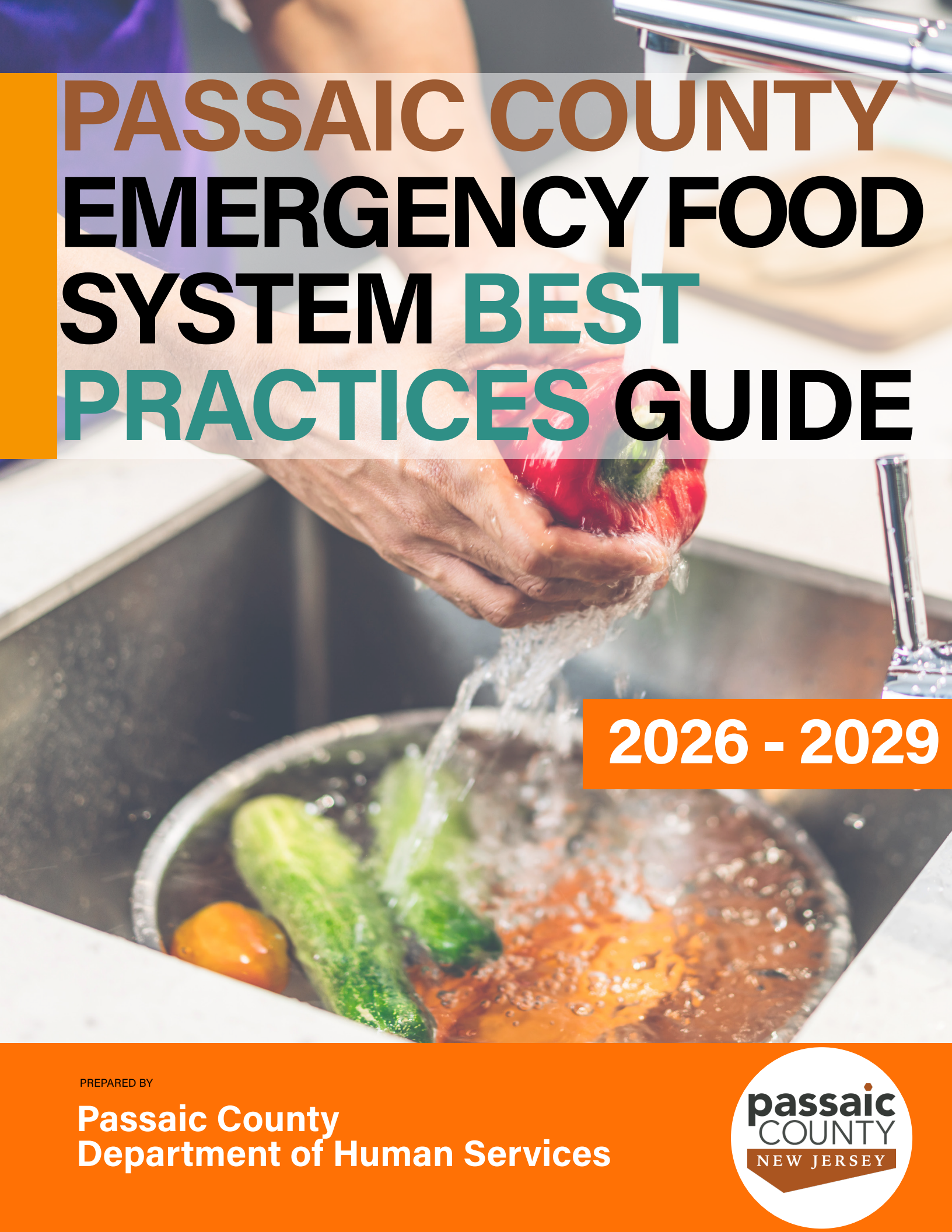


A close-up photograph of a person's hands washing vegetables in a stainless steel kitchen sink. Water is running from a chrome faucet onto a red bell pepper held in the person's right hand. In the sink, there are also green cucumbers and a tomato. The background is slightly blurred, showing a wooden cutting board and a white countertop.

PASSAIC COUNTY EMERGENCY FOOD SYSTEM BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

2026 - 2029

PREPARED BY

**Passaic County
Department of Human Services**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This overview outlines **essential practices** and **recommendations** for the management of emergency feeding programs. The guide focuses on **food safety, distribution, volunteer coordination, collaboration, and resource management**.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



Sustainable sourcing and funding are vital:

- **Food Sources:** Leverage partnerships with food banks, farms, and retailers.
- **Grant Funding:** Identify and apply for grants to support operations.
- **Fundraising:** Organize events to raise funds and awareness. Use data and personalization to increase donations.
- **Logistics:** Transporting and storing food.

COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS



Strategic partnerships enhance program reach and efficiency:

- **Operational Coordination:** Stagger distribution hours and exchange volunteers with nearby programs.
- **Shared Resources:** Collaborate on food storage, referrals, and grant applications.

DISTRIBUTION & CLIENT MANAGEMENT



Efficient distribution and positive client experiences are critical:

- **Client management:** Use data and online management tools to ensure effective operations and customer service.
- **Nutrition Promotion:** Prioritize healthy culturally preferred food sourcing and promote nutritious choices through demos and displays.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DISTRIBUTION & CLIENT MANAGEMENT CONTINUED



Efficient distribution and positive client experiences are critical:

- **Client Choice Models:** Implement appropriate models (e.g., supermarket, table, walk-thru) based on pantry needs.
- **Line Management:** Use designated managers, partitions, and clear rules to manage client flow.
- **Special Pantries:** Pantries that serve specific populations, such as college students or the elderly, may have unique needs.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT



Effective volunteer management ensures a positive experience for everyone involved:

- **Recruitment:** Leverage community and digital outreach opportunities.
- **Applications & Onboarding:** Use a standardized application and onboarding process.
- **Role Development & Resolution:** Define clear roles and establish conflict resolution protocols.
- **Recognition:** Acknowledge and celebrate volunteers.

FOOD SAFETY & HANDLING



Food safety must be prioritized:

- **Storage:** Follow appropriate dry food and cold food storage protocols.
- **Equipment:** Utilize chest freezers, commercial upright refrigerators or freezers, walk-in coolers or freezers, shelving units, dunnage racks, food storage bins, hydraulic pallet jacks, and/or flatbed carts.
- **Pest Control:** Maintain clean spaces and schedule regular pest control inspections and treatments.
- **Prevent Foodborne Illness:** Practice good hygiene and monitor food temperatures.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Overview

This Emergency Food System Best Practices Guide is meant to be used by any emergency food provider that serves residents of Passaic County, NJ.

Sections Organized by Color

The guide is divided into five main sections. Each section has a unique color for categorization.

- Yellow = Resource Management
- Green = Collaboration & Partnerships
- Red = Distribution & Client Management
- Blue = Volunteer Management
- Purple = Food Safety & Handling

Website Links Appendix

All underlined text is hyperlinked. All hyperlinks are also numbered in the order they appear in text (e.g., L1, L2, etc.). At the end of the document, you will find a list of all website links referenced in this guide, listed in the order they appeared in text and grouped by section.

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide and serve our community.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

01

Food Sources

Effective pantry resource management involves building strong partnerships, maintaining consistent food supply, and ensuring safe, efficient operations. Below are key strategies for sourcing food and managing relationships with major food providers:

Community Food Bank of New Jersey (CFBNJ)

CFBNJ is the largest anti-hunger and anti-poverty organization in New Jersey. Emergency food pantries can obtain donated food through several avenues:

Become a Partner Agency: Pantries must apply to become a CFBNJ partner. This includes meeting food safety standards and demonstrating community need.

Retail Food Donation Program: CFBNJ connects pantries with local retailers for regular pickups of surplus food.

Host Food Drives: Pantries can organize food drives in collaboration with CFBNJ to collect shelf-stable items.

Growing Healthy Pantries: Pantries can access this free online toolkit that breaks down operational best practices. Visit growinghealthypantries.com^{L1} to learn more.

Contact CFBNJ: Visit cfbnj.org^{L2} to apply or learn more.

Table to Table

Table to Table is New Jersey's first and largest food rescue nonprofit, serving Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, and Passaic counties.

Agency Partnership: Pantries can apply to become one of Table to Table's 300+ community partners to receive free deliveries of fresh, nutritious food.

I-Rescue App: This app mobilizes volunteers to pick up and deliver surplus food from supermarkets, farms, restaurants, and caterers.

No Cost: Table to Table provides food at no charge to its partners.

Contact & Apply: Visit tabletotable.org^{L3} to become a partner or learn more.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Local Retailers

Retailers such as supermarkets, grocery stores, and convenience chains can be excellent sources of donated food, including fresh produce, dairy, baked goods, and shelf-stable items. Building strong relationships is key to securing consistent donations.

Best Practices for Locating Retail Partners

Start Local

Identify nearby stores such as ShopRite, Stop & Shop, Whole Foods, Trader Joe's, and independent grocers.

Use Online Tools

Platforms like Table to Table's iRescue App can help match pantries with retailers offering surplus food.

Network with Other Pantries

Ask neighboring organizations which retailers they work with and if they can make introductions.

Check Corporate Programs

Many chains have formal donation programs—check their websites or corporate social responsibility pages.

Wholesale Vendors

For the best pricing when funding permits purchase from wholesale food vendors such as, Driscoll Foods, Riviera Produce, Ace Endico and Baldor Foods are some examples.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Tips for Building Relationships with Retail Partners

Approach Store Managers Directly

Visit in person during non-peak hours and bring a one-page overview of your pantry's mission and impact.

Offer Consistency

Provide a reliable pickup schedule and ensure volunteers are trained in food safety.

Follow Up Professionally

Send thank-you notes, share impact stories, and invite retailers to events or volunteer days.

Stay Compliant

Ensure that you follow all food safety and liability guidelines (e.g., Good Samaritan Food Donation Act).

Highlight Mutual Benefits

Emphasize tax deductions, reduced food waste, and positive community impact.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

02

Grants

Securing sustainable funding is essential for emergency food pantries to meet growing community needs and maintain operations. In New Jersey, pantries have access to a variety of grant opportunities from federal, state, and private sources. This section provides practical recommendations for locating and applying for grants, tips for writing compelling proposals, and summaries of key initiatives—such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s partnership with FRAC, the New Jersey Food Security Initiative, and the Rutgers REACH Program—that support food access and community health.

Where to Find Grants			
Federal Sources	State & Local Sources	Private Foundations	Online Grant Portals
• USDA's Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) • Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) • FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP)	• NJ Department of Agriculture • NJ Office of Food Security • County-level health and human services departments	• Robert Wood Johnson Foundation • Community Foundation of New Jersey • Healthcare and corporate foundations (e.g., Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield)	• <u>New Jersey Office of the Food Security Advocate</u>^{L4} • <u>Grants.gov</u>^{L5} • <u>Candid.org</u>^{L6} • <u>Foundation Directory Online</u>^{L7}

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Key Grant Supported Initiatives	
<u>Robert Wood Johnson Foundation & Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)^{L8}</u>	<u>New Jersey Food Security Initiative (NJFSI)^{L9}</u>
RWJF funded FRAC's New Jersey Food Security Initiative (NJFSI) is a grant to combat food insecurity and health inequity. The initiative: • Supports community-based solutions • Enhances cross-sector coordination • Expands access to federal nutrition programs • Prioritizes client-centered communication	NJFSI is a three-year collaborative effort led by FRAC and funded by RWJF. It aims to: • Increase food security and nutrition • Boost equitable access to healthier food • Expand community purchasing power • Provide funding, technical assistance, and infrastructure support to local organizations
<u>Rutgers REACH Program^{L10}</u>	<u>Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GUSNIP)^{L11}</u>
The Rutgers Equity Alliance for Community Health (REACH) focuses on improving health outcomes in Camden, Newark, and New Brunswick. Funded by RWJF and Rutgers University, REACH: • Addresses social determinants of health including food access • Combines community wisdom with academic research • Offers grant opportunities and collaborative learning tables • Supports scalable, community-led solutions to health disparities	GUSNIP is a USDA-funded initiative that supports nutrition incentive programs to help low-income individuals purchase more fruits and vegetables. Pantries can apply for GUSNIP funding to expand access to fresh produce and improve community health outcomes. Administered through the Nutrition Incentive Hub, GUSNIP: • Provides grants to organizations offering SNAP incentives at farmers markets, grocery stores, and pantries • Supports infrastructure development, outreach, and evaluation • Encourages partnerships between pantries, healthcare providers, and local food systems

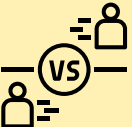
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

03

Fundraising

Fundraising is essential for sustaining pantry operations, expanding services, and meeting growing community needs. Successful fundraising combines creativity, community engagement, and strategic storytelling.

Fundraising Ideas for Food Pantries

	Adopt-a-Shelf	Creative Drives
	Donors sponsor a pantry shelf for a month.	
	Holiday Drives	
	Tie fundraising to Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Back-to-School seasons.	
	Matching Gifts	
	Encourage donors to double their impact through employer match programs.	
	Custom Drives	
	Create curated events for local small business and corporate partners. Some examples include: • Competitive events: department vs. department or business vs. business to see who can raise the most monetary or food donations. • Sponsored events: partners pay to host an event at their location where their employees pack pantry bags.	

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

	Galas & Dinners	Community Events
	Host themed dinners with local chefs or community leaders. Include silent auctions or raffles.	
	5k Runs/Walks	
	Organize a “Run to End Hunger” in a local park. Offer sponsorship opportunities and branded merchandise.	
	Fun Events	
	Karaoke Nights: Partner with local bars or community centers.	
	Bowling Tournaments: Engage families and youth groups. Dance Parties or Game Nights: Great for younger audiences and college campuses.	

	Social Media	Digital Campaigns
	Use platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to share stories and donation links. Create hashtags like #FeedNJ or #PantryPower to build momentum.	
	Email	
	Send monthly newsletters with impact stories and donation appeals. Use platforms like Mailchimp or Constant Contact to manage lists and track engagement.	
	Crowdfunding	
	Launch campaigns on GoFundMe, Givebutter, or Classy with clear goals and visuals.	

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Data Driven Storytelling

Data helps donors understand the scale, impact, and urgency of your work. When paired with personal stories, it becomes a powerful fundraising tool.

Using Data to Tell the Story

VISUALIZE IMPACT



Share infographics and charts showing meals distributed, families served, and volunteer hours.

TRACK & SHARE PROGRESS



Regularly update supporters on goals met and future needs.

DEMONSTRATE OUTCOMES



Highlight improvements in food access, health, and community well-being.

IMPACT PASSAIC



For local data you can use Impact Passaic.

Tips for Using Data Effectively

HUMANIZE THE NUMBERS



Pair stats with real stories (e.g., “Last month, we served 300 families—including Maria, a single mother who now has fresh produce for her children.”)

INCLUDE TESTIMONIALS



Quotes from clients, volunteers, and donors add authenticity and emotional connection.

USE BEFORE & AFTER COMPARISONS



Demonstrate how donations directly change lives (e.g., pantry expansion, new refrigeration, more nutritious options).

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

04

Logistics

Efficient pantry operations rely on having the right vehicles to ensure timely and safe food rescue and delivery. Cargo vans work well for neighborhood routes, while box trucks handle larger pantry distributions, and refrigerated vehicles are essential for transporting perishable items. By planning for leasing options, securing proper insurance, and budgeting for maintenance, pantries can keep deliveries consistent and cost-effective.

Vehicles for Food Delivery

Cargo Vans	Box Trucks (Straight Trucks)	Refrigerated Vans/ Trucks
Ideal for small to medium loads and urban routes.	Suitable for larger deliveries and bulk pickups.	Necessary for transporting perishable or frozen items.

Covering Costs

Leasing Options	Insurance	Maintenance & Repairs
• Consider short-term leases for seasonal needs or pilot programs. • Explore nonprofit leasing programs or cooperative vehicle sharing.	• Work with brokers who specialize in nonprofit or fleet insurance. • Bundle vehicle and general liability insurance for cost savings.	• Budget for routine maintenance (oil changes, tire rotations). • Partner with local mechanics or vocational schools for discounted services. • Apply for grants that cover capital expenses (e.g., USDA Community Facilities Program).

COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS

01

Collaboration & Shared Resources

Strategic collaboration between emergency food pantries and other organizations strengthens community impact, improves resource efficiency, and enhances client services. Building strong partnerships helps ensure that food assistance is accessible, consistent, and sustainable. This section suggests ways to partner with other organizations.

Coordinate Hours of Operation	
	• Work with nearby pantries and feeding programs to stagger distribution times. • Avoid overlapping service hours to reduce client congestion and allow clients to access multiple resources. • Share schedules with community partners and post them publicly for client awareness.

Volunteer Exchange	
	• Collaborate with other programs to share volunteer pools, especially during peak distribution times. • Create a shared calendar or communication channel to coordinate volunteer needs and availability. • Offer cross-training opportunities to build a flexible and skilled volunteer base.

COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS

	Joint Grant Applications • Partner with other emergency food providers to apply for collaborative funding opportunities. • Highlight shared goals, community impact, and resource-sharing strategies in grant proposals. • Pool administrative resources to streamline the application process and reporting requirements. • Attend annual grant writing technical assistance workshops through the Passaic County Department of Human Services.
	Share Food and Storage Resources • Exchange surplus food items with nearby pantries to reduce waste and meet diverse client needs. • Share storage space when possible, especially for bulk donations or temperature-sensitive items. • Use shared inventory systems or communication tools to track available resources.
	Client Referrals • Refer clients to partner organizations for additional services such as housing, employment, or health care. • Maintain a list of trusted referral partners and provide printed or digital resource guides. • Ensure referrals are made respectfully and with the client's consent. • Search for needed services for clients through the Find Help^{L12} website.

DISTRIBUTION & CLIENT MANAGEMENT

01

Client Management

Effective client management ensures that emergency food pantries operate smoothly, maintain funding, and provide a respectful, dignified experience for all clients.



Client Relationship Management (CRM) Tools

- Use CRM platforms to track client visits, needs, and eligibility.
- Recommended tools include Plentiful, Oasis, and PantrySoft, Pantry Manager by SoxBox. Virtual tours and demos can be scheduled via the platform websites.
- Ensure systems are secure, user-friendly, and compliant with data privacy regulations.



Data Collection

- Collect essential data such as household size, income level, zip code, and dietary needs.
- Use digital forms or tablets to streamline intake and reduce errors.
- Train volunteers and staff on respectful data collection practices.



Data Sharing

- Share anonymized data with funders to demonstrate impact and support funding renewals.
- Use dashboards or reports to highlight service trends, demographics, and outcomes.
- Ensure clients are informed about how their data is used and protected.

DISTRIBUTION & CLIENT MANAGEMENT

	Customer Service
	• Greet clients warmly and respectfully. • Provide clear signage and instructions to reduce confusion. • Offer incentives like recipe cards, nutrition tips, or small giveaways to enhance the experience.
	Conflict Resolution
	• Train staff and volunteers in de-escalation techniques. • Designate a point person to handle client concerns or disputes. • Use calm, empathetic communication and offer private spaces for sensitive conversations.
	Trauma-Informed Client Interaction
	Create a Safe and Welcoming Environment: • Greet clients warmly and respectfully. • Use clear signage and simple instructions to reduce confusion and anxiety. • Ensure the physical space is clean, accessible, and organized to promote a sense of safety. Empower Client Choice and Autonomy: • Offer client choice models that allow individuals to select foods that meet their needs. • Avoid making assumptions about what clients “<i>should</i>” want or need. • Provide information and options without pressure, reinforcing that clients are in control of their choices.

DISTRIBUTION & CLIENT MANAGEMENT

	Trauma-Informed Client Interaction Continued
	Train Staff and Volunteers on Empathetic Communication: • Educate team members on trauma-informed principles such as safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. • Encourage active listening, patience, and nonjudgmental responses. • Use inclusive language and avoid stigmatizing terms or tones. Conduct Customer Satisfaction Surveys: • Develop survey rationale and identify the desired number of responses. • Ensure surveys do not exceed 5-10 questions. • Designate a theme for the survey. Customer service, food preferences and non-food-related needs are examples of survey themes. • Use digital tools such as Google Forms and Survey Monkey. Most digital form tools can automatically generate result analysis. • Survey clients while they are at the pantry. This allows staff to explain the survey process and assist clients with submission. • Review survey results and use the feedback to implement informed improvements at the pantry.

DISTRIBUTION & CLIENT MANAGEMENT

02

Nutrition Promotion

Promoting nutrition in emergency food pantries helps clients make healthier choices and supports long-term wellness. Food pantries can play a vital role in addressing food insecurity while encouraging nutritious eating habits.

Nutrition Policy	Sourcing Healthy Foods	Promotion Strategies
• Develop a written nutrition policy that outlines the pantry's commitment to offering healthy foods. • Include guidelines for prioritizing whole grains, lean proteins, low-sodium items, and fresh produce. • Share the policy with staff, volunteers, and donors to align sourcing and distribution practices.	• Partner with local farms, food banks, and retailers to source fresh fruits and vegetables. • Prioritize donations of low-sugar, low-sodium, and nutrient-dense items. • Use grant funding to purchase healthy staples like whole grains, legumes, and dairy alternatives. • Prioritize culturally preferred foods when ordering from vendors and sourcing donations.	• Display healthy items prominently and use signage to highlight their benefits. • Share simple, budget-friendly recipes using pantry ingredients. • Host cooking demonstrations or tastings to introduce clients to new foods. • Use posters, flyers, and social media to promote nutrition tips and healthy eating habits.

Suggested Guidelines

Healthy Eating Research has nutrition guidelines for ranking charitable food. They categorize different types of food as "Choose Often," "Choose Sometimes," and "Choose Rarely" based on sodium, added sugar, and saturated fat content. These guidelines have been adopted by CFBNJ and Feeding America, and could be used to drive pantries' nutrition policies. View the full chart at [HER](#)^{L13}.

DISTRIBUTION & CLIENT MANAGEMENT

SNAP Resources

SNAP Eligibility^{L14}

- Income Requirements
- Minimum Payments
- Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities
- College Students
- Work Requirements

SNAP Application Process^{L15}

- Application^{L16}
- Application Overview - English^{L17}
- Application Overview - Spanish^{L18}
- Ways to Apply^{L19}

Using SNAP Benefits^{L20}

- Retail locator^{L21}
- Stores that accept SNAP^{L22}
- SNAP Brochure - English^{L23}
- SNAP Brochure - Spanish^{L24}
- Connect EBT App
- Stolen Benefits

Staying on SNAP^{L25}

- Work requirements
- ABAWD (able bodied adult without dependents) Rules^{L26}
- SNAP Employment and Training Program
- Reporting a change
- Recertification

Summer EBT Tool-Kit^{L27}

DISTRIBUTION & CLIENT MANAGEMENT

03

Client Choice

Implementing a client choice model in food pantries empowers individuals to select foods that best meet their household's needs, promotes dignity, and reduces food waste. There are several models to choose from depending on space, staffing, and inventory.

Client Choice Styles	
Supermarket Model	Walk-Thru Model
• Clients “shop” for pantry items using a point system based on household size. Volunteers assist during selection and checkout. • Best for pantries with permanent shelving and dedicated space.	• Clients move through the pantry storage area and receive selected items from volunteers stationed at each section. • Best for pantries with permanent shelving and dedicated space.
Table-Top Model	Inventory List Model
• Food is displayed on tables, and volunteers distribute items to clients. • Best for pantries with permanent shelving and dedicated space.	• Clients choose items from a printed or digital menu, and volunteers pack bags accordingly. • Best for pantries with limited space but a desire to offer choice.

DISTRIBUTION & CLIENT MANAGEMENT

Client Choice Implementation Factors

Distribution Space

Assess the size, layout, and accessibility of the space. Consider how many people can be accommodated safely and comfortably during distribution.

Volunteer Roles

Assign volunteers to manage line flow, assist clients, restock items, and clean up. Volunteers may rotate or hold multiple roles.

Inventory Management

Offer variety (2–3 options per category), track popular items to guide future sourcing, and prioritize fresh food when possible.

Food Waste Reduction

Allowing clients to choose helps prevent unwanted items from being discarded, ensuring food goes to those who will use it.

Dignity & Respect

Client choice reduces stigma and promotes autonomy, allowing individuals to select foods that align with their preferences and dietary needs.

DISTRIBUTION & CLIENT MANAGEMENT

04

Line Management

Effective line management ensures that pantry operations run smoothly, safely, and respectfully. A well-managed line helps reduce stress for clients, maintain order, and create a more dignified experience.



Designate a Line Manager

- Assign a trained volunteer or staff member to oversee the line during distribution.
- The line manager should greet clients, answer questions, and monitor flow.
- This role helps prevent confusion and ensures that any issues are addressed promptly.



Use Partitions and Clear Signage

- Set up physical partitions or barriers to guide the line and prevent crowding.
- Use signs to indicate where clients should stand, wait, and move next.
- Ensure accessibility for individuals with disabilities, seniors, and families with children.



Establish and Communicate Line Rules

- Create simple, respectful rules for line behavior (e.g., no cutting, maintain personal space).
- Post rules visibly and review them with volunteers before distribution begins.

DISTRIBUTION & CLIENT MANAGEMENT

05

Special Pantries

Some pantries only serve a specific population. This section highlights campus pantries and senior centers.

Campus Pantries - Sourcing Food

Campus pantries can source food through a mix of donations, partnerships, and purchases:

Local Food Banks

Partner with organizations like the Community FoodBank of New Jersey or Table to Table for regular donations.

Retail Partnerships

Build relationships with nearby grocery stores and convenience shops for surplus or near-expiry items.

Campus Dining Services

Coordinate with dining halls to rescue surplus food.

Farmers Markets & Local Farms

Reach out to vendors for unsold produce donations.

Student & Faculty Food Drives

Host themed drives (e.g., “Cans for Finals”) to engage the campus community.

Online Platforms

Use tools like MealConnect or Food Rescue US to find donation opportunities.

DISTRIBUTION & CLIENT MANAGEMENT

Campus Pantries - Managing Volunteers

Volunteers are essential to pantry operations. Here's how to recruit and retain them:

Offer Incentives	Build a Culture	Create a Schedule
Provide service hours, certificates, or leadership opportunities.	Host appreciation events and encourage feedback to foster community.	Use tools like SignUpGenius or Google Sheets to manage shifts.
Train Thoroughly	Recruit from Student Organizations	
Cover food safety, confidentiality, and intake procedures.	Partner with service clubs, fraternities/sororities, and honor societies.	

Campus Pantries - Intake Process

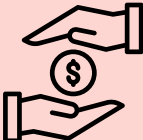
A respectful and efficient intake process ensures dignity and accurate tracking:

Confidentiality First	Track Usage	Client Choice Model
Avoid asking for unnecessary personal information. Use student ID numbers if needed.	Use simple databases or spreadsheets to monitor inventory and visits (while protecting privacy).	Let students choose their items to reduce waste and increase satisfaction.
Online Pre-Registration	Feedback Loop	
Allow students to sign up or schedule visits online to reduce wait times.	Provide anonymous surveys to improve services.	

DISTRIBUTION & CLIENT MANAGEMENT

Campus Pantries - Funding

Securing funding is key to sustainability. Consider these strategies:

	University Support • Request funding from student affairs, health services, or diversity offices.
	Grants • Apply for campus-specific grants (e.g., student wellness or basic needs initiatives). • Seek external grants from organizations like the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation or NJ Food Security Initiative.
	Fundraisers • Host events like bake sales, trivia nights, or donation drives. • Collaborate with student groups for themed events (e.g., “Empty Bowls”).
	Alumni & Faculty Giving • Create a donation page and share pantry impact stories.
	Corporate Sponsorships • Partner with local businesses for recurring support or one-time donations.

DISTRIBUTION & CLIENT MANAGEMENT

Senior Centers - Sourcing Food

Seniors often have specific dietary needs, so sourcing nutritious, low-sodium, and easy-to-prepare foods is essential.

Local Food Banks

Partner with organizations like the Community FoodBank of New Jersey for regular deliveries of shelf-stable and fresh items.

Retail Partnerships

Build relationships with nearby grocery stores and pharmacies for donations of senior-friendly items (e.g., low-sugar snacks, nutritional drinks).

Community Drives

Host food drives with themes like “Healthy Aging” to collect appropriate items.

Meal Delivery Services

Collaborate with services like Meals on Wheels for surplus or packaged meals.

Farmers Markets & Local Farms

Source fresh produce and eggs through donation agreements or gleaning programs.

DISTRIBUTION & CLIENT MANAGEMENT

Senior Centers - Managing Volunteers

Volunteers are essential to pantry operations. Here's how to recruit and retain them:

Recruit Locally

Engage retirees, faith groups, and high school students seeking service hours.

Create Roles

Assign volunteers to intake, stocking, delivery, and companionship roles.

Recognize Contributions

Host appreciation luncheons or give small thank-you gifts.

Train for Senior Sensitivity

Include training on mobility assistance, respectful communication, and dietary awareness.

Use Scheduling Tools

Include training on mobility assistance, respectful communication, and dietary awareness.

Senior Centers - Intake Process

A respectful and efficient intake process ensures dignity and accurate tracking:

Simplify Forms

Use large print and minimal fields. Offer assistance with filling out forms.

Respect Privacy

Avoid asking for sensitive information unless required for eligibility.

Track Preferences

Maintain records of dietary restrictions or preferred items.

Offer Delivery Options

For seniors with mobility issues, provide home delivery or curbside pickup.

Provide Support

Offer referrals to SNAP, senior nutrition programs, or health services.

DISTRIBUTION & CLIENT MANAGEMENT

Senior Centers - Funding the Pantry

Funding is crucial to sustain operations and meet the unique needs of seniors.



Government Programs

- Apply for support through Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs.
- Seek funding from Area Agencies on Aging (AAA).



Grants

- Look for grants focused on senior wellness, food security, and aging in place.
- Consider applying to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation or New Jersey Food Security Initiative.



Fundraisers

- Host community events like bingo nights, pancake breakfasts, or raffles.
- Partner with local businesses for sponsorships or donation matching.



In-Kind Donations

- Request donations of mobility aids, reusable grocery bags, or hygiene products.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

01

Volunteer Management

Volunteers are essential to the success of emergency food pantries. Effective volunteer management ensures a positive experience for volunteers and supports smooth pantry operations.

Volunteer Recruitment	
	Community Outreach:
	• Engage local businesses, schools, and community organizations. • Recruit directly from the pantry line when appropriate.
	Group Events:
	• Host fun volunteer events like 5K runs, karaoke nights, or corporate team-building experiences.
	Digital Outreach:
	• Promote volunteer opportunities via your website, social media, LinkedIn, and online platforms like Charity Quest and Hunger Free NJ.

Volunteer Applications	
	Applications help match volunteers to appropriate roles and set clear expectations.
	• Use a volunteer application to gather contact information, availability, and skills.
	• Include details about the pantry's mission, role expectations (e.g., customer service, lifting requirements), and time commitments.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

	Orientation & Onboarding • Provide a structured orientation for every volunteer. • Cover the pantry's mission, role assignments, point-of-contact for questions, and location of restrooms and break areas. • Ensure volunteers feel welcomed, informed, and prepared.
	Role Development • Create clear position descriptions for each volunteer role. • Include responsibilities, physical requirements, and time expectations. • Rotate roles when possible to keep volunteers engaged and cross-trained.
	Conflict Resolution • Establish protocols for resolving volunteer disputes or misunderstandings. • Train staff in conflict de-escalation and empathetic communication. • Encourage open dialogue and provide a safe space for feedback.
	Volunteer Recognition • Show appreciation through verbal acknowledgments, thank-you cards, certificates, gift cards, or stipends. • Host recognition events like luncheons or social media spotlights. • Celebrate milestones and contributions regularly to boost morale and retention.

FOOD SAFETY & HANDLING

01

Food Storage & Equipment

Proper storage and equipment practices are essential for maintaining food safety and quality. This includes discarding dented cans, monitoring food dates, and using National Sanitation Foundation-approved shelving and clean, functional equipment.

General Guidelines

Food Dates		
Sell By	Use By/ Best By	Expiration Date
For inventory management, not safety.	Indicates peak quality, not necessarily safety.	Do not distribute past this date.

Dented Cans
Discard cans with deep dents, especially near seams or lids, as they may compromise food safety.

Equipment
Use NSF-approved shelving, maintain refrigeration units, and ensure pallet jacks are clean and functional.

Security of Stored Foods
Lock storage areas when not in use, limit access to authorized personnel, and use surveillance or inventory tracking systems if feasible.

FOOD SAFETY & HANDLING

Pest Control			
Cleaning	Harborage Prevention	Professional Services	Building Out
Clean spills immediately, sanitize surfaces, and remove waste daily.	Eliminate clutter, seal cracks, and keep storage areas dry.	Schedule regular pest control inspections and treatments.	Install door sweeps, seal entry points, and use air curtains or screens to prevent pest entry.

Guidelines for Dry Food

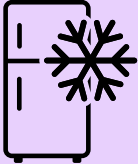
	Dry Food Storage
	• Store dry goods in cool, dry, well-ventilated areas. • Store food at least 6 inches off the floor and 18 inches from the ceiling. • Label and rotate stock using FIFO (First In, First Out). • Maintain a clean, pest-free environment. • Monitor humidity and temperature to prevent spoilage.

	Dry Storage Equipment
	• Shelving Units: Use NSF-certified, adjustable metal shelves for durability and sanitation. • Dunnage Racks: Keep food off the floor to meet health codes. • Food Storage Bins: Use airtight, food-grade containers for grains, pasta, and bulk items. • Hydraulic Pallet Jacks: Essential for moving heavy pallets safely. • Flatbed Carts: Useful for transporting boxes and bags within the pantry.

FOOD SAFETY & HANDLING

Guidelines for Cold Food

	Cold Food Storage
	• Temperature Guidelines: ▪ Refrigerated foods: ≤ 40°F (4°C) ▪ Frozen foods: ≤ 0°F (-18°C) • Thawing: Never thaw foods at room temperature. Use refrigeration or cold running water. • Temperature Logs: Maintain daily logs for all cold storage units to ensure compliance and identify issues early. • Use alarms and temperature logs to ensure food safety. • Organize using FIFO (First In, First Out) to reduce waste. • Label all items with received and expiration dates.

	Cold Storage Equipment
	• Chest Freezers: Affordable and energy-efficient; ideal for frozen meats and produce. • Commercial Upright Refrigerators/Freezers: ▪ Single-Door Units: Good for limited space. ▪ Double-Door Units: Offer more capacity and visibility. • Walk-In Coolers/Freezers: Best for high-volume pantries or shared storage hubs. Require professional installation and temperature monitoring systems.

FOOD SAFETY & HANDLING

02

Hygiene & Illness

By following guidelines for hand hygiene and preventing foodborne illness, organizations can avoid contamination and ensure safe food distribution.

Preventing Foodborne Illness

Norovirus

- Highly contagious virus that can cause serious illness
- Spreads through contaminated food and water, or close contact with infected individuals

Hand Hygiene

- Ensure all staff and volunteers wash hands thoroughly before handling food.

Time-Temperature Control

- Avoid leaving perishable items in the temperature danger zone (40°F–140°F).
- Use thermometers to monitor food temperatures.

Illness Protocols

- Team members showing symptoms of foodborne illness (vomiting, diarrhea, fever) should not handle food and must follow return-to-work guidelines.

FOOD SAFETY & HANDLING

Handwashing

Handwashing is one of the most effective defenses against foodborne illness. It prevents the transfer of harmful bacteria and viruses from hands to food, surfaces, and equipment.

	When to Wash Hands
	• Before handling any food • After using the restroom • After touching garbage or cleaning supplies • After coughing, sneezing, or touching the face • After handling raw meat, poultry, or seafood • After eating, drinking, or smoking • After touching money or client documents

	Steps for Proper Handwashing
	• Wet hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), and apply soap. • Lather by rubbing hands together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of hands, between fingers, and under nails. • Scrub for at least 20 seconds. (Tip: Hum the “Happy Birthday” song twice.) • Rinse hands well under clean, running water. • Dry hands using a clean towel or air dryer.

	Additional Tips
	• Use hand sanitizer only when soap and water are not available. It must contain at least 60% alcohol. • Post handwashing signs near sinks and food prep areas. • Provide adequate supplies: soap, paper towels, and handwashing stations.

WRAPAROUND SERVICES

Community Services	
NJ211	
NJ211 is a nonprofit organization that provides the 211 Service to the residents of New Jersey.	Website: https://nj211.org/get-help Call: 211 or 1-877-652-1148 Text: Text your ZIP code to 898-211
FindHelp	
Search for needed services in Passaic County such as medical care, mental health and substance abuse treatment, housing, food, job training, and legal services.	Website: https://help.impactpassaic.com
Passaic County Board of Social Services	
Assists in determining eligibility on federal and state assistance programs.	Website: https://pcbss.org/ Call: 973-881-0100
Paratransit	
Provides free transportation for the county's senior citizens and disabled residents.	Schedule a ride: https://tinyurl.com/ycxnzfc2
EZ Ride	
Provides free transportation services for career and employment-related needs to Passaic County residents who are current or post-TANF recipients.	Call for approval: 973-881-2895
Passaic County MOVE	
On-demand transportation service available in Clifton and Passaic City for \$1.90 per ride.	Website: https://city.ridewithvia.com/passaic-county

WRAPAROUND SERVICES

Food Assistance

SNAP Navigation Services

The CFBNJ Community Connections team visits food pantries and other community sites to provide SNAP, WIC, and School Meals navigation assistance.

Learn more at: <https://cfbnj.org/apply-for-snap/>.

Contact Paula Tintinago Gonzalez, Director of Community Connections, at: ptintinago@cfbnj.org.

School Meals and Summer EBT

Parents and guardians can complete the School Meals and Summer EBT Application and return it to their child's school to see if they qualify for free meals, which can save \$1,200 on average per year in grocery costs. The school district does not share personal information from the application with the state.

Learn more about eligibility and the application process at:

<https://nj.gov/foodsecurity/our-work/initiatives/index.shtml#SummerEBTApplication>.

WIC

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is available to eligible low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk.

Learn more about eligibility and the application process at:

<https://www.nj.gov/health/fhs/wic/index.shtml>.

Senior Nutrition

The Passaic County Division of Nutrition Services provides congregate meals and meal delivery services (Meals on Wheels) to eligible adults 60 years and older.

Learn more at:

<https://www.passaiccountynj.org/departments/senior-services-disability-veterans-affairs/nutrition-services>.

Good Food Bucks

At participating retailers your SNAP, WIC, and Summer EBT benefits will be automatically doubled through the Good Food Bucks program run by City Green.

Find participating retailers and learn more at: <https://www.goodfoodbucks.com/>.

WRAPAROUND SERVICES

Additional Food & Nutrition Resources

Mobile Food Pantry

The Passaic County Mobile Pantry supports Passaic County Residents in all 16 municipalities who need food and/or application support in order to increase self-sufficiency and decrease food insecurity.

Find the Mobile Pantry schedule and make reservations at:
<https://www.cumac.org/mobile-pantry>.

Impact Passaic Food Resource Map

The Passaic County Food Resource Map aids in locating a food pantry, farmers' market and SNAP/EBT retailer near you.

For more information visit: <https://impactpassaic.com/food-resource-map>.

Nutrition Education Services

Jennifer Salt Taylor is the Family and Community Health Sciences Educator for Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Passaic County; she provides nutrition and wellness trainings for all ages in her community.

To inquire about her services, contact Jen at:
jennifer.taylor@rutgers.edu or 973-305-5746.

WEBSITE LINKS

Resource Management

- L1.** Growing Healthy Pantries: <https://growinghealthypantries.com/>
- L2.** Community Food Bank of New Jersey: <https://cfbnj.org/>
- L3.** Table to Table: <https://tabletotable.org/>
- L4.** New Jersey Office of the Food Security Advocate:
<https://nj.gov/foodsecurity/funding-opportunities/>
- L5.** Grants.gov: <https://www.grants.gov/>
- L6.** Candid: <https://candid.org/>
- L7.** Foundation Directory Online: <https://fconline.foundationcenter.org/>
- L8.** Robert Wood Johnson Foundation & Food Research and Action Center:
<https://frac.org/states/new-jersey>
- L9.** New Jersey Food Security Initiative: <https://njfsi.org/call-for-proposals>
- L10.** Rutgers REACH Program: <https://reach.rutgers.edu/fundingopportunities>
- L11.** Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program:
<https://nutritionincentivehub.org/about/gusnip>

Collaboration & Partnerships

- L12.** Find Help: <https://www.help.impactpassaic.com/>

WEBSITE LINKS

Distribution & Client Management

L13. HER Charitable Food Nutrition Guidelines:

https://healthyeatingresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Nutrition-Guideline-Expert-Panel_one-pager2.pdf

L14. SNAP Eligibility:

<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/njsnap/apply/eligibility/>

L15. SNAP Application Process:

<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/njsnap/apply/app/>

L16. SNAP Application: <https://mynjhelps.gov/home>

L17. SNAP Application Overview (English):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yESHwU4WUME>

L18. SNAP Application Overview (Spanish):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YrPPkkNm1M>

L19. SNAP Ways to Apply:

<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/njsnap/apply/ways/>

L20. Using SNAP Benefits:

<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/njsnap/recipients/benefits/>

L21. Retail Locator: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-locator>

L22. Stores that Accept SNAP: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/online>

L23. SNAP Brochure (English):

https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/njsnap/library/documents/FINAL_SNAP_EBT_Trifold_Brochure_no_marks.pdf

L24. SNAP Brochure (Spanish):

https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/njsnap/library/documents/FINAL_SNAP_EBT_Trifold_Brochure_SPANISH_no_marks.pdf

L25. Staying on SNAP: <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/njsnap/recipients/stay/>

L26. ABAWD Rules:

<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/njsnap/apply/eligibility/abawd.shtml>

L27. Summer EBT Tool-Kit: <https://hungerfreenj.org/summer-ebt/>