



Kids' Farmers Market Operations Manual

Operating and partnership guidelines for hosting a Kids' Farmers Market



A member of:



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Welcome!

We are very pleased to be working partners in our region to administer our Kids' Farmers Market! We know we are making a significant difference in the life of children and their families throughout our region. We believe that the Food Bank of the Southern Tier and our KFM host sites are partners in every sense of the word; it takes all of us to ensure this work is done well. We know many programs helping us run our KFM are often already stretched thin, and we want to thank you for your tireless efforts on behalf of your youth.

Please do not hesitate to reach out via phone or email at any time with concerns of questions. Our goal is to have a program that works well and impacts lives. We are deeply grateful for your commitment to making this program a reality and a resounding success.

Thank you,
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Part 1: About the Food Bank of the Southern Tier

Our Vision and Mission

Our Vision

The Food Bank of the Southern Tier is committed to creating a future without hunger where access to healthy food by all is recognized as fundamental to the well-being and success of individuals and the foundation of a strong, vibrant society.

Our Mission

Working together to build and sustain hunger-free communities throughout the Southern Tier.

What We Do

The Food Bank of the Southern Tier maintains a 65,000 square foot distribution center in Elmira. We serve over 160 partner agencies, 90 Mobile Food Pantry sites, and 41 school districts in 6 counties out of this facility.

One in seven people in the Southern Tier face food insecurity, which can range from families struggling with grocery funds to individuals who don't know where their next meal is coming from. This is a problem of both today and tomorrow, and the Food Bank's goal is to feed people who are hungry now while also working to address the long-term causes.

Our Service Area

The Food Bank covers six counties in the Southern Tier region: Broome, Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, and Tompkins. The region is mostly rural and covers about 4000 square miles.



Part 2: Kids' Farmers Market Overview

What is the Kids' Farmers Market?

The Kids' Farmers Market is a distribution that provides fresh fruits and vegetables to children who are at risk of hunger or food-insecurity and may not have access to produce at home on a regular basis.

Across the Southern Tier, over 50% of school aged children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. Some children do not know when they will have their next meal, and they may not have a choice whether it will be nutritious or healthy for them. We have heard parents say they are uneasy about buying produce because they are afraid their child will not eat it, and that would be a blow to their food budget, so having a program where a child can try it first for free is very beneficial. The Kid's Farmers Market provides free produce to children of low-income families who may not have the financial means to purchase produce on a consistent basis.

The program runs throughout the school year in conjunction with after-school programs, as well as during the summer in partnership with existing summer meal sites. KFM can either be a drop-and-go model, where the Food Bank drops off produce and the event is managed exclusively by the site coordinator, or with Food Bank staff support, most notably the driver.

What are the overall goals of the KFM?

- Increase children's exposure to fresh fruits and vegetables thus creating an awareness of the importance of eating these foods.
- Encourage long-term nutritious eating patterns.
- Create new and fun opportunities for learning about fruits and vegetables (including taste tests and recipes).
- Give children the confidence to try unfamiliar foods.
- Promote a better understanding of how gardening/ agriculture produces the healthy foods we eat.
- Provide an opportunity for children to take fruits and vegetables home to share with their families.

Where does the food come from?

Kids' Farmers Market produce comes from a variety of places. Some produce we purchase through our Healthy Harvest Program. We also get produce from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Coop (MARC) out of Philadelphia.



How the Program Works

- The Food Bank and a KFM site coordinator sign a joint agreement for the program
- The site coordinator designates a date and time for distribution
- FBST delivers produce to the site
- The site coordinator manages the distribution of produce
- The site coordinator reports participation and distribution stats
 - For summer, weekly sites: Please email your stats weekly to your PPC contact
 - For school year, monthly sites: [Please enter your stats through our website.](#)

Role of the KFM Site Coordinator

Commitments you can expect:

- 1-2 hours beginning of the school year / summer to set-up program
- 8 minutes a month / week to submit statistics
- 2-3 hours per distribution
- 1 hour a year to complete program evaluations

Weekly / Monthly Stat Reports and Annual Evaluations

Site Coordinators are required to submit weekly (for summer sites) or monthly (for school year site) stats electronically to the Community Impact Department. [See our website for more information.](#) FBST asks each site coordinator to assist in the distribution of annual evaluations and surveys to children, parents, and staff.

Part 3: Steps to Planning a Kids' Farmers Market

What are the requirements?

The following is a checklist of minimum requirements required to host a KFM.

- A community or area determined by the Food Bank of the Southern Tier to be underserved.
- A KFM Site Coordinator who will oversee the distribution, supervise the volunteers and serve as primary contact with Food Bank of the Southern Tier. It is also a good idea to have an Alternate Coordinator.
- A safe and secure storage area for the produce and a location to host the KFM.
- Ability to receive deliveries and assist with transferring produce to storage area.
- 2-4 on-site volunteers to assist with the distribution and unloading of product (Volunteers unloading product should be able to lift 40 pounds).
- Willingness to distribute flyers (can be provided by FBST) to families in order to promote the KFM.
- Distribute the produce in the way the FBST designates.
- Ability to count KFM participants and submit statistics and report to the Food Bank ([see how to do so on our website](#)).
- Willingness to distribute and collect surveys of children and their parents as needed.

Choose a location

During the school year, indoor locations such as community centers, after-school programs and churches with main level access work well for KFM distributions. The location should be easily identifiable to families coming from neighboring towns.

During the summer, KFMs can be held outside in conjunction with a summer food meal or another existing program.

We recommend the site you choose be able to provide the following:

- An area to easily unload one 26-foot truck to a large multipurpose room with an area for the truck to remain for at least 10-15 minutes if a drop-and-go, or for 2+ hours if this is FBST staff-run.
- 4-6 tables to set up produce.
- Ample parking for families if they are attending with their children.
- If possible, doors wide enough to fit 4'x4' pallets of food through them.

Note: An on-site visit will be scheduled at the distribution site prior to the scheduling of the KFM with the KFM Site Coordinator and the Food Bank Programs & Partnerships Coordinator.

Choose a date

Scheduling the KFM date will be a joint decision between the KFM Site Coordinator, the host site and the Food Bank of the Southern Tier. Dates for subsequent KFM will also be scheduled this way. Dates can be posted on the Food Bank's "Food Finder" website, if the site is open to the general public.

Volunteer recruitment and management

The KFM Site Coordinator will recruit approximately 2-4 volunteers to assist with the distribution and unloading of product on the day of the KFM. A volunteer should be able to lift 40 pounds. Volunteers should be prepared to commit three hours: one hour for preparation work and training, one hour for distribution and an hour for clean-up. Local churches, service groups, non-profit organizations and businesses should be considered when recruiting volunteers.

Below are examples, and suggested totals, of volunteer job descriptions:

- KFM Site Coordinator (1)
 - The primary contact person providing oversight to the day-to-day planning and operation of the KFM.
- KFM Site Coordinator Assistant (1)
 - Will serve as a back-up for the Coordinator and assist in the overall management of the KFM event.
- Set up, distribution, and clean-up Crew (2-4)

KFM Agreement

The KFM Agreement outlining the operation is signed by the KFM Site Coordinator and the Food Bank of the Southern Tier. See [our website](#) for a copy of the KFM Agreement. This sets the requirements and expectations for both the Food Bank and the Site Coordinator.

Market the event

KFM Site Coordinator responsibilities

Because the KFM is strategically located to serve specific geographical areas, the KFM Site Coordinator's role in promotion of the KFM is crucial. The sample flyer provided [on our website](#) should be updated and distributed to schools, after-school programs, social service agencies, etc. The [sample reminder card](#) should be updated to reflect the next KFM date. Copy enough cards so that each household receives one reminder card at the KFM.

Food Bank of the Southern Tier responsibilities

The Food Bank of the Southern Tier will market the KFM through our website, social media, and with other summer food and youth programming outreach.

Ordering Product

The site coordinator should communicate the number of children expected at the KFM up to one week prior to the distribution. The Food Bank of the Southern Tier will be responsible for providing the product to distribute at no cost to you. The product can vary depending on the season and donations. When possible, the Food Bank will inform the KFM Site Coordinator of what is coming on the delivery a few days before the event.

Inclement weather policy

Some outdoor sites may need to cancel or reschedule in the case of inclement weather. If such a need arises, either the KFM Site Coordinator or the Food Bank of the Southern Tier can initiate a cancellation. When bad weather is anticipated in advance, the KFM Site Coordinator and the assigned Programs & Partnerships Coordinator should have a discussion the day before the distribution to decide if cancellation is warranted. This should include which conditions must exist, (if taking a wait and see approach) and what resulting communications must be made in the event of cancellation.

For the instances when this early conversation is unable to occur, and there is inclement weather on the day of the distribution – **NO LESS THAN 3 HOURS BEFORE THE EXPECTED TRUCK ARRIVAL TIME**, either the KFM Site Coordinator or Programs & Partnerships Coordinator must notify the other party of their intentions to cancel the distribution. Safety will be our highest priority. If needed, the Food Bank will announce the cancellation on our website and Facebook. The KFM Site Coordinator should inform their volunteers of the cancellation and put out signage at the site letting the community know that the KFM is not taking place.

Produce set-up and presentation

Produce will be distributed the same day or a few days after the delivery in order to ensure freshness and peak taste. Produce will be displayed on tables in a visually pleasing manner. Table cloths and baskets or wooden crates are encouraged in order to create the feel of a true farmers market. Staff and volunteers will create an atmosphere of fun and excitement around the Kids' Farmers Market and show enthusiasm for trying new things! Children will receive a bag and will shop around the table(s) in order to choose the items that they want to take home ("client choice"). Forcing a child to take something they don't want is going to be counterproductive and could lead to food waste. The number/ amount of produce a child may take home will depend on the product and how many children are being served the day of the market. (If there are melons, it makes sense to just give one per child. If there are oranges, it makes sense to give a few if there are enough to go around.)

Here are some images of what your KFM set-up should and can look like.



Nutrition education

Ideally, the partner site will engage the expertise of a community nutrition agency such as Cornell Cooperative Extension at each monthly or weekly distribution, in order to provide a cooking demonstration, tasting of a fruit or vegetable dish, and a simple recipe to take home that includes one or more of the produce options being offered at the market that day. It is highly desirable to have a parent or other caregiver come to the partner site to share a recipe, or simply help out during market day, in order to encourage their child's active participation. The Food Bank will do our best to ensure the Site Coordinator knows what produce will be available a few days prior to the event in order to communicate this to any nutrition educators.

Statistics and evaluation

After each distribution, the Site Coordinator is responsible to report statistics to the Food Bank. **You must count how many children go through the KFM line.**

We ask that you please provide the number of children served, the name of the community nutrition agency that participated that week / month and a brief synopsis of their demonstration/lesson, any stories or quotes from children or their parents/caregivers, photos of children or children's drawings in relation to the Kids' Farmers Market.

For **Summer Sites that run weekly**: Please email your statistical information to your Programs & Partnerships Coordinator.

For **School Year Sites that run monthly**: You can submit your statistics online via the Food Bank website. Please see [our website](#) to learn how to submit stats online. These must be submitted by the 5th of the following month.

The Food Bank also conducts an annual evaluation of our programs. We ask that the Site Coordinator helps with the dissemination of surveys or the coordination of listening sessions.

Funding the KFM

Currently, there is no fee to partners for KFM distributions. Food and funds to support the KFM program are provided by the Food Bank of the Southern Tier. Families and volunteers are not expected or permitted to provide any fee or compensation for accessing the KFM.

Delivery logistics



Your Kids' Farmers Market produce will be delivered on pallet. Pallets are 40"x42" and are usually about 5' tall when loaded.

Most of the produce will be repacked into banana boxes, but some may come in other box sizes or in large mesh bags – typically things like onions, carrots and potatoes. Above is what a typical full pallet looks like.

If storing food inside, our driver will need a food that is at least 4' wide to get the pallets through.

Part 4: Safety first

General safety guidelines

- Children should be supervised at all times.
- It is recommended to have one first aid kit available on site.
- If the driver is attending: The Food Bank of the Southern Tier driver is responsible for the vehicle and may not be used to give out food in place of a volunteer. The driver will assist you in unloading the product from the truck. Provide an adequate number of adult volunteers to distribute the food.
- **The KFM Site Coordinator should be designated and responsible for settling issues prior to and during the distribution. The KFM Site Coordinator should always be present and aware of the Food Bank of the Southern Tier policies and procedures.**
- The driver (if present) or site coordinator will establish the measures needed to control the flow of products and people throughout pantry setup and product distribution process.

Every organization must have a safety plan which fits their agency's needs. Surface cleaner and paper towels are needed to wipe down contaminated surfaces. Gloves should also be available on site but are not required to handle produce.

Volunteer safety

- All volunteers should dress appropriately for the weather and wear close-toed shoes.
- The food product on the truck is intended for children and families only. Volunteers should bring their own snacks and beverages if needed. Volunteers can also receive food from the KFM at the end of the distribution.
- **During the hot summer months, providing water for your volunteers is important.**
- Establish procedures to monitor and direct volunteer assistance at the KFM site, from site setup through distribution and site break down.
- Evaluate volunteers to determine if they exhibit any health conditions that would prohibit them from handling food, such as a cold, flu, etc. prior to food distribution.

Family and children safety

- KFMs bring a lot of excitement and families may start arriving early. Be aware of the additional traffic this creates. Children must always be supervised.
- Entrance and Exit Points - Steps should be taken to control the flow of families in and out of the distribution area. This can be accomplished by placing "barriers" (caution tape, cones, signs, etc.) that direct and control client flow, their vehicles, and other traffic. Volunteers can assist in directing families to the proper areas.

Food safety

- Produce will be stored six inches off ground in order to deter pests.
- Keep any cleaning and/or sanitizing chemicals transported and used at the distribution site separate from food.
- Do not reuse boxes that show signs of contamination (wet, stained, dirty, or broken).
- Provide enough single-use containers or grocery bags so that food can be safely segregated.
- Avoid reusing packaging gleaned from the food in distribution (e.g., packaging from bulk repack items).
- Collect and dispose of garbage onsite in suitable containers.
- Maintain product integrity throughout distribution. Collect any damaged or compromised produce and dispose onsite. Do not distribute damaged or compromised produce.
- Identify the steps needed for volunteers to safely handle and distribute food. Provide the means to wash hands with soap and hot water for 20 seconds before and after handling the food and provide single-use towels for hand drying, for example, have restrooms available for volunteers. Rely on hand sanitizer as a back-up.
- Children will be encouraged to wash their hands before choosing their produce.
- **Before taking produce home, children will be informed about the importance of washing the produce under cold running tap water to remove any lingering dirt.** (This reduces bacteria that may be present. If there is a firm surface, such as on apples or potatoes, the surface can be scrubbed with a brush.)

DROP & GO KFM Storage:

- Some KFMs are drop-and-go: FBST delivers the product and the KFM is held at a later time. It is essential that all produce is stored safely until the event.
- Produce will never be stored in a cooler under meat or other products that could leak (cross contamination) as this could contaminate the produce and cause a foodborne illness.

Site visits

A requirement of hosting a KFM distribution includes an annual site visit. Your Programs & Partnerships Coordinator will select a KFM distribution to come and check on various aspects of the program. Much of this includes food safety on our warehouse and driver end. See [our website](#) for a copy of our site visit form.

That's it! Please let us know if you have any additional questions. Thank you for your partnership!