

# Emergency Food Providers Community Standards

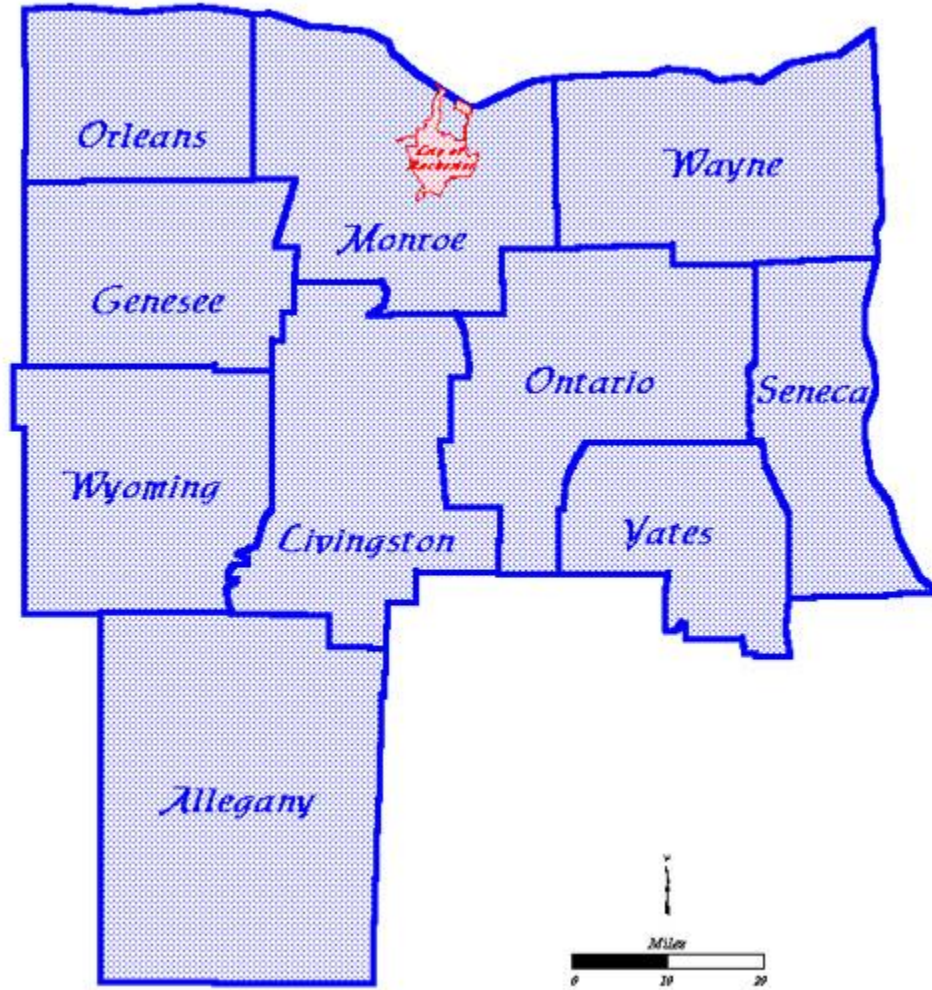
by the Agency Advisory Council



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AMERICA**

Adopted  
April 10, 2002  
Updated  
September 7, 2011

# FOODLINK SERVICE AREA



Prepared By Genesee/Yates/Orleans 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 or County Food Security 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 2-1-1/Life Line, of your requirements, services provided, and geographic area served.
6. **All pantries must be a Client Choice pantry** whereby clients are empowered to select the most nutritiously and culturally appropriate foods for themselves. There are several acceptable models including, but not limited to the following:

**Supermarket model:** Food is set up by food groups inside the pantry. Clients choose their food as they walk through the pantry. Workers may help guide clients through their choices or check them out when they have finished shopping.

**Table model:** Clients stand outside the pantry area but can see the food in the pantry. Clients choose by pointing to the food they want.

**Window model:** Clients stand outside the pantry area but can see the food in the pantry. Clients choose by pointing to the food they want.

**Inventory model:** A list of food in stock is posted or given to clients. Clients choose their food from the list. Workers then assemble the clients' food bags.

These four models are described in "On Your Way to Offering Client Choice: A Handbook for Food Pantries in New York" (available upon request from Foodlink). *Alternative acceptable models must be approved by Foodlink.*

## **Additional Requirements for All Emergency Agencies**

1. **Hold minimum hours and days of operations**  
This is an effort to fill the meal gap and encourage members to expand their service. This is also an effort to discourage distribution of Foodlink's resources, particularly as demand continues to rise, to organizations serving a couple hours a week. Weekends and evenings are given consideration and exception to the minimum standard, as they are considered low service times.

**Pantries:** nine hours, three days a week

**Soup Kitchens:** three meals, two days a week

**Emergency Shelters:** 24/7 (excluding seasonal shelters)

**Exceptions to the minimum:** Agencies in low service areas filling meal gaps will be given exception to this standard, including consideration for agencies serving evenings after 5:00pm or weekends

2. **Adhere to all food safety standards:** Food Safety standards are an important part of Foodlink’s emergency food system and enforced by HPNAP, NYS DoH, and Feeding America. In addition to following NYS DoH and county health department standards, the following standards must be met:

**All Soup Kitchens, Emergency Shelters, and Kids Cafés**

- One person (or more) will be on site during food handling, preparation and service who has completed the following:
  - Annual 2-hour training offered by Foodlink staff
  - OR (L2) training to be renewed every 3 years (per Monroe County health code)
  - OR (L1) training to be renewed every 5 years (per Monroe County health code)
- Training certificates must be displayed at all times and will be checked during monitoring visits

**All Food Pantries**

- One person (or more) will be on site during food handling & distribution that has completed the following:
  - Annual 1-hour Basic Food Safety Training offered by Foodlink Staff
  - Bi-annual in-depth monitoring session may fulfill that year’s requirement
- Training certificates must be displayed at all times and will be checked during monitoring visits

3. **Agree to pay an annual membership fees:** Emergency and Non-emergency Agencies: \$500 annually. Emergency Agencies will only pay \$300, as Foodlink will subsidize the Emergency Agency membership fee by \$200.

Each additional program of agency: \$50

Agencies can opt to pay half the amount by July 1 and the remainder by January 1 of the fiscal year.

**Scholarship clause:** Foodlink and the AAC may waive an agency’s membership fee. The agency must demonstrate need and detail plan of action for raising funds to cover membership fees.

4. Each program must place an order or shop with Foodlink at least once every three months. Exceptions made only for seasonal programs (i.e. summer camps).
5. Foodlink cannot be an agency’s sole source of food.

## **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. The Agency Advisory Council will review all potential new membership applications on a quarterly basis.

### **The 2011-2012 Agency Advisory Council:**

Thomas C. Ferraro, Foodlink  
Jeanette Batiste, Foodlink  
Michelle Larson, Foodlink  
Laura Sugarwala, Foodlink  
Roberta Markel, NYS Department of Health  
Annie Miller, Baden Street Settlement  
Drew Bielemeier, Heritage Christian Services  
Bishop Herman Dailey, Outreach Community Center  
Zetta Denno, Charles Settlement House

Diane Draheim, Seneca County House of Concern  
Ruth Fischer, Catholic Family Center  
Deborah Flood, Catholic Charities  
Minister Earl Greene, Newark Church of Christ Family Life Center  
Robert Lauterbach, Calvary St. Andrews Food Cupboard  
Patty Lorenzen, St. Peter's Soup Kitchen  
Sister Diane Muldoon, St. Joseph's Villa  
George McVey, St. Joseph's House of Hospitality  
David McKeckney, H.O.P.E. Ministries  
George Moses, NEAD Freedom School  
Dawn Rockefeller, Victor-Farmington Food Cupboard  
Preston Sanders, City Recreation

**Community Organizations and Partners**

Emergency Services and Family Stabilization Network



A Member of FEEDING AMERICA

## Emergency Food Providers Community Standards Acknowledgement Form

This Emergency Food Providers Community Standards handbook has 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. Please read it carefully. Upon completion of your review of this handbook, sign the statement below, and return it to Foodlink’s Agency Services Department.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name), have received and read a copy Emergency Food Providers Community Standards which outlines the roles and responsibilities of Emergency Food Providers as members of Foodlink.

I have familiarized myself with the contents of this handbook. By my signature below, I acknowledge, understand, accept, and agree to comply with the information contained in the Emergency Food Providers Community Standards handbook provided to me by Foodlink. I understand this handbook is a general guide to the roles and responsibilities of Emergency Food Providers as members of Foodlink.

I understand that the Emergency Food Providers Community Standards handbook is not a contract of membership with Foodlink and should not be deemed as such.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Executive Director signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

Agency Name & Foodlink ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Return this signed acknowledgement form via fax or mail to  
**Foodlink, Agency Services Department, 1999 Mt. Read Boulevard, Rochester, NY 14615**  
or **585-328-9951** (fax)