

The Community Food Connection Program

Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

Q1: What is Community Food Connection?

A1: Community Food Connection (CFC) is an NYC Department of Social Services program that provides food and capacity building assistance to organizations operating food pantries and soup kitchens. It plays a crucial role in supplying emergency food resources to communities, particularly in high-need areas.

CFC was formerly known as the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP). EFAP was established by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) authority under Title [7 U.S.C. 7501-7516](#); [7 U.S.C. 2011-2036](#) of the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983, which defines FNS' responsibility to distribute USDA foods and allocate funds to states for emergency food assistance programs. With a primary goal of helping to supplement the diets of low-income Americans, EFAP supported provision of emergency food assistance at no cost. In 2022, the program became CFC.

Q2: How does CFC work?

A2: The City contracts with a food distributor who provides a list of approved food items for CFC providers. CFC allocates credit to providers, which they can use to purchase approved items. As partner providers operate with differing hours, locations, and capacities, the CFC program can accommodate an array of delivery windows and order sizes to meet the needs of the community served. The amount of credit allocated to providers is determined on an annual basis, supporting providers in ordering relevant food resources throughout the year.

Understanding that need can change due to emergencies and other unpredictable factors, CFC also provides flexibility for increased spenddown. In these cases, additional funds are allocated halfway through, or six months into, the funding period. Additional allocations are made at the discretion of the CFC program administrators to encourage full utilization of funding by program providers.

Q3: What types of food items does CFC provide to member organizations?

A3: The CFC program provides monetary support for the purchase of approved food items including fruits, vegetables, rice, beans, juice, cereal, pasta, protein, and more. All foods provided as part of the approved vending list meet the citywide nutritional standards. Organizations can request new items, including religious, cultural, or other diversified food items, to be included on the approved product list, bolstering the flexibility and adaptability of the program offerings.

Q4: What is the impact of the CFC program?

A4: The CFC Annual Impact Report assesses the total number of providers, number of visits, the volume of fresh fruit and vegetables distributed, and how much of the Supply Gap was closed. Historical reports on CFC impact can be found on the MOFP website under [CFC Impact Reports](#).

Funding & Budget

Q5: How is the CFC program funded?

A5: The CFC program is funded through the New York City Budget, guided by insights from the annual [Supply Gap Analysis](#) as well as citywide, time-relevant needs (e.g. reduction of pandemic-era additional benefits, establishments of shelters for newly arrived migrants). CFC receives a baseline of \$25 million in funding, the majority of which is provided through city tax levy dollars. During the annual Budget Cycle process, the amount of CFC funding is negotiated, taking into account specific annual needs and historic precedent in funding amounts. See the recent CFC budget in the [CFC Impact Report](#).

Q6: How does the CFC support organizations in expanding their services or capacity?

A6: CFC supports partner organizations through onboarding assistance, sharing information and resources, and providing capacity building grants. Capacity building grants are provided annually as available to aid organizations with improvement or expansion initiatives. Grants support scaling up service through investments in technology, storage space, refrigeration, transportation, and more. Organizations must submit a separate application to receive capacity building funds.

Q9: How does the CFC determine the allocation of food resources to providers?

A9: CFC funds are supplemental, meaning that they are not the sole source of support but serve as an additional resource to providers that have other funding streams. Provider allocations are determined based on multiple factors, including the Supply Gap and Neighborhood Priority rankings. The Supply Gap provides insights into historical data including neighborhoods' estimated need for and existing supply of emergency food, and where there exists a deficit in neighborhoods' emergency food supply. Additional insights into the Supply Gap can be found [here](#). New providers are allocated smaller awards until service, reach, and capacity can be documented in FeedNYC. For returning providers, allocations are based on service, reach, capacity, and effective resource management history. As the funding amount is finite, the more providers that apply for CFC funds, the less is available per allocation.

Q10: What is the Supply Gap Analysis?

A10: Completed annually by the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity), the Supply Gap Analysis measures the difference between the amount of emergency food available and the amount needed for every New Yorker to be food secure. The annual Supply Gap Analysis is composed of two key assessment tools:

The Supply Gap Tool determines the difference in emergency food supply and emergency food demand by Neighborhood Tabulation Area (NTA). Food supply inputs are from the FeedNYC Tracker, which compiles the majority of emergency food data in the city. Data on food demand comes from the latest Feeding America report on food hardship, sourced from U.S. Census data.

The Neighborhood Prioritization Tool uses the Supply Gap results and additional factors (TRIE neighborhood designation, unemployment rate, presence of vulnerable populations, percent of SNAP recipients) to rank neighborhoods by need. Prioritization factors are reviewed on an annual basis, offering the flexibility to add or remove factors as policy goals and time-sensitive community needs evolve (e.g., location of emergency shelters was added in the 2023 assessment to respond to the additional pressure reported by emergency food providers).

Additional information about the Supply Gap Analysis can be found on [here](#).

Impact on Food Security

Q11: Who does the CFC program serve?

A11: The CFC program serves NYC's food insecure population across the five boroughs through partnerships with emergency food providers within the community.

Q12: How does the CFC measure success in reducing food insecurity?

A12: The CFC program measures success by assessing the change in the Supply Gap. The CFC program aims to close **30%+ of the food Supply Gap** each year through contributions to the mosaic of emergency food providers across the city.

Q13: What is the role of CFC in TRIE neighborhoods?

A13: TRIE neighborhoods represent 33 neighborhoods exhibiting significant racial and economic disparities in health outcomes as identified by the City. Expanding equitable food access is a key piece of addressing these historical harms, as such **72% of all CFC providers serve TRIE NTAs**, and **CFC is active in 92% of all TRIE NTAs**.

Q14: How does CFC adapt to meet the changing needs of food insecure New Yorkers?

A14: CFC remains committed to providing locally sourced, nutrient rich, culturally relevant food to New Yorkers experiencing food insecurity. Through collaboration with emergency food providers across the city, CFC works to adapt to time-sensitive changes in need and food supply, including reallocation of funding to target pockets of unmet need. Further, CFC strategizes with community partners, the Mayor's Office of Food Policy (MOFP), and the NYC Opportunity team to improve service, data-driven insights, and collective impact for increased food security.

Q15: How does CFC coordinate with other city programs and partners to maximize impact?

A15: The CFC program coordinates with both MOFP and NYC Opportunity, pantries, food banks, and other partners across the emergency feeding network to support citywide food security. This includes aligning strategies to strengthen collaboration and support, facilitate capacity building and best practices, and adjust to real-time need as it arises due to unexpected changes on the ground. This is facilitated through monthly convenings, reporting in the centralized FeedNYC platform, and participation in networks like the Food Policy Council and The Roundtable, to bolster efforts for improved delivery of services across the network.

Application & Enrollment

Q16: Who is eligible to apply for the CFC program?

A16: To be eligible for participation in the CFC program, an organization must:

- Operate a food pantry or soup kitchen for at least four months prior to application.
- Possess IRS verification of their Employer Identification Number (EIN) and Tax-Exempt Status [501(c)(3)].
- Have other established sources of food and funding.
- Maintain consistent days and hours of operation.
- Distribute food to the general public without charge or mandatory participation in any religious or other programs.
- Ensure food is stored, prepared, and distributed securely to maintain safety and integrity.
- Not operate from a private residence.
- Have a reliable method for accounting for the number of people served.
- For soup kitchens, hold a valid permit from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Q17: How can an organization apply to become a CFC provider?

A17: Organizations can apply by completing the [CFC Application Form](#) and submitting it along with necessary documentation, including IRS verification of **501(c)(3) status**, a **list of board members**, and proof of food funding sources, to the DSS Community Food Connection at 150 Greenwich Street, 43rd Floor, New York, NY 10007. For assistance, contact 929-221-7679.

Q18: What documents are required with the CFC program application?

A18: Applicants must attach:

- IRS verification of the organization's EIN and Federal Tax-Exempt Status [501(c)(3)].
- A list of the Board of Directors.
- Documentation of current food funding sources, such as membership agreements, award letters, or budget letters.

Q19: Is there an application deadline?

A19: The application does not specify a deadline; however, it's advisable to contact the CFC directly for the most current information.

Program Operations & Logistics

Q20: How many providers participate in CFC?

A20: New providers are able to apply for CFC participation on an annual basis. As such, the most up to date count of CFC providers can be found through the CFC Quarterly Report, found on Open Data NYC [here](#).

Q21: Where does CFC operate?

A21: The CFC program operates in communities serviced through Partner Sites across all five boroughs of New York City.

Q22: Are there reporting requirements for member organizations?

A22: Yes, CFC program partners are required to report key metrics into the FeedNYC portal on a monthly basis.

Q23: What are the key metrics reported by CFC program partners in the FeedNYC portal?

A23: Key metrics reported in the FeedNYC portal include:

- Service statistics (zip code, household size, demographics of community served)
- Frequency of visits
- Program participation
- Spoken languages
- Food supply deliveries
- Food allocation and composition
- And more