



Connecticut Foodshare

Our Community, Our Food Bank

Network Update
September 17, 2025



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**
 - Feeding America Updates
 - National Trends
 - State Response and Advocacy
 - Long-Term Planning & Budgeting
- **Brittney Cavaliere, Senior Director of Strategy & Community Engagement**
 - New Strategic Plan
- **Chris O'Rourke, Chief Network and Program Officer**
 - CT-NAP
 - SNAP – *New* Lock/Unlock/Block feature
 - Thanksgiving
- **Paul Shipman, Senior Director of Network Resources**
 - Website Resources
 - Upcoming Webinars & Opportunities
- **Miranda Muro, Senior Director of Network Relations**
 - Resources for Managing Change

UPDATES FROM JASON

- Feeding America Network Standards Review
- Changes at Feeding America
- National Trends
 - Cuts to federal food assistance programs
 - Changes in administrative processes
 - Strong advocacy by Feeding America helped to avoid deeper cuts



UPDATES FROM JASON

State Response

- Continued advocacy for more ways the state can support our work
- Working with you to engage elected officials – continue inviting them to your agency to help them understand your work
- Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro and State Comptroller Sean Scanlon round table on federal impacts at Connecticut Foodshare in July – thank you to participating NAC members
- CT-NAP – increased inventory will appear soon



UPDATES FROM JASON

Long-Term Planning and Budgeting

- We are committed to transparency as we navigate change in a challenging environment
- Consolidation of Bloomfield warehouse
- Staff reorganization and cost containment
- Managing operational costs
- Reinstatement of some network fees in July 2026



Strategic Plan FY26-FY28



PILLAR ► **A**

Increase Food Access

Advance partnerships and programs throughout Connecticut to offer food assistance that is accessible, equitable, coordinated, and effective.



PILLAR ► **C**

Mobilize Support

Generate more community awareness, funding and support for food assistance and policies to advance lasting food security.



PILLAR ► **B**

Bolster Food Supply

Ensure sufficient food supply, with a focus on meeting neighbors' food needs and preferences.



PILLAR ► **D**

Strengthen Our Organization

Continue to strengthen our organization and operations to best fulfill our mission and respond to an evolving environment.

CT-NAP Preference Survey Results

- 177 survey responses – thank you!
 - Top 10 items requested--coming soon for CT-NAP participating programs
 - Fresh eggs will continue to be offered
-
- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Frozen chicken | ☐ 100% fruit juice – shelf stable |
| ☐ Frozen ground beef | ☐ Canned tuna |
| ☐ Shelf stable milk | ☐ White rice |
| ☐ Cold breakfast cereal (low sugar) | ☐ Peanut butter |
| ☐ Cheddar cheese | ☐ Butter (sticks) |





New EBT Card Security

SNAP Lock & Block



The Connecticut Department of Social Services has launched
a new way to protect EBT benefits on MyDSS:

*Clients can **LOCK** their card when they aren't using it or **BLOCK** out-of-state transactions.*

The **LOCK** feature will prevent benefits (SNAP & Cash) from being accessed, as well as prevent purchases, balance inquiries, and most other transactions until the card is unlocked. This includes both online purchases as well as in stores.

The **BLOCK OUT-OF-STATE** feature prevents purchases at stores outside of Connecticut. It will not prevent online transactions even if the online transaction occurs out-of-state.

<https://portal.ct.gov/dss/find-benefits-and-support/food-assistance/protect-your-ebt-card-benefits>

Thanksgiving 2025

- Response Forms due this coming Monday, September 22
- New Holiday Meats coming to GPP in October: frozen turkey breast (bone-in) and whole chickens
- Check out our Thanksgiving Resources website for more information, tools and tips



Thanksgiving Resources on CTFoodshare.org

- Important dates
- Frequently asked questions
- Other resources to raise more food
- Specialized Food Safety Information



Visit www.ctfoodshare.org/thanksgiving-resources





Thanksgiving Partner Peer Connect

Are you feeling it too? Chat with your fellow network partners about Thanksgiving!

Network Advisory Council (NAC) members will lead small group discussions about Thanksgiving distributions. Share how you create a successful distribution and hear how others overcome Thanksgiving-specific challenges.



Tomorrow, **September 18** at 2pm

Wednesday, **September 24** at 12pm

Register at ctfoodshare.org/webinars

Conversation Categories:

Fundraising

Client Choice

Community Kitchens

Advocacy

Suggest your
own topic!

College Pantries

Community Gardens

Mobile Pantries

Connecticut Foodshare

Network Connection

Connect, chat, and share with your network partners.

Connecticut Foodshare Network Connection is a free online discussion tool that helps connect at your convenience.

Earn GPP credits while you post!

Each month, the most engaged user will be awarded a **\$50 GPP credit** per month.

Each quarter, the user who creates the post/topic with the most engagement, including replies and likes, will be awarded a **\$100 GPP credit**.

A different winner will be chosen each time. Programs are eligible for each incentive once a year and eligibility will be renewed every May.



Scan to register
and start chatting!

Or visit

ctfoodshare.discourse.group/

ArrayRx: Prescription Discount Card

Prescriptions are expensive, but with the ArrayRx Digital Discount Card, people living in Connecticut have **saved an average of \$200 per month** on their medications. Connecticut's newest program is free and easy to use.

This Is a Pharmacy Savings Program, Not Insurance

The digital discount card is available to anyone living full time or part time in Connecticut — no age, income, immigration, or insurance restrictions.

For additional information or support, email Stephanie Krieg, ArrayRx Program Director, at Stephanie.Krieg@ct.gov



What You Can Do with Your Digital Discount Card

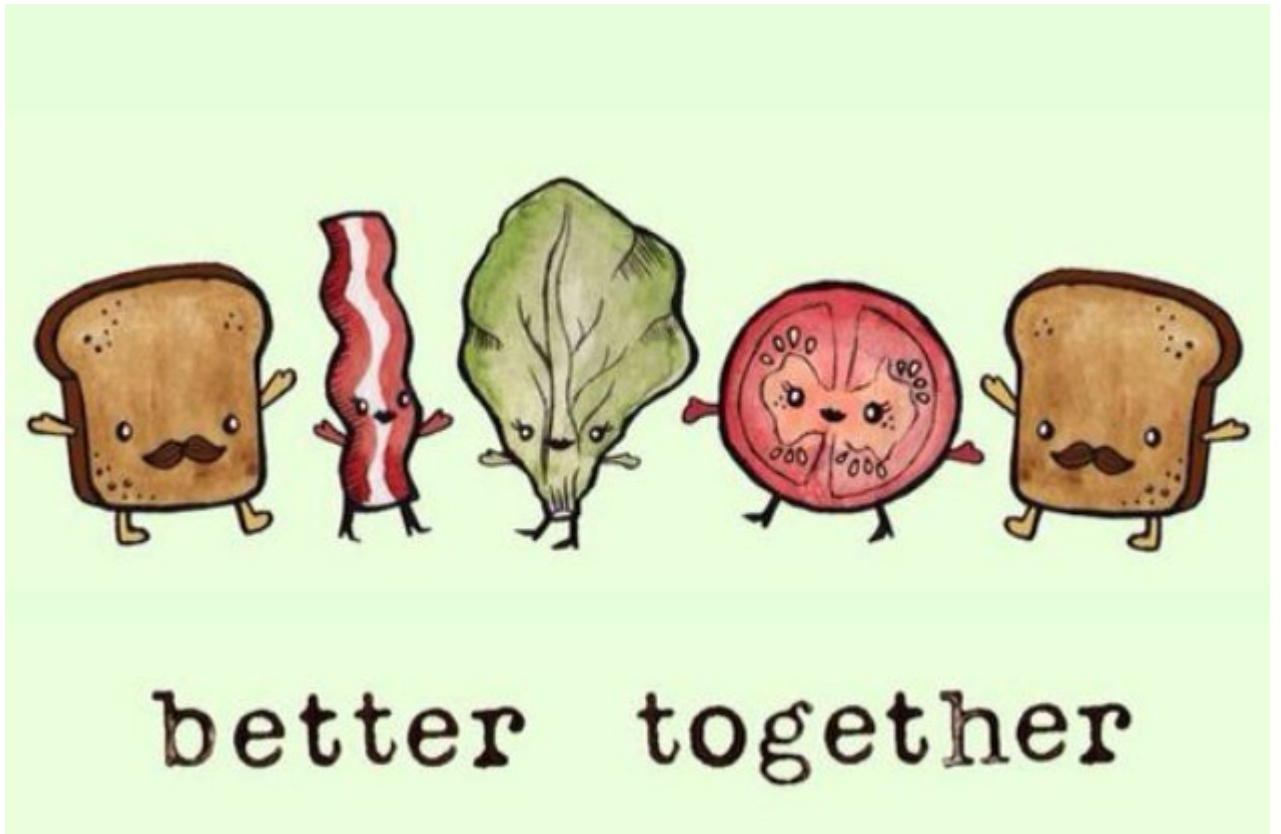
- Save up to 80% on all FDA-approved medications, including:
 - Maintenance prescriptions
 - Smoking cessation medications
 - Diabetes supplies
 - Vaccinations – flu, shingles, pneumonia, and more
 - Over-the-counter drugs that have a National Drug Code (NDC)
- Compare prices online
- Use at over 64,000 pharmacies nationwide (98% of Connecticut pharmacies are included)

Visit our **Latest Updates** webpage to order free materials: flyers in multiple languages, call-in enrollment cards, and toolkits. Visit our **Help Beyond Food** page to download digital flyers.

Our
charitable
food system
is being
stretched in
new ways



Navigating Change At Your Program



Centering Neighbors

Offering Services That Are:



Tips for Line Management

- ✓ Assign the right person to greet guests, walk the line, and answer questions
- ✓ Address neighbors with calmness, respect, and transparency
- ✓ Establish a clear process for intake and shopping that's consistent for everyone receiving food
- ✓ Post clear signage
- ✓ Offer customer choice whenever possible
- ✓ Prioritize a short wait time whenever possible
- ✓ Consider expanding days to offer appointments, or introduce a numbering system
- ✓ Consider additional activities or resources to offer while people wait
- ✓ Solicit feedback from volunteers and guests – what did and didn't work



More Tips

- ✓ Explore new ways to raise awareness and ask your community for support
- ✓ Connect with other food pantries to get ideas and brainstorm together
- ✓ Support your team with de-escalation techniques
- ✓ Understand your limits as an organization
- ✓ Practice self-care
- ✓ When in doubt, reach out to your Network Relations Representative

TAKE CARE



OF YOURSELF

Training Resources from The Connection

Recording Available: Trauma Informed Crisis De-Escalation

- View online: ctfoodshare.org/neighbor-centered-practices
 - Under Creating a Welcoming Culture > De-escalation Resources

Coming Soon: Compassion Fatigue Webinar

- October 22nd from 1-2 pm
- Register online: ctfoodshare.org/network-partner-webinars





Today's Presenters

Jason Jakubowski – jjakubowski@ctfoodshare.org

Brittney Cavaliere – bcavaliere@ctfoodshare.org

Chris O'Rourke – corourke@ctfoodshare.org

Paul Shipman – pshipman@ctfoodshare.org

Miranda Muro – mmuro@ctfoodshare.org



Connecticut Foodshare

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Thank You!



Provide feedback on this webinar at
www.ctfoodshare.org/WebinarSurvey