

# 2022 Mobile Pantry Program Changes



The changes outlined below are necessary because the Mobile Pantry program has grown beyond the constraints of the old model. The food bank has spent months developing a conscious and strategic approach to growth that enhances our partnerships and supports all the communities our program serves.

The ultimate goal of these changes is to equitably serve communities across our service area while eliminating overlap of services. Clients' needs will inform how we conduct the program moving forward. A secondary goal of these changes is to shift from a business transaction model toward one of true partnership with agencies and the communities we serve, together.

In light of these goals, the food bank will be making the following changes starting in January. Given that scheduling opens on October 11, we want all partners to fully understand these changes to help inform their plans for 2022.

1. In order for us to spread our resources equitably across our service area and best serve our clients, the food bank will be changing how we **schedule** Mobile Pantries. Mobile Pantry slots will be available by county for host sites to fill. The number of slots will be based on [the documented need](#) in the county and distribution dates will be spread out evenly on the calendar. Information for your county was previously mailed to you in August. The available dates may be a departure from your prior schedule. Many of our partners already host distributions on a regular basis, and our goal is to transition to a model where all partners schedule this way. Additionally, when we're filling slots, we will be careful not to duplicate services and ensure no part of our service area is underserved.
2. To make the best use of available food and better meet clients' needs, Mobile Pantries are transitioning to a **family-centered menu style**. Instead of focusing on pounds of food, we will be building Mobile Pantries to serve a certain number of families based on recent average attendance figures at your location, plus a small cushion. For example, if your Mobile Pantry has recently been serving 100 families, about 110 bags of potatoes would be loaded onto the truck.
3. To better help partners promote the program and improve consistency of messaging, the food bank seeks to improve its **branding**. The result of this work will likely be prepared signage and a communication toolkit for partners to utilize.
4. In order to better serve communities, the food bank seeks to foster more **partnerships** among organizations that host Mobile Pantries. Such relationships are particularly vital for agencies that are located near one another or are unable to host at least monthly. Furthermore, while Mobile Pantries cannot provide every support necessary for neighbors in need, they are a great place to connect clients' with many additional resources and services. The food bank is building partnerships with organizations that provide supports to help neighbors find security beyond food. Therefore, the scheduling form will ask you if you are interested in providing other resources and/or services at your distributions.
5. The food bank will be changing how we conduct **billing** for Mobile Pantries. We will no longer be billing per distribution. Instead, we are asking agencies to financially contribute in support

of the program to whatever degree is plausible. This contribution will not be due all at once or in advance of the program. However, such a pledge will assist the food bank in targeting its own fundraising efforts for the program. If you rely on grant funds to support your Mobile Pantries, the food bank can supply supporting information for your applications and reports. No one will be denied partnership because of their pledged contribution.

Historically, many Mobile Pantry program costs have been subsidized or fully covered by the food bank. In an effort to be more transparent, we are sharing [the actual cost of the program in your community](#). If you have questions about the specific breakdown of the expenses tied to the program, please let us know and we will gladly elaborate.

These costs can provide insight into the costs of your particular program. This should be helpful in determining your pledge and communicating about the program with your funders. We hope that this will inform your level of contribution, but we anticipate most contributions will be similar to the amount allotted for the program last year.

The aim of these changes is to efficiently use Feeding America West Michigan's resources to serve the greatest number of neighbors across our service area in a way that meets their needs. We hope that any negative impact on our partners will be minimal and appreciate your understanding and flexibility as we make these changes.

