

PASSAIC COUNTY EMERGENCY FOOD SYSTEM 3-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

2026 - 2029

PREPARED BY

Passaic County
Department of Human Services



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The **Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG)** ensures that the **voices** of those directly **impacted** by food insecurity are **central** to the planning and implementation of emergency food services. The following individuals have served as members of the **LEAG**, contributing their insights, experiences, and leadership to shape more **equitable** food systems in **Passaic County**:

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In 2025 the **LEAG** convened on **(4)** occasions to formulate structured feedback for the EFPC on the pantry customer experience. LEAG then joined an EFPC meeting where they shared their concerns and recommendations for improvements.

Passaic County will maintain the **Food Security Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG)** as a standing **advisory** body to the **Emergency Food Provider Coalition**, ensuring that community perspectives remain central to decision-making. **LEAG** will provide structured feedback on pantry services, identify opportunities to **strengthen** customer service and client experience, and **participate** in formal discussions with the Coalition about emerging community concerns. To support this role, the County will facilitate **quarterly** touchpoints between **LEAG** and **EFPC** leadership, integrate **LEAG** insights into training and service improvement efforts, and ensure clear communication pathways that allow community voices to **meaningfully** shape pantry operations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Passaic County Emergency Food System 3-Year Strategic Plan** is a collaborative initiative designed to **strengthen** food security across the county by **improving** coordination, data collection, and service delivery among emergency food providers. This plan brings together key stakeholders—including food pantries, hot meal programs, mobile feeding services, community organizations, government agencies, and residents—to create a more **equitable, efficient, and sustainable** emergency food system.

Food insecurity is defined as the lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life. It encompasses both the **quantity** and **quality** of food available to individuals and households. It is often influenced by factors such as income, transportation, housing stability, and access to supportive services.

In **Passaic County**, food insecurity affects thousands of residents, particularly in under-served communities. According to **Feeding America** data,¹ as of **2023** the **food insecurity rate** in Passaic County is **13.6%** with **70,720** residents being classified as **food insecure**. In Passaic County, **67%** of residents live below the **SNAP** eligibility threshold. An analysis of the data available through



the **New Jersey Statewide Food Insecurity Index**² identified census block segments throughout Passaic County with food insecurity scores **higher** than the NJ **statewide average**. The **statewide** average **food insecurity** score is **28.559** and the **overall** food insecurity score for **Passaic County** is **39.21**. This strategic plan **addresses** these challenges by leveraging data, technology, and lived experience to **guide** decision-making and resource allocation.

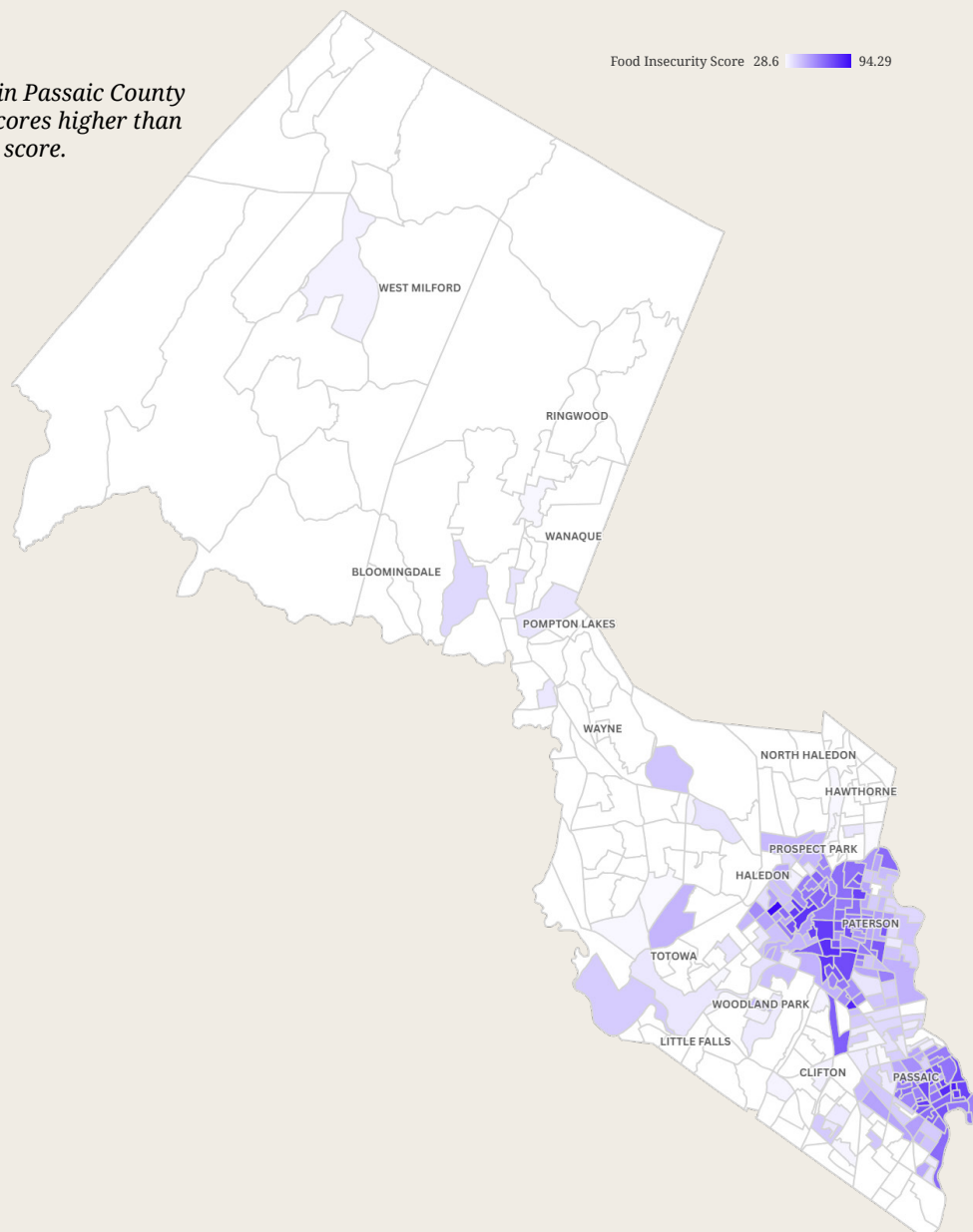
¹ Feeding America. (2023). Hunger & Poverty in Passaic County. Map the Meal Gap. Retrieved from <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2023/overall/new-jersey/county/passaic>

² Trenton Health Team. (2025). NJ Statewide Food Insecurity Index. <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/834bef4af760415c95cbdd930af62ce0/page/Home>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Passaic County, **13** out of **16** municipalities have census block segments with food insecurity scores that are **higher** than the **statewide** average, indicating a **very high** likelihood of food insecurity: **Bloomingtondale, Clifton, Haledon, Hawthorne, Passaic, Paterson, Pompton Lakes, Prospect Park, Totowa, Wanaque, Wayne, West Milford, and Woodland Park.** Figure 1 is a map of the food insecurity scores for Passaic County where the **census block segment** scores are **higher** than the **statewide** average.

Figure 1
Map of census blocks in Passaic County with food insecurity scores higher than the statewide average score.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Table 1 summarizes the census block scores for each municipality, indicating the **percentage** and **average** score of **census blocks** that have a food insecurity scores that **surpasses** the NJ **statewide average**.

Table 1
Summary of census blocks in Passaic County with food insecurity scores higher than the statewide average score.

Municipality	% Census Blocks w/ Food Insecurity Scores Above Statewide Avg	Avg Food Insecurity Score of Census Blocks Above Statewide Avg	Overall Municipal Food Insecurity Score
Bloomingtondale	20%	37.65	22.56
Clifton	59%	40.06	32.12
Haledon	71%	41.53	36.96
Hawthorne	22%	30.13	20.41
Little Falls	0%	N/A	16.66
North Haledon	0%	N/A	20.09
Passaic	90%	63.63	59.70
Paterson	97%	57.69	56.85
Pompton Lakes	25%	33.71	22.08
Prospect Park	100%	53.53	53.53
Ringwood	0%	N/A	13.35
Totowa	30%	32.54	24.68
Wanaque	22%	31.86	23.78
Wayne	19%	36.42	19.20
West Milford	6%	30.83	15.27
Woodland Park	60%	36.40	31.81

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN



STANDARDIZED METRICS

Establishing uniform methods for tracking the number of people served and the amount of food distributed, segmented by age and geography.

COALITION BUILDING

Organizing the Passaic County Emergency Food Provider Coalition to foster collaboration, share resources, and advocate for systemic improvements.



BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

Providing emergency food providers with tools and recommendations to operate safely, efficiently, and sustainably.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Offering on-site support to providers to enhance operations, volunteer management, and client services.



FOOD ACCESS MAP

Creating a digital platform where residents can easily locate food resources, including pantries, meal sites, and supportive services.

LIVED EXPERIENCE

Engaging residents with firsthand experience of food insecurity to inform strategies and ensure services are responsive to community needs.



Through these efforts, **Emergency Food Provider Coalition** aims to **reduce** food insecurity, improve service delivery, and build a more **resilient** emergency food system that **meets** the **diverse** needs of **Passaic County** residents.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY







Alignment

The Passaic County Department of Human Services and the Emergency Food Provider Coalition **aligned** the Passaic County Emergency Food System Strategic Plan with the Office of Food Security Advocate's **New Jersey Food Security Strategic Plan**.

The State Strategic Plan **defines**³ food security as follows: “when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” This definition incorporates the NJ six dimensions of food security: availability, access, utilization, stability, agency, and sustainability. The six dimensions of food security are used as a **framework** to understand the **necessary** factors for **attaining** and **sustaining** food security.

The NJ strategic plan utilized the six dimensions framework to develop **five Focus Areas** with Strategies to advance food security throughout the state. The Passaic County Emergency Food System Strategic Plan **incorporated** the five State focus areas into the seven sections of the Passaic County Strategic Plan. **Table 2 summarizes** the alignment of the sections of the Passaic County Emergency Food System Strategic Plan with the NJ Six Dimensions of Food Security and the specific Focus Area Strategies.

Table 2
Summary of Passaic County Emergency Food System Strategic Plan alignment with NJ Six Dimensions of Food Security.

Six Dimensions		PC Strategic Plan Sections	Aligned Strategies
	Access	Volunteer Management Technology Needs Supportive Services	3.1 1.1, 1.3 4.5
	Availability	Capital Equipment	2.4
	Utilization	Food Sourcing	2.1
	Stability	Technology Needs	1.1, 1.3
	Agency	Supportive Services Enhanced Collaboration Volunteer Management	4.5 1.2, 3.2, 3.3 3.1
	Sustainability	Emergency Response	5.4

³ State of New Jersey. Office of Food Security Advocate. (2026). NJ Food Security 3-Year Strategic Plan. Retrieved from https://www.nj.gov/foodsecurity/documents/strategic-plan/NJ_FoodSecurity_3Yr_StrategicPlan_010726_FINAL.pdf#page=9

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Compliance

The Passaic County **Department of Human Services** will formalize **partnerships** with pantries through contracts that set clear expectations for reporting, safety, and participation. **Partners** will submit data reports, complete food safety training, host site visits, maintain active membership in the Emergency Food Provider Coalition, and complete trauma-informed care training.

Partner pantries will be required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding

(MOU) with the **Passaic County Department of Human Services** that include:

- Tracking and reporting of adult, children and seniors served each month
- Quarterly food poundage distributed reporting
- Food safety training every 5 years
- Updating of contact information annually
- Participation in the Passaic County Emergency Food Provider Coalition
- Hosting of site visits
- Trauma Informed Care training

DATA REPORTING



- Submit:
- **monthly** demographic data
 - **quarterly** food-poundage totals
 - **annual** contact updates

FOOD SAFETY TRAINING



Complete food safety training every **five** years

EFPC MEMBERSHIP



- Actively engage in the county's **Emergency Food Provider Coalition**.
- **Host** site visits

TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE TRAINING



Complete **trauma-informed care** training to further strengthen service quality and client dignity.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Metrics

To ensure **consistency**, **transparency**, and **accountability** across Passaic County’s emergency food system, it is essential to implement **standardized metrics** for data collection and reporting. These metrics will help providers and stakeholders understand the **scale** and **impact** of food distribution efforts and identify areas for improvement.

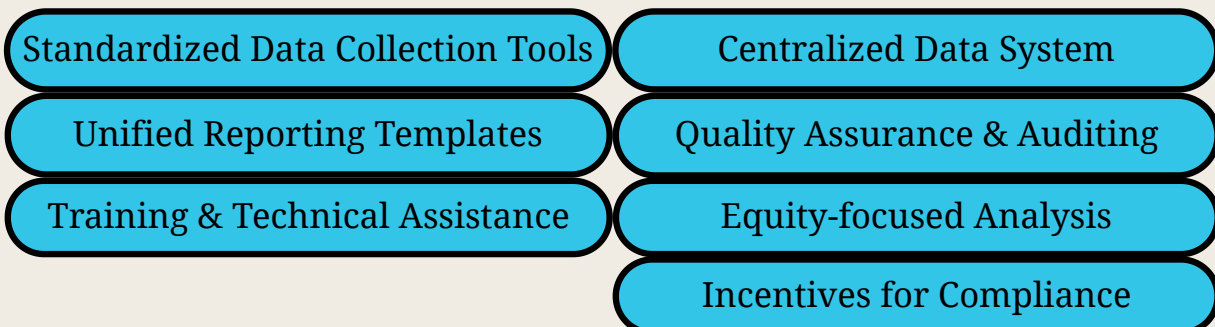


Providers will report:

PCDHS is most likely to receive **consistent**, accurate data from community feeding programs that are partners. PCDHS is recommending to integrate data and reporting requirements into the community feeding program partner’s MOUs. PCDHS may receive **additional data** from other funders (e.g. Community Food Bank of New Jersey, Table to Table and United Way).

Recommendations for a Uniform Metric System

The Emergency Food Provider Coalition recommends a **uniform metric system**. The uniform metric reporting system will include the following components:



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

01

Standardized Data Collections Tools

Develop a **county-wide** intake form (paper and digital) that captures:

- **Household** size and composition (adults, children, seniors)
- **Zip code** or municipality (for geographic segmentation)
- **Frequency** of visits
- Provide **digital intake** tools (e.g., Plentiful, Oasis, Pantry Soft, Microsoft Access) to **streamline** data entry and **reduce** errors.

02

Unified Reporting Templates

Create a monthly reporting template that all providers must use, including:

- Total **individuals** served (by age group, adult, children, senior)
- Total **pounds** of food distributed
 - Estimated meals (using the **USDA** conversion: 1.2 lbs = 1 meal)
- Service **location** (Upper or Lower County)

03

Training and Technical Assistance

Offer **training** sessions for providers on:

- How to estimate **food weight** using invoices, packaging, or scales
- How to use digital tools for **intake and reporting**
- Data **privacy** and **ethical** data collection practices

04

Centralized Data System

- Implement a **centralized** data platform where providers can upload their monthly reports.
- Include **dashboards** for real-time tracking and analysis.
- Allow **filtering** by region, provider, and time period.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

05

Quality Assurance and Auditing

- Conduct **quarterly** data audits to ensure accuracy and consistency.
- Provide **feedback** to providers and offer corrective support where needed.

06

Equity-focused Analysis

- Use **geographic data** to identify service **gaps** between Upper and Lower County.
- Adjust **resource allocation** based on **population** needs, **cultural** needs, and service **coverage**.

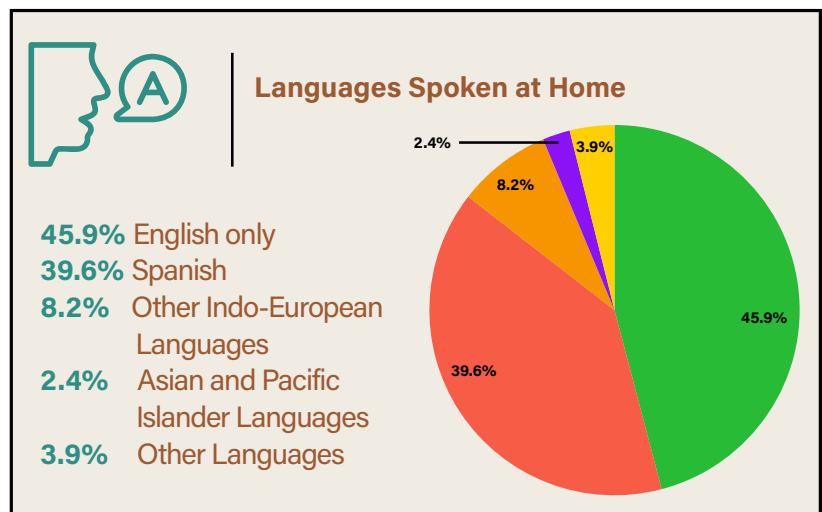
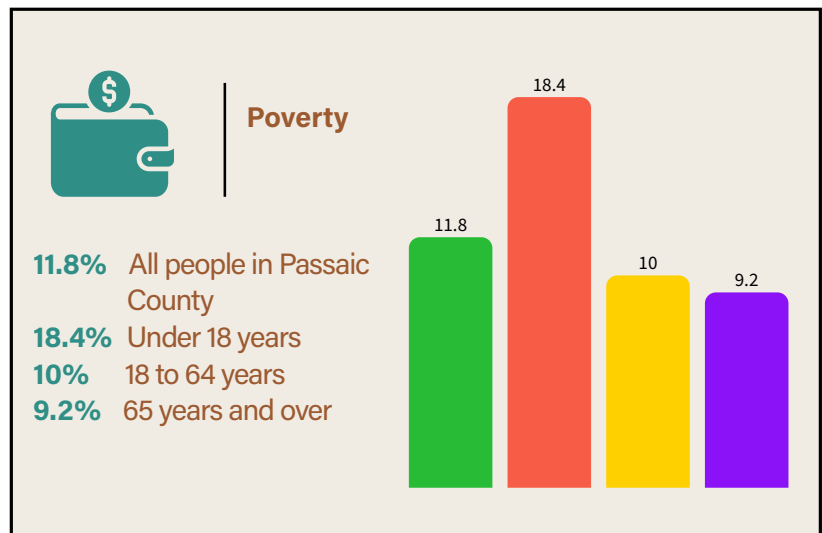
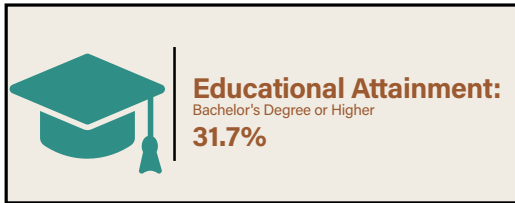
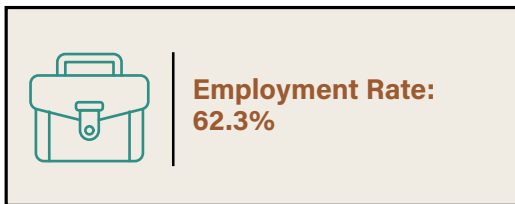
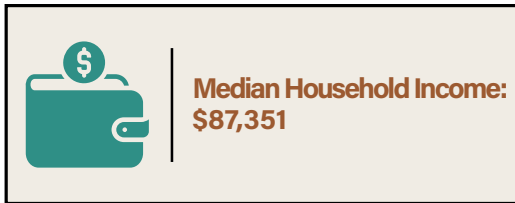
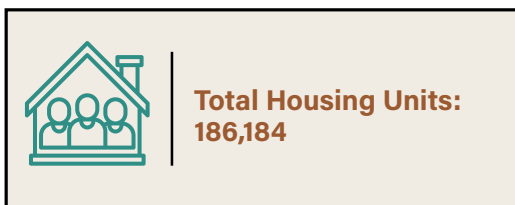
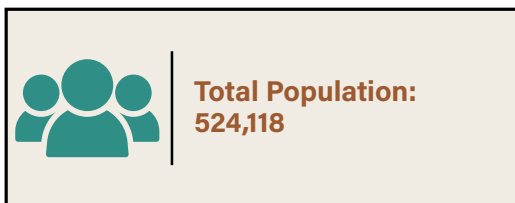
07

Incentivize Compliance

- Offer incentives or recognition for providers who **consistently** submit **accurate** and **timely** data.
- Tie **participation** in county-wide initiatives or funding opportunities to **compliance** with the metric system.

COUNTY PROFILE

Passaic County has the 4th largest number of households in the state receiving SNAP benefits, according to the **December 2025 NJ CPS Report**.⁴ 76,829 residents, comprised of 44,032 adults and 32,797 children, representing a total of 39,895 households that received SNAP benefits. Recipients of SNAP benefits reside within every municipality in Passaic County. Each municipality is comprised of many economic and cultural demographic variables that impact **food security**, and are summarized in the **dashboard**⁵ below.



⁴ State of New Jersey, Department of Human Services. (2025). Current Program Statistics, December 2025. Division of Family Development. Retrieved from https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/dfd/news/reports/pdf/cps/2025/CPS_December2025.pdf

⁵ This dashboard was created by data available from the U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). *Passaic County, New Jersey, Profile*. U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved from https://data.census.gov/profile/Passaic_County,_New_Jersey?g=050XX00US34031

COUNTY PROFILE

The New Jersey Food Insecurity Index measures the level of intensity of food insecurity throughout the state to identify and map where food access challenges are located. The **Food Insecurity Index**⁶ was developed to strategically allocate resources to support needs of areas that are most impacted by food insecurity. The Food Insecurity Index is constructed by **(11)** variables (see **Figure 1**) from data available from the American Community Survey and census tract level variables from CDC Places to calculate a score. The scores are calculated and mapped at the census tract block level, which allows for a hyper-local measurement of food insecurity. This allows for a more **granular** analysis by neighborhoods, as opposed to a broader measurement at the municipal or county level within the state.

Figure 1
Variables to calculate food insecurity score

MEASURES OF NEED

- % individuals at or below poverty level
- % households (HHs) using SNAP benefits
- % housing cost burdened households (HHs)
- % individuals without insurance
- % individuals on Medicaid

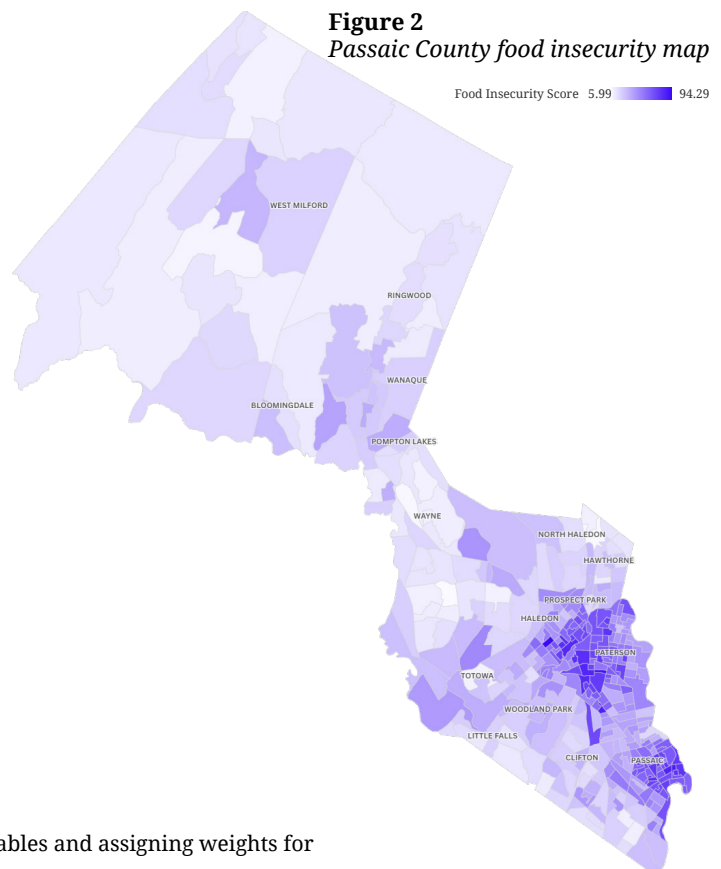
MEASURES OF ACCESS

- % of block group area with no access to bus transportation
- % households (HHS) with no vehicle access

DEMOGRAPHIC MEASURES

- % individuals with limited English proficiency
- % households (HHs) with member 65+ living alone
- % individuals with disability
- % single parent households (HHs)

The **average** food insecurity score for New Jersey is **28.559** and the average food insecurity score for Passaic County is **39.21**. Passaic County has census block segments that are **above** the **statewide** average Food Insecurity Index Scores in **13** out of **16** municipalities: Bloomingdale, Clifton, Haledon, Hawthorne, Passaic, Paterson, Pompton Lakes, Prospect Park, Totowa, Wanaque, Wayne, West Milford, and Woodland Park. **Figure 2** is a map of the food insecurity scores for Passaic County where the **darker** shades of purple indicate a **higher** food insecurity score.



⁶ For additional information on the methods for selecting variables and assigning weights for calculating food insecurity scores, see <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/834bef4af760415c95cbdd930af62ce0/page/Methodology>.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Volunteer support is a **cornerstone** of emergency food programs, yet many providers face challenges in recruitment, retention, and management. This section outlines key observations and recommendations to **strengthen** volunteer engagement.


Six Dimensions Check!


Access




Agency





	<h3>Impact Passaic-Supported Recruitment Strategies</h3>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize Impact Passaic-sponsored volunteer recruitment events in partnership with schools, faith-based organizations, local businesses, and the Impact Passaic Youth Services Task Force. • Promote volunteer opportunities through social media channels, community newsletters, and local media outlets. • Include volunteer recruitment guidance in the Emergency Food Provider Best Practices Guide, with sample outreach materials and messaging templates.

	<h3>Centralized Volunteer Management Tools</h3>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a county-wide volunteer management platform such as Charity Quest, Volunteer Hub, Civic Champs, and Bloomerang Volunteer which allow volunteers to easily sign up for shifts via mobile devices. • Provide training and onboarding support to food pantries to help them integrate the platform into their operations. • Use the platform to create a shared volunteer pool, enabling volunteers to support multiple sites based on availability and need.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Volunteer Retention and Recognition	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present awards for pantries and volunteers at the annual Passaic County Food Security Summit.• Develop a criteria for selecting award recipients.<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Potential awards: Pantry of the Year; Volunteer of the Year• Offer branded certificates, public acknowledgments, and small incentives to boost morale and retention.• Encourage pantries to implement flexible scheduling and clear role descriptions, as outlined in the Best Practices Guide.

Technical Assistance and Training	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide on-site technical assistance to help pantries set up and manage volunteer systems, including scheduling, communication, and reporting.• Develop and distribute training modules for volunteer coordinators, covering topics such as conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity, and emergency preparedness.

Data Collection and Impact Tracking	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage pantries to track volunteer hours and roles using standardized templates or digital tools.• Use this data to evaluate volunteer impact, identify gaps, and inform future recruitment strategies.

CAPITAL EQUIPMENT

Reliable capital equipment is essential for the safe and efficient operation of emergency food programs. This section identifies common equipment needs and provides recommendations for support.

Six Dimensions Check!

Availability



EQUIPMENT MINI GRANTS



As funding is available, Passaic County may make provider mini-grants that funds the purchase of essential capital equipment. These grants can be used for:

- Commercial refrigerators and freezers
- Shelving units and pallet jacks

The county can provide technical assistance to providers for writing grant proposals or applying for state and federal funding.

EQUIPMENT SURVEY



Conduct a county-wide survey to identify gaps in equipment across emergency food providers. This data can guide:

- Funding priorities
- Equipment purchases
- Strategic partnerships with donors or suppliers
- Create an equipment survey for pantries

BEST PRACTICES



Include capital equipment recommendations in the Emergency Food Provider Best Practices Guide, with:

- Recommendations for types of capital equipment that support safe food receiving, storage and distribution
- Vendor recommendations
- Tips for budgeting and maintenance

TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

Technology plays a **vital role** in modernizing emergency food systems. This section presents an **assessment** of current technology use and outlines **recommendations** for improvement.

Six Dimensions Check!

Access 	Stability 
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County-Wide Technology Survey and Planning

The **Emergency Food Provider Coalition** should conduct a comprehensive technology survey to identify gaps in digital infrastructure across emergency food providers. This will help prioritize investments and ensure that solutions are tailored to provider capacity and community needs.

Impact Passaic-Supported Recruitment Strategies

To streamline intake and reporting, the county should invest in a centralized client management system that:

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows providers to track household demographics, service history, and referrals. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports both paper-to-digital transitions and mobile data entry. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures data privacy and compliance with relevant regulations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and technical support should be provided to help providers adopt and use the system effectively. |
|---|---|--|---|

Impact Passaic Food Access Map

The Emergency Food Provider Coalition should continue developing the **Emergency Food Access Map**, a mobile-accessible tool that helps residents locate food pantries, meal programs, and supportive services. Features should include:

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Real-time updates on hours of operation and services offered. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filters by location, service type, and accessibility. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The map should include emergency feeding programs, SNAP navigation sites and farmers markets. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration with social service directories and transportation options. |
|---|---|---|---|

TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

Training and Technical Assistance			
Provide ongoing training and on-site technical assistance to help providers:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition from manual to digital systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use data to improve service delivery and reporting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Troubleshoot common technology issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops and webinars should be offered regularly, with materials included in the Best Practices Guide.

Plentiful		
<p>Recommend Plentiful as the preferred tool for food resource mapping, client management, and surveying tool for Passaic County community feeding programs. Promotion of Plentiful to pantries and community members, training and technical assistance are integral to success.</p> <p>Plentiful can create a customized dashboard for PCDHS to display data from all Passaic County pantries using Plentiful. Data can be accessed and used for reports at any time without having to request the information from the pantries.</p>		
<p>Client Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables check-in via QR code to streamline check-in process. Enables messaging to community members. Community members can schedule appointments for pantry pick up. 	<p>County Data and Reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share a comprehensive list of food programs with contact and distribution details. Invite Plentiful to present the initiative at regular provider meetings. Providers can share data to support county-wide planning. 	<p>Surveys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather feedback from residents visiting food sites. Collect data on needs, experiences, and program impact. Identify service gaps and inform resource allocation decisions.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Emergency food providers are uniquely positioned to connect clients with supportive services that address the root causes of food insecurity. This section outlines key service areas and strategies for collaboration.

Six Dimensions Check!

Access



Agency



Nutrition Education Support

Passaic County should collaborate with local health departments, universities, and extension programs to deliver evidence-based nutrition education. These partnerships can provide:

- Qualified educators to lead workshops at food pantries and meal sites.
- Access to culturally relevant curricula tailored to the dietary needs of diverse communities.
- Opportunities for student interns or volunteers to assist with programming.
- Collaborate with Rutgers

Nutrition Education Toolkits

Create nutrition education toolkits that providers can use and share with

clients. These toolkits should include:

- Simple, budget-friendly recipes using pantry staples.
- Tips for meal planning and grocery budgeting.
- Guidance on reading nutrition labels and making healthy choices.
- Materials available in multiple languages and formats (print, digital, video).

Nutrition + Food Distribution

Encourage providers to incorporate nutrition education into their regular operations by:

- Hosting short “pop-up” workshops during food distribution hours.
- Including recipe cards or nutrition tips in food bags.
- Displaying educational posters or videos at distribution sites.

Nutrition Education Best Practices

Ensure that the Emergency Food Provider Best Practices Guide includes:

- A section on nutrition education strategies.
- Sample workshop outlines and evaluation tools.
- Recommendations for culturally appropriate content and delivery methods.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Training and Technical Assistance

Offer **training** sessions for pantry staff and volunteers on how to:

- **Deliver** basic nutrition education messages.
- **Refer** clients to more in-depth nutrition programs or dietitians.
- Use available **materials** effectively and respectfully.

Community Empowerment

Providers should **engage** clients in program planning and feedback processes. Peer leadership programs can also **foster** community ownership and **advocacy**.

School Meals Program

Promote enrollment in the School Meals Program.

- New Jersey has the **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)** that enables **high-poverty** schools to offer free breakfast and lunch to all students without requiring individual applications.
 - CEP schools are **identified** by the state annually.
 - **Promote** school meal applications and **provide** technical assistance to families with students **who do not attend** CEP schools and **meet** the eligibility requirements.

FOOD SOURCING

Access to a **consistent** and **diverse** food supply is critical to the **success** of emergency food programs. This section outlines key focus areas and recommendations to **improve** food sourcing across Passaic County.

Six Dimensions Check!

Utilization



NUTRITION-FOCUSED GRANT OPPORTUNITIES



Create or promote **grant programs** that help pantries:

- Purchase **refrigeration** and **storage** equipment for perishable items.
- Offset costs of sourcing healthier foods.
- Pilot **innovative** programs like Produce Prescription or healthy meal kits.
- These grants can be tied to **measurable** outcomes such as increased distribution of fresh produce or improved client health indicators.

CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE FOOD SOURCING



Work with community leaders and cultural organizations to identify **dietary preferences** and traditions. Passaic County can:

- Develop a **culturally** appropriate food sourcing guide.
- Include **diverse** grains, spices, and proteins in bulk purchasing programs.
- Host **listening sessions** to ensure food offerings reflect community needs.
- Conduct community culturally preferred foods **surveys**.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Passaic County will create a **collaborative** Emergency Food Distribution Response Plan with EFPC members. An Emergency Food Distribution Response Plan for the county will aid in ensuring an **organized response** to a food emergency/crisis. This can be modeled after a combination of disaster crisis response and Code Blue Alerts where key partners, volunteer staff, resources, standard guidelines and protocol, and communication tools are designed and identified in **advance**, and an **MOU** is created for designated food distribution sites for implementation to disseminate supplies for basic necessities across the county if/when an **emergency arises**.

Six Dimensions Check!

Sustainability



Partner Pantries

Establish a **cohort** of Passaic County emergency response pantries:

- Create an **MOU** with each pantry.
- **Identify** each pantries storage capacity, people served numbers, number of staff and/or volunteers, distribution capability, preferred

food items and delivery preferences.

- Provide **support** with placing food orders as needed.
- Provide **requirements** for reporting.
- Share recommendations for crisis response **best practices**.

Accessible Distribution Sites

Emergency food distribution sites must be planned to meet the diverse, regional needs of the county.

- Location sites should be **identified** utilizing **location data** from the county's Food Access Map, the NJ Food Insecurity Index, and census tract data.
- Locations must be **accessible** local proximities to up- and down-county residents.
- Transportation access must be **factored** into site selection.
 - Ensure that sites can be accessed by public transportation or on foot where access to a personal vehicle is limited.
- Accessibility solutions must be planned to **meet the needs** of residents who have mobility issues or are home-bound.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Data Collection and Sharing

Establish a **uniform** format for **reporting** data to the **county** and the **state** for responding to an emergency.

A uniform data collection and reporting protocol for emergency response will aid in identifying **need** and **service gaps** throughout the county.

- Sharing data about **free school meals** enrollment throughout the county.
 - Aids in understanding when emergency food distribution times and locations are **compatible** with the schedules of families.
 - Aids in determining the **type** of distribution needs; i.e., is the distribution sufficient enough to supplement if school meals are missed if schools are closed.
- Collect data on **changes** in service **levels** for pantries.
 - Increased number of client visits;
 - Increased number of calls from clients seeking information or assistance;
 - Increased number of first-time clients.

Multi-lingual Communication

All communications must be designed and distributed in **both** English and Spanish, at a minimum.

- Design **templates** for files in advance as part of the Emergency

Food Distribution Response Plan to allow for creating multi-lingual documents, quickly.

Distribution Event Registration

Create detailed plans and templates for emergency distribution event registration and queuing processes according to the type of emergency response.

- For disasters that impact **all** residents in the county, a specific municipality, or a specific neighborhood (i.e., flooding, Hurricane Sandy, COVID-19) event registration **may not** be necessary if all residents will be served.
- For disasters that impact a **specific** sub-population within the county (i.e., the SNAP Benefits Delay in 2025) an emergency distribution event **may require preregistration** to **verify** that the individual is impacted by the specific type of disaster and should be served.
- Create a **digital check-in** process that can serve hundreds of residents within a small window of time.
 - Create a simple check-in process utilizing a free, online ticketing system such as Eventbrite to **scan QR codes** instead of conducting manual check-in processes.
 - Create **multiple** check-in stations, for both **drive-up** and **walk-up** service.
 - Designate **separate** stations for emergency supply **hand-off** after completing the check-in step.

ENHANCED COLLABORATION

Collaboration among emergency food providers and community organizations is **vital** for building a **resilient** and **equitable** food system. This section outlines the **benefits** and **strategies** for enhanced collaboration.

Six Dimensions Check!

Agency



Formalize the Passaic County Emergency Food Provider Coalition

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish regular meetings for providers to share updates, challenges, and best practices. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create working groups focused on logistics, outreach, SNAP enrollment, and food rescue. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a shared mission and goals to guide collaborative efforts. |
|---|--|--|

Launch a Mini-Grant Program for Wrap Around Service Enrollment Events

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide grants to pantries that partner with high-capacity organizations (e.g., CUMAC) to host SNAP enrollment events. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cover costs for staffing, outreach materials, technology, and setup. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize events during high-traffic distribution times and offer recurring sessions. |
|--|---|---|

Strengthen Event Infrastructure and Outreach

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure private or semi-private spaces for application assistance with digital tools (e.g., tablets/laptops). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote events through flyers, social media, radio, and listings on the Food Access Map. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide multilingual materials to reach diverse communities. |
|---|---|---|

ENHANCED COLLABORATION

Facilitate Data Sharing and Impact Evaluation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require grantees to report monthly on participation, applications, and demographics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use data to evaluate program effectiveness and identify gaps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share insights across the coalition to inform future planning.

Support Provider Capacity and Recognition		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer training on SNAP navigation, event planning, and data collection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate SNAP event guidance into the county's Best Practices Guide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize high-performing providers in county communications and offer continued funding.