

**Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare Officially Unite
Frequently Asked Questions for Network Partners**

January 27, 2021

The combination of Foodshare and Connecticut Food Bank has been approved by both Boards and our first day of business as a united organization will be Monday, February 1, 2021. Below are some questions we expect that you may have. As we work together toward a smooth integration of our two organizations, we ask for your patience and commit to be as transparent and collaborative as possible.

Q: Why are the two food banks uniting?

A: We believe that by bringing together our organizations we can better serve Connecticut residents who struggle with food insecurity. We will be able to address hunger with a united voice, a fully coordinated distribution model, and an integrated set of programs made available across the entire state. We can utilize our combined resources to add efficiencies, better support our partner programs and food insecure neighbors, and collaborate with the broader community to build effective solutions to end hunger.

Q: What will the new organization's name be?

A: The new organization will have a new name that reflects our statewide nature. We have been engaged in conversations with stakeholders and hope to announce a name and logo in the next two months.

Q: Who will lead the new organization?

A: The new organization will be governed by a 23-member board of directors comprised of a mix of members of the outgoing Foodshare and Connecticut Food Bank boards. It will be led by current Foodshare President and Chief Executive Officer Jason Jakubowski.

Q: Who will lead the new organization's efforts with partner programs and community programs?

A: The combined food bank will have a Network & Program Department dedicated to supporting a statewide network of more than 700 partner food pantries, meal programs, mobile distribution sites, and more. This department will be comprised of existing staff from Foodshare and Connecticut Food Bank that you already work with. Chris O'Rourke will lead the department as Chief Network & Program Officer. Chris is an experienced food bank professional, having worked at Foodshare in multiple capacities for over 30 years, most recently as Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer. Other senior staff involved include Paul Shipman from Connecticut Food Bank as Senior Director of Network Resources and Miranda Muro from Foodshare as Senior Director of Network Strategy. We look forward to getting to know you in the months ahead.

Q: Will there be staffing changes? Will my staff contact change?

A: Over the coming months as the staff of each food bank are integrated into one organization you may see some contacts change. Your food bank contact will remain the same in the near term and any future changes will be communicated with the network.

Q: What changes can my program expect to see in the first six months?

A: Programs should not expect to see significant change in the short term. You will continue to order using the current website and receive product under the agreement currently in place for your agency. Fee and delivery policies will remain as they are in your current agreement. You will continue to work with the same warehouse location. We will work in the months ahead to communicate regularly about proposed changes. Our goal is open dialogue and engagement in our planning.

Q: How will the combination affect sites that host Mobile Foodshare and Connecticut Food Bank's mobile pantry?

A: There will be no immediate changes to service delivery. The respective Mobile locations and schedules will continue as currently agreed to for the foreseeable future. In the months ahead, we will engage in a deliberate process to look at opportunities to integrate our approaches. We look forward to working with you in that planning process.

Q: How long will the integration take?

A: The combination will occur over a period of months and will involve a thorough review of systems, policies, and procedures. We are committed to a thoughtful transition and making informed decisions that will provide the network and the people we serve with quality services that you can rely on.

Q: Who should we contact if we have questions?

A: You should contact your current food bank representative with any questions or concerns. If you need additional information, they will work with you to get answers.

Q: What should I do if someone from the media calls to ask about the new food bank?

A: Your role in our work is vital and you may get asked about this union. You can feel free to refer media questions to Monica Obrebski, Senior Director of External Relations, at mobrebski@foodshare.org. We hope that you share our enthusiasm for this new organization and the opportunities it will create to increase access to food, expand opportunities to strengthen our network, and advance lasting solutions to hunger in Connecticut.

Q: How will partner programs be involved with planning for the future?

A: We look forward to creating opportunities to listen and learn from our community partners, and people served, to inform our priorities and statewide strategy. We will host quarterly Network Forums as an opportunity for partner programs to connect with each other, President & CEO Jason Jakubowski, and additional food bank staff. The first forum will take place on Wednesday, February 3 at 1 pm. You can register for that forum [here](#). We will plan additional opportunities for you to share your input; more details to come. In the meantime, if you have questions or ideas, please reach out to your existing food bank representative.