

BLUE RIDGE AREA FOOD BANK



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OUR MISSION is to provide nourishing food to our neighbors in need through vibrant community partnerships and passionate public support.

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network news

The BRAFB
Agency Relations
& Programs
Team Newsletter



OCTOBER 2017

BRAFB Invests in the Capacity of Our Partners

Agency Capacity Grants 2017

Thanks to the hard work of our colleagues and generous Food Bank donors, 38 of our partner agencies received commercial coolers and/or freezers this year, and 46 partners have received or will receive tablets and/or laptops.

Fifty-seven agencies submitted applications, which were reviewed by a team of BRAFB staff and a member of the Board. In the end, every agency was granted some or all of its request.



Agency partners made compelling cases for additional coolers and freezers, telling us about the plentiful donations of perishable foods they would be able to accept and the produce orders they would be able to place with the Food Bank. Equipment was delivered in June, and agencies are sharing pictures of full coolers and freezers and telling stories of how

happy clients and volunteers are to see all the wonderful food in the units.

We're already planning for the 2018 Agency Capacity Grant application process, so be on the lookout for an announcement this coming Spring.

Agency Representation at Feeding America National Conference

For the first time ever, Feeding America invited Food Banks to bring an agency representative to the 2017 Agency Capacity, Programs and Nutrition (ACPN) Conference in Chicago. This unique opportunity was made possible by a Walmart grant administered through Feeding America. The purpose of the grant was to explore agency willingness and capacity to grow in two particular areas — increasing SNAP applications and increasing the amount of product accepted from local retail grocery stores (our Partner Pick-Up Program). By bringing together teams of Food Bank staff and agency representatives, Feeding America was able to interview partners and validate survey findings to develop new tools for growing agency capacity.

Gordy Harper, Director of Park View Community Missions in Lynchburg, VA



Gordy Harper, director of Park View Community Missions, at the ACPN Conference.

said he was grateful for the opportunity to attend the conference and hear about the challenges others face while expanding capacities and services to better meet the needs of their food insecure neighbors.

"I was able to work alongside other agencies and food bank staff to evaluate and understand survey results from partner agencies around the country," he said. "The conference speakers shared valuable insights that help me better understand my relationship with our neighbors and with my food bank partners, and how we can create change in our community."

Thank YOU, Gordy, for sharing your perspective and representing the great work of all of our Partner Agencies!

JMU and BRAFB Project for Nutritious Foods

Offering more variety of nutritious foods remains a high priority for the Food Bank. Thanks to a partnership with JMU's Michelle Hesse, Andrew Peachey and David Wang, we're making significant progress. New tools will help Food Sourcing Manager Greg Knight make the best decisions based on the nutritional value of the foods available. As we make changes in our inventory, we look forward to hearing from you and those you serve.

CSFP—Partnering to Serve Seniors

We've completed a year of participation in the Commodities Supplemental Food Program — boxes of USDA food for people 60 and older who are at 130% of poverty or below. Thank you to all who helped us roll out this valuable program at over 40 sites, with more than 2,000 individuals enrolled!

Training—Development series, Food Safety

Training continues to be an important support we offer our Partner Agencies. If you're interested, please contact your Partner Services Coordinator:

- Food Safety — Food Handler Certification
- Fundraising, Communication, Volunteer Management (sessions part of a series or standalone)
- Nutrition — education series, food demos, setting up nudges, client choice.

Pantry Awareness

With every survey of our programs — children's, seniors', Mobile Food Pantry — we ask families if they visit pantries in their area. Time and again, we hear that a significant number do not. Sometimes, they don't know there are pantries close by. Other times, they know about the pantries, but don't think they will qualify to receive food. We want individuals and families to visit as many pantries as they need to get



the food they need for themselves and their families. Not every pantry carries a full inventory of foods that will be best for food preferences and/or health needs.

To make sure families and individuals have the information they need, we will pilot a Pantry Awareness Campaign in Lynchburg, and we hope that families with children in schools become aware of locations and qualifications so they visit their local pantries to receive a wide variety of foods, including fresh produce and perishables. We later hope to replicate the approach in other communities.

New BRAFB Faces

Our team has some new faces! In the TJ Branch, Robert Wadden is our Partner Services Coordinator, effective May 1. His



predecessor, Katie, is now spending more time with her young family and pursuing her passion for art. Robert has extensive experience working in human services and food justice efforts. He lives in Charlottesville with his wife and 1-year-old son.

In the LF Branch, Kim Johnson replaces Dina, who has relocated to



England with her husband and their 7-year old daughter. Kim has spent her career in planning for Northern Virginia and

Fauquier County. She retired from that role to move to Winchester with her husband and 2 dogs.

Partner Agency Cost Sharing

To assist agencies in obtaining and distributing more food and more nutritious food, the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank has established the following cost-sharing structure, effective July 1, 2017:

Donated Products - Shipping & Handling Fees

FOOD TYPE	SHIPPING & HANDLING FEE – PER POUND
Produce	FREE
Bakery	FREE
Baby Products	FREE
Short Shelf-Life Dairy	FREE
Water	FREE
All other foods	5 cents per pound
All other non-food items	5 cents per pound

**On occasion, and announced dependent on availability, shipping and handling fees on specific products may be reduced or eliminated to move additional product.*

Purchased Food

Partner agencies will reimburse the Food Bank for 75% of the cost we pay for purchased food products.

USDA Food

An extensive variety of USDA Food is available through BRAFB at *no cost* to agencies. Some of the food items we expect to see in October include: rice, orange juice, 1 % shelf-stable milk, tomato sauce and pasta, flour, oats, canned beans, corn, applesauce, and cereal.

RECIPE BOX

Apple and Sweet Potato Hash

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients:

2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and diced bite-size
 2 large apples, diced bite-size (peeling optional)
 3 Tablespoons oil or butter (divided)
 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon dried ground thyme*
 1/2 teaspoon sugar
 Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions: 1. Heat large frying pan over medium heat and add 2 Tablespoons oil or butter. 2. Once pan is hot, add sweet potatoes. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, to taste. Stir to coat potatoes, then cover pan and cook for 2 minutes. 3. Uncover, stir, and

Try this for a Fall recipe, developed for our Mobile Food Pantry recipe card collection by the chefs at Devil's Back Bone.

lower heat if potatoes are beginning to brown too much. Cook, covered, for another 2-4 minutes until potatoes are soft. 4. Add 1 Tablespoon oil or butter, apples, and sugar to pan, stir until combined. 5. Cook over medium heat for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Adjust temperature, if necessary, to avoid burning. 6. Once sweet potatoes and apples are cooked through, remove from heat and stir in cinnamon and thyme. 7. Let cool a little, then serve warm.

*Ground rosemary or dried oregano can be substituted for thyme.

Per Serving: Calories – 290; Protein – 3g; Fat – 10g (1 sat); Carbs – 49g; Fiber – 8g; Sodium – 182mg

Scouting for Food

This event provides tens of thousands of pounds of donated food for our partner agencies to distribute. To keep the Scout councils engaged and the drive continuing, we need to have full reports of the pounds of food delivered directly to the agencies. Dates for SFF: **Oct. 28:** Charlottesville, Staunton, Harrisonburg and surrounding counties
Nov. 11: Winchester and surrounding counties
 Please report these deliveries to your respective Branch Assistant — Faye (Shenandoah), Cindy (Lord Fairfax), and Wanda (Thomas Jefferson).

Survey Results

Recently, 73 of our partner agencies responded to an Agency Capacity Self-Assessment. This was the second year of the self-assessments and we learned a lot about where our partners feel they are in their current operations and prospects for the future. Our Partner Services Coordinators and others at the Food Bank are using the results to determine where we can provide more tools to support our partners. A summary of the results was sent to those agencies that participated in the survey. If you are interested in completing a survey and/or want to see the results, please let your Partner Services Coordinator know. We'd love to hear from more of you!