



Connecticut Foodshare

Our Community, Our Food Bank

Network Update
June 3, 2026



Welcome!

- Please enter your name, organization and town in chat
- Enter questions in the Q&A and we will answer at the end of each presenter's section
- To view captions for the presentation, click “show captions” in the meeting controls of your Zoom screen.
- Recording and slides will be sent out after the webinar

Today's Agenda

Jason Jakubowski, President and CEO

- Insights on National landscape
- Outlook for Fiscal Year 2027
- Driver shortage and recruiting

Brittney Cavaliere, Chief Strategy Officer

- State-wide Neighbor Listening Sessions
- Culturally Preferred foods

Miranda Muro, Senior Director of Network Relations

- Resources to support neighbor-centered practices
- Network trends - pantry choice

Chris O'Rourke, Chief Network and Program Officer

- Food update and survey reminder
- Coming soon: Agency Partner Agreement; New payment option
- Walk Against Hunger results

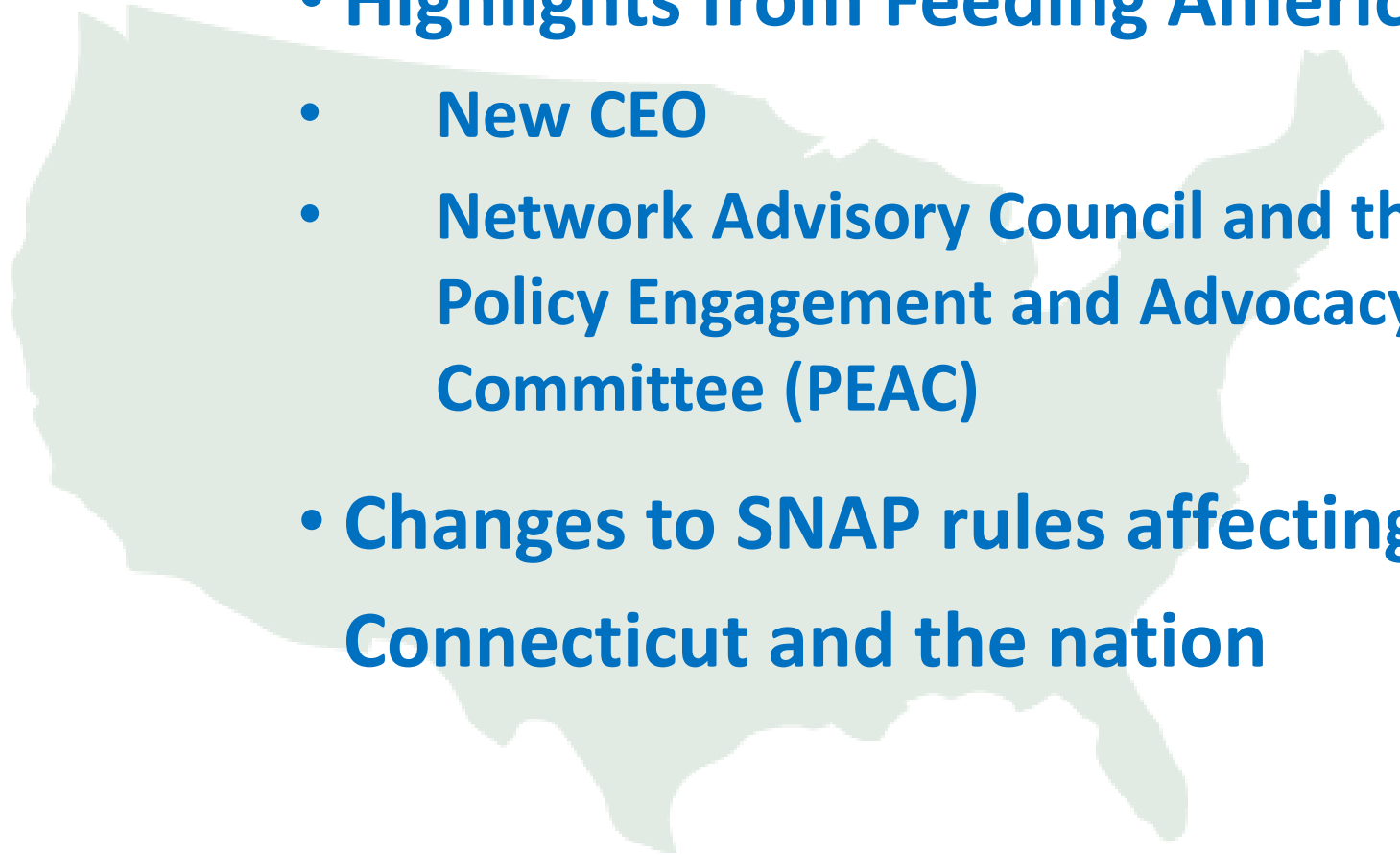
Paul Shipman, Senior Director of Network Resources

- Save the date for:
 - June webinar
 - Updated holiday calendar and closing information



National Landscape

- **Highlights from Feeding America**
 - **New CEO**
 - **Network Advisory Council and the Policy Engagement and Advocacy Committee (PEAC)**
- **Changes to SNAP rules affecting Connecticut and the nation**



FY 2027 Outlook

- No Fees
- CTNAP and emergency funds
- Building Expansion Update
- Thanksgiving
- Driver Shortage



Meeting Neighbor Food Needs and Preferences

Neighbors are looking for:

- Nutritious food
- Fresh food – produce, protein, dairy
- Foods that meet dietary or health needs
- Foods they are familiar with
- Foods they know how to cook

Culturally connected food:

Foods that specific cultures, populations, or communities have a special connection to. Foods important to cultures and traditions of different cultures.



Meat & Meat Alternatives
Beef *
Chicken *
Fish *
Lamb
Pork
Turkey

Flour
All-purpose flour *
Masa flour
Rye flour
Semolina/durum flour

Vegetables
Carrots *
Lettuce *
Onions *
Peppers *
Broccoli
Corn
Garlic
Green beans
Okra
Peas
Potatoes
Red peppers
Spinach
Tomatoes

Fruits
Apples *
Bananas *
Grapes
Oranges
Strawberries

Beans/ Lentils/ Peas
Black beans *
Chickpeas/ garbanzo beans *
Pinto beans *

Grains
Oats *
Pasta *
White rice *
Brown rice
Jasmine rice
Whole-grain pasta

Spices
Basil *
Oregano *
Parsley *
Pepper *
Salt *
Cilantro
Garlic
Rosemary

Note: Asterisk (*) signifies this item was ranked the highest in that category by neighbors representing a majority of cultures identified in the survey.

Listening Sessions with Neighbors

- March and April 2026
- English and Spanish with live translation
- Facilitated in nine communities

Bridgeport

Bristol

Groton

Hartford

Killingly

New Haven

Norwalk

Waterbury

Winchester

The purpose of these sessions was to:

- Identify barriers and facilitators to seek out food assistance.
- Understand how neighbors are finding out about resources.
- Understand where in the community neighbors currently go for help with food.



Learnings from neighbor listening sessions:

- Programs with **good customer service** are the places neighbors want to go
 - One bad experience may impact if a neighbor ever goes back
- Neighbors prefer to **shop** for their food, but also like **convenience** so long as they can **choose** what foods they take home
 - Looking for foods that meet needs and preferences
 - **Home delivery** could be a useful tool for neighbors with mobility challenges.
- **Minimal eligibility requirements** help neighbors easily access the support they need
- Neighbors value **fairness** with volunteers

“Some places don’t let you choose. Whatever they offer, you have to take it and sometimes I don’t even like it or want it so then I have to toss it.”

Listening session participant

Centering Neighbors By Offering Services That Are:



Resources to Support Neighbor-Centered Practices

Go to ctfoodshare.org/neighbor-centered-practices

Find tips for:

- Creating a Welcoming Culture
- Offering Customer Choice
- Offering Home Delivery
- Promoting Health & Nutrition
- Elevating Neighbor Voice
- Connecting to Other Resources



Knight's Pantry at University of Bridgeport

Resource Spotlight: De-Escalation Training



Training prepared by
The Connection
Institute for
Innovative Practice
TRAINING | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | CONSULTATION

Are your distributions feeling more tense lately? Are staff and volunteers finding it more difficult to manage the line and maintain a positive neighbor experience at your program?

We can help! Scan below for a **15-minute customized training video** on how to handle difficult situations and maintain a welcoming environment. Share with your volunteers!

English



Spanish / Español



Food Assistance for Volunteers: Partnership Agreement Standards

- Product from Connecticut Foodshare is for people in need without requiring individuals to pay, pray, or work
- All individuals receiving food assistance (including staff or volunteers) must meet the same eligibility criteria
- Staff, volunteers, or others associated with the program who need assistance may not receive priority or different access



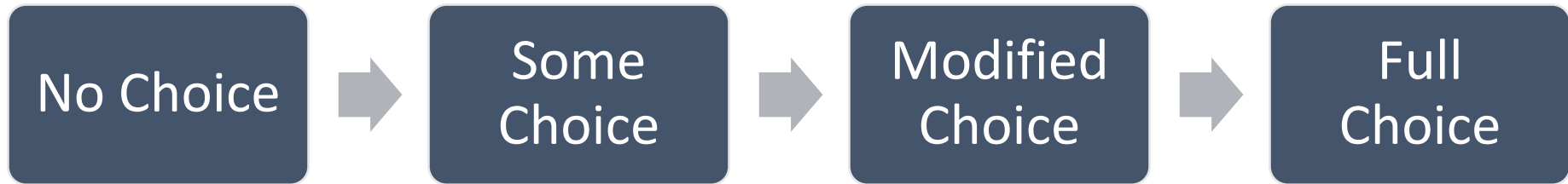
Food Assistance for Volunteers: Tips & Best-Practices

Add to the chat: What tips do you have for making expectations around receiving food clear with your volunteers?

- Set expectations early with your volunteers
 - *If at any point you need help with food, let us know*
 - *You don't need to volunteer to receive food*
 - *Volunteering will not give you better access*
- Establish a clear procedure for volunteers in need of assistance that you follow consistently
 - *For example, volunteers wait until the end*
- Perception matters – be transparent



Network Trends: Pantry Choice



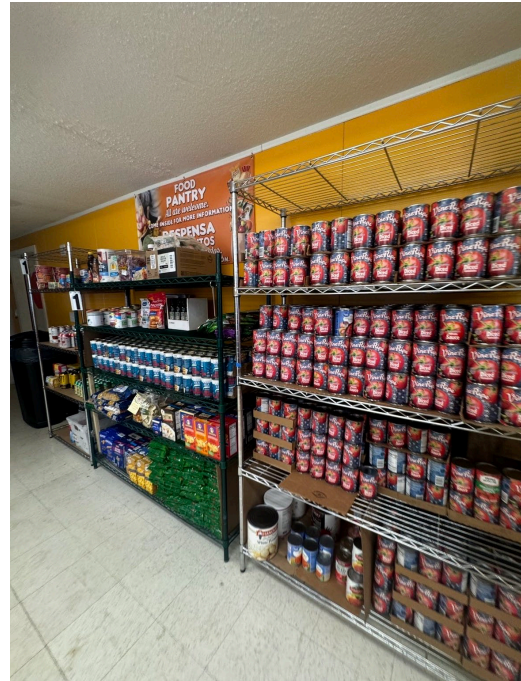
What is Full Choice? Guests are allowed to shop for their food much like a typical grocery shopping experience and freely handle and select food items.

Of the 372 food pantries in the Connecticut Foodshare partner network, **most offer full choice** (66%) or modified choice (18%)

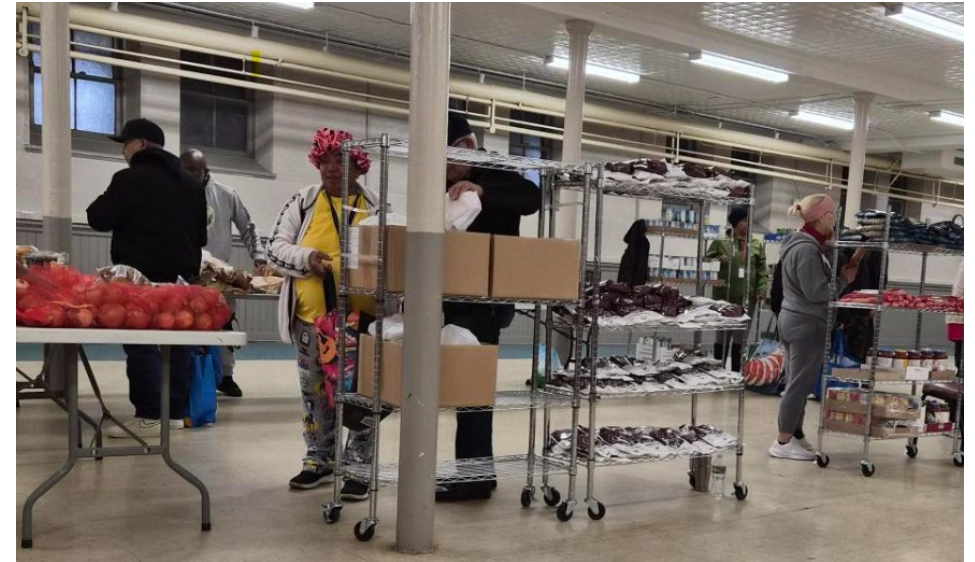


Network Trends: Pantry Choice

Add to the chat: If your pantry offers full choice, what benefits have you seen?



Greater Waterbury Interfaith
Ministry (GWIM)



St. Augustine Church Food Pantry
in Hartford

Network Trends: Pantry Choice

Benefits of Full Choice:

- ✓ Promotes dignity and respect
- ✓ Reduces food waste
- ✓ Addresses dietary needs and preferences
- ✓ Adds efficiency to operations
- ✓ Fosters more meaningful relationships



Bishop Jean Williams Community Market in Bridgeport

Network Trends: Pantry Choice



"We went full client choice with no limits and it was a decision that caused lots of conversation and raised fear. In watching our numbers for 3 months, our pounds per person actually decreased by 12 pounds."

- Kristina Walton, Seymour Oxford Food Bank

Looking to offer more choice or other neighbor-centered practices at your program?

Ask the people you serve for input

Visit other programs for inspiration

Contact your Network Relations Representative to brainstorm

FY 27 Food Update

TEFAP

- Some Bonus Loads returning— primarily fresh produce, dairy
- Overall TEFAP expected to be about level with current fiscal year

CTNAP/emergency funds

- Significant increase (total=\$17M)
- 15% to purchase from local farmers
- Take the survey!

Food Industry Donations

- From wholesalers and distributors – expecting donations to be “flat”.
- From retailers – forecasting slight decrease



Food Preference Survey

CTNAP and Grocery Purchasing Program (GPP)

- **Closes June 12**
- In May and June newsletters
- Specific products for each program
- Will provide direction for at least the first 6 months of this fiscal year (July – Dec.)
- Your input is needed!



Coming Soon!

Updated Agency Partner Agreement

Why?

- Updated requirements based on recent Feeding America audit
- Ended partnership with non-emergency programs
- Created new category of partners = Host Sites
- Updated appendices – including fees appendix

When?

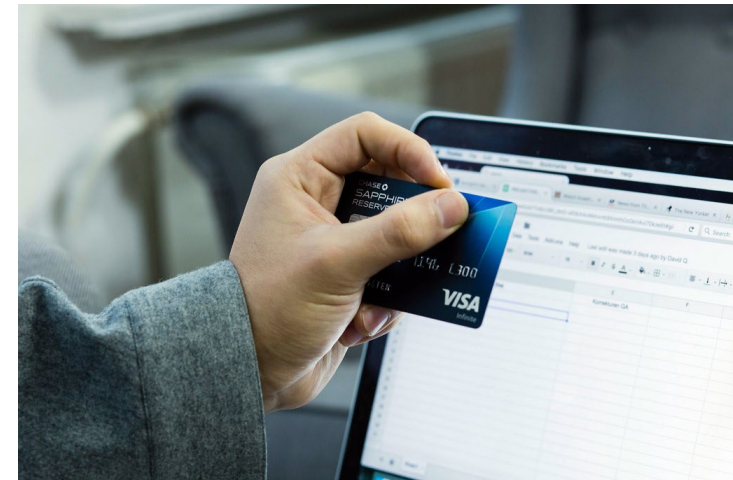
- Expect email from ReadySign by early July
- Includes link to document highlighting changes
- Signatures requested by August 31



Coming Soon!

Pay by Credit Card

- New feature made available by our vendor
- **Additional** option – will still accept payment by check
- Available in early FY27
- More details coming soon



Walk Against Hunger – results!

- Over 1100 walkers
- 48 participating agencies
- raised over \$170,000



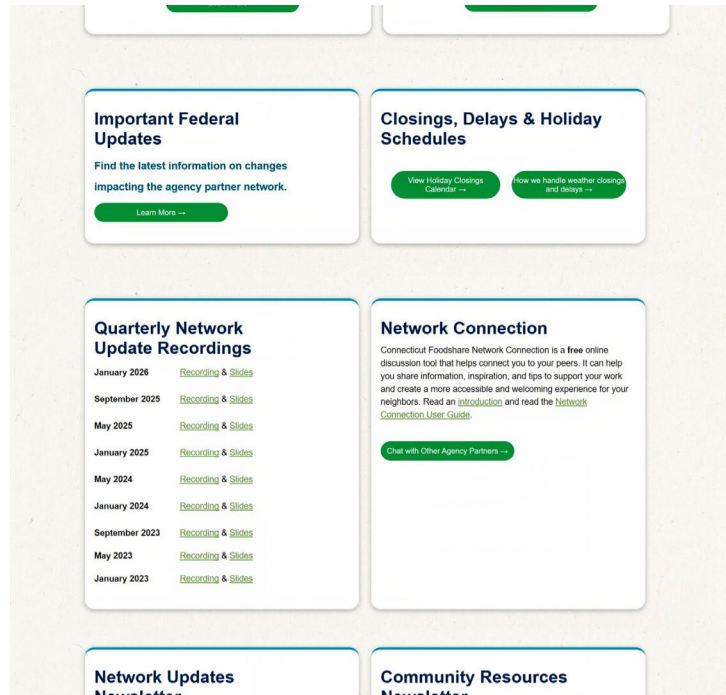
June Webinar

Enhancing Cultural Humility

Join us Wednesday, June 17, at 1PM for Enhancing Cultural Humility in Organizations, presented by The Connection. Learn strategies for building an inclusive environment at your program. Scan this code or visit ctfoodshare.org/webinars to register.



Updated Closings Calendar



The screenshot shows the Connecticut Foodshare website with the following content:

- Connecticut Foodshare** logo with the tagline "Our Community, Our Food Bank".
- Holiday Closings: Impact on Ordering Schedule**
- May through September 2026**
- Questions? Call the support team at (203) 404-5597
- A table detailing the holiday closings calendar.

Date Closed	Delivery/Pickup Date	Ordering Window Opens	Finalize order within 48 hours after starting but no later than:
Memorial Day Monday, May 25th	Tuesday, May 26	Friday, May 15	Noon on Wednesday, May 20
	Wednesday, May 27	Monday, May 18	Noon on Thursday, May 21
	Thursday, May 28	Tuesday, May 19	Noon on Friday, May 22
Juneteenth Friday, June 19th	Monday, June 22	Thursday, June 11	Noon on Tuesday, June 16
	Tuesday, June 23	Friday, June 12	Noon on Wednesday, June 17
	Wednesday, June 24	Monday, June 15	Noon on Thursday, June 18
Independence Day Observance Friday, July 3rd	Monday, July 6	Thursday, June 25	Noon on Tuesday, June 30
	Tuesday, July 7	Friday, June 26	Noon on Wednesday, July 1

ctfoodshare.org/latest-updates

Join Us At Gather 2026



Connecticut Foodshare Partner Newsletter

Network Partner Updates

Monthly updates to inform, connect, and inspire Connecticut Foodshare network and program partners.



www.ctfoodshare.org/networknewsletter

Community Resources Newsletter

Community Resource Updates

Monthly updates to share resources beyond food and help connect people with additional resources to meet basic needs



www.ctfoodshare.org/communitynews





Today's Presenters

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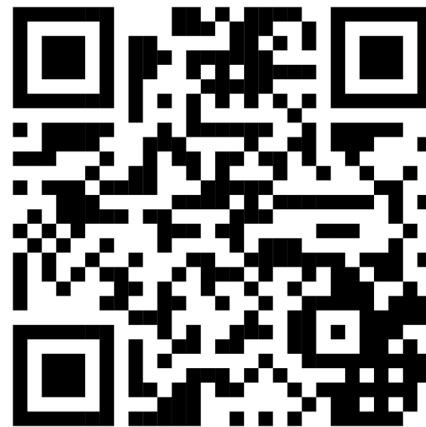
Paul Shipman – pshipman@ctfoodshare.org



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Thank You!



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www.ctfoodshare.org/WebinarSurvey