

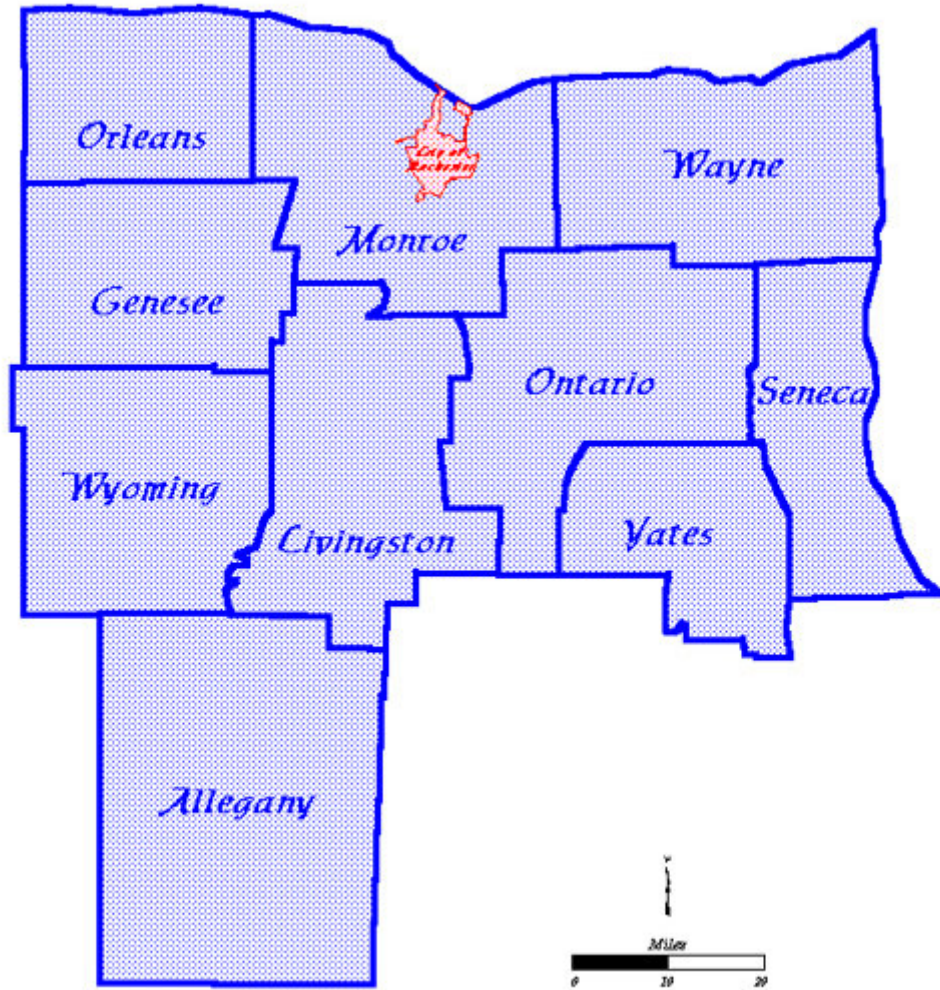
# Emergency Food Providers Community Standards

by the Agency Advisory Council



Adopted  
April 10, 2002  
Revised  
March 3, 2008

# FOODLINK SERVICE AREA



Prepared By: Greater/Rochester/Lake Ontario Regional Planning Council 1/97

## Role of Community Standards

Community Standards have been created by the Foodlink Agency Advisory Council to establish clarification of the roles and responsibilities of Emergency Food Providers as members of Foodlink in the 10 county service area. The Community Standards are the benchmark to which operations and practices of Emergency Food Providers will be held accountable in efforts to serve clients in a more efficient and effective manner, while efficiently utilizing available foodbank resources in an equitable manner.

The goal of Community Standards is increased cooperation among Emergency Food Providers and programs to ensure that no one in our community goes hungry or without the vital services and support needed to overcome an emergency situation.

The vision is a community that has the best possible human service delivery programs that meet the needs of those in our community. This is achieved through strong cooperation, thorough understanding of the needs of those being served, and by a diverse approach to service delivery. The Community Standards provide a common foundation for Emergency Food Providers; however the individual programs and agencies will determine their own method of service delivery, as they will know their clients' needs the best.

### **The Community Standards will ultimately:**

- ◆ Improve quality of services to clients in our community
- ◆ Facilitate the coordination of emergency food providers and emergency food delivery
- ◆ Ensure funding and resources are distributed in the most effective manner
- ◆ Reduce the amount of duplication of emergency food services
- ◆ Reduce the amount of misuse of food appropriated through emergency food providers and food banks
- ◆ Assure food donors, manufactures and retailers, with some certainty, that their food donations are being distributed to programs that employ safe food handling methods, and that are serving the ill, infant and/or needy.

## Emergency Food Provider Defined

Emergency Food Providers include those agencies that are established *to meet the temporary food needs* of individuals or families in an emergency situation, including those who are in chronic need. Emergency providers should not be the sole supporter of a families needs.

Foodlink has categorized Emergency Food Providers to include:

- 1) Soup Kitchens and Kids Cafés
- 2) Emergency Shelters
- 3) Emergency Food Pantries

Status as an Emergency Food Provider qualifies programs to receive the choice products and resources from Foodlink, state, federal, and local agencies. It is, therefore, most

important to develop a policy which outlines criteria for establishing and maintaining status as an Emergency Food Provider with Foodlink that are in addition to the requirements outlined in the standard Foodlink membership criteria.

Soup Kitchens, Emergency Shelters, and Kids Cafés in general will automatically qualify for Emergency Food Provider status due to the nature of their business and their client's evident immediate need and/or crisis situation. These programs will be held to the same expectations as the Emergency Food Pantries where applicable.

## **Expectations of All Member Emergency Food Providers**

(Soup Kitchens, Kids Cafés, Emergency Shelters, Emergency Food Pantries)

- Respect of all clients and staff
- Equal access for those in need of emergency services
- Cooperation and coordination with neighboring providers and with Foodlink
- Dedication to moving clients away from emergency services to self-sustainability
- Food is stored and prepared in a safe and sanitary manner in accordance with specified health and safety regulations.
- Post signage including open hours and emergency phone numbers

## **Client Bill of Rights**

- Clients are to receive food free of charge
- Clients are not required to give donations, pay, work, or participate in religious services in order to get food
- Clients are to be treated with respect and dignity at all times
- Clients are free to refuse any items that do not meet their dietary or religious standards
- Clients are to receive food that meets local, state, and federal standards for food safety
- Clients are not to be turned away on their first visit because of lack of identification, referral, or documentation of need
- Clients are never to be asked for their Social Security Number for any reason

The number of people that Emergency Food Providers are able to serve and the amount of food they can provide are dependent upon the amount of food and funding available to them. Foodlink is dedicated to reducing hunger by utilizing its resources in the most efficient and effective manner to support the efforts of Emergency Food Providers in the community.

Referral systems are the essential network in moving a person away from dependency on emergency food providers. It is expected that the Emergency Food Provider will **partner with community organizations** that offer services such as job training, WIC, senior nutrition, and food stamps, to best help their clients break the cycle and causes of their emergency situation when applicable.

All Emergency Food Providers must **notify referral agencies** (such as Life Line, DSS, etc.) of their programs and services offered, as well as the geographic regions served.

All Emergency Food Providers are required by the State of New York to **submit monthly serving statistics to Foodlink by the 10<sup>th</sup>** of the following service month (eg. April statistics are due by May 10<sup>th</sup>). Failure to submit reports in a timely fashion will result in the agency being placed on hold from access to products from the foodbank. Copies of these monthly statistics must be kept on file at the provider site for 2 years.

**Attend the mandatory Annual Foodlink Member Meeting.** In order to continue status as an Emergency Food Provider, a representative from your agency must be in attendance.

## **Emergency Food Pantries**

Food Pantries lend themselves to an environment that advocates client contact on an individual caseload basis, which enables the agency to identify an emergency situation versus a supplemental food source. To receive state and federal funding through the foodbank, the pantry provider must identify and distribute food for emergency situations only.

For Food Pantries to be considered an Emergency Food Provider the following criteria must be met:

1. **Maintain accurate and up-to-date documentation of each client visit on file at the Food Pantry.** A sample copy of the verification forms used to identify an emergency situation will be submitted to Foodlink for their files. Client documentation should include the following components with verification:
  - a. Household make-up
  - b. Address
  - c. Documentation of emergency need of food each time the client receives food; maintaining at least two years of records on file.
  - d. Referrals received and made to other agencies
2. **Define a set geographical service area.** Each Food Pantry must determine an outlined service area and then inform Foodlink of their specific geographic area served upon enrollment as an Emergency Food Provider. Any changes in the service area must be reported to Foodlink and to your referral partnering agencies (eg. Life Line). Pre-determined service areas help to reduce instances of overlap, and/or duplication of services. Defining service areas will also provide a usable network for referrals to verify if clients have received and/or are eligible for similar services in their designated area.

Special needs populations that may require city or countywide jurisdictions must be approved by the Agency Advisory Council.

3. **Provide food to the public in their designated service area, or upon confirmation that the client has not been served in their own service area.** Internal pantries that only serve clients from a specific housing complex or program are not considered emergency programs under the state applicable guidelines. However, these programs may still be eligible for additional grant dollars awarded through Foodlink as an Internal Pantry, and will therefore be held accountable to applicable Community Standards.
4. **Attend at least one Foodlink Pantry Meeting annually** to establish an on-going communication network between Foodlink and member Food Pantry agencies. In order to continue status as an Emergency Food Provider, a representative from your agency must be in attendance.
5. **Notify appropriate referral agencies**, such as Life Line, of your requirements, services provided, and geographic area served.
6. **Foodlink strongly endorses the Client Choice pantry model** whereby clients are empowered to select the most nutritiously and culturally appropriate foods for themselves. Materials on the Client Choice pantry model can be obtained by contacting the Foodlink Agency Services Department.

## **Grievance Procedures**

When a program is in violation of any of the established Community Standards the following process will occur:

- a) A Foodlink staff member will visit the site and outline methods to develop a resolution to the infraction. A time limit will be established, and a follow-up visit may be required to ensure the situation is resolved.
- b) If no resolution can be established, an Agency Advisory Council member and a Foodlink staff member will visit the site for further clarification and understanding. The issue will then be presented at the Agency Advisory Council meeting. The program in question may be placed on temporary probation until the meeting is held. Please refer to the Foodlink Membership Manual for further explanation of probation procedures.
- c) The Agency Advisory Council will meet to discuss the procedure for the program in question. The Agency Advisory Council may request a program representative to attend the meeting to outline their plan of action.
- d) The Agency Advisory Council will outline a clear timeline and objectives to be met, and a course of action if they are not.
- e) If the program in question would like to challenge the decision, they may take the issue up with the Foodlink Executive Director and the Foodlink Board of Directors upon formal written request.

## **Process of Becoming a New Emergency Food Provider**

When Foodlink receives a request to begin a new emergency service program, Foodlink staff will notify the neighboring service providers in the requested area. Foodlink will provide a survey to the neighboring providers requesting information on the status and types of need in their community and if they are interested in partnering with this potential new provider. This information is taken into consideration when determining unmet need for establishing a new program.

Based on information initially collected, Foodlink staff will visit the location identified and work with the new potential partner through the standard Foodlink membership process. A listing of new programs is provided regularly to the Agency Advisory Council for review.

Community Standards have been fully approved and adopted on **2/28/08** by the following:

### **The 2007-2008 Agency Advisory Council:**

Thomas C. Ferraro, Foodlink  
Frances Pesavento, Foodlink  
Thomas Foster, Foodlink  
Sheila Williams, Foodlink  
Mona Durgin, Greece Ecumenical Food Shelf  
Sue Bryant, Northstar Christian Academy Day Care  
Minister Franklin Florence, Faith Community Alliance  
Deborah Flood, Catholic Charities  
Drew Bielemeier, Heritage Christian Services  
Sister Diane Muldoon, St. Joseph's Villa  
Ruth Fischer, Catholic Family Center  
Charlie DelPlato, Genesee County Mental Health Association  
Zetta Denno, Charles Settlement House  
George McVey, St. Joseph's House of Hospitality  
David McKeckney, H.O.P.E. Ministries  
Lori McEvoy, Livingston County Coalition of Churches  
Elizabeth Robinson, Ibero-American Action League  
Kathy Pierce, Cameron Hot Lunch Program  
Ron Fox, Open Door Mission  
Lucille Everett, American Red Cross  
Sue Forsyth, Salem Nutrition Center  
Robert Lauterbach, Calvary St. Andrews Food Cupboard

### **Community Organizations and Partners**

Emergency Services and Family Stabilization Network