

A 🦋 FOOD RESCUE HERO™ WEBINAR SERIES

HOW TO START A FOOD RESCUE

Lesson ④: Expanding Your Nonprofit Distribution Network

Guest speaker!



A FEW REMINDERS:

Drop your questions in the Q&A as we go!

Yes, this is being recorded!

A recording of this presentation will be emailed within the next few days.

Links provided at the end of the webinar:

→ Next webinar



WEBINAR SERIES LOOK AHEAD:

~~Lesson 1:~~ Introduction

~~Lesson 2:~~ Funding

~~Lesson 3:~~ Building Operations: Food Donors

Lesson 4: Building Operations: Distributions *TODAY'S LESSON*

Lesson 5: Essential "Extras": Marketing & Board Development

Lesson 6: Pulling it all together



TIPS FOR SUCCESS WITH **DOUG SILVER**



Doug Silver

Executive Director
Gotham Food Pantry



TODAY'S AGENDA:

1. Introduction: Why Partnerships Are the Backbone of Food Rescue
2. Identifying Potential Partners
3. Leveraging Elected Officials
4. Approaching New Partners
5. Building Trust from Day One
6. Using Intake & Feedback Forms
7. Start Small, Build Strong
8. Establishing Communication & Expectations
9. Maintaining Strong Partnerships
10. Growing Your Network
11. Ensuring Dignity in Distribution
12. Key Takeaways



WHY PARTNERSHIPS ARE THE BACKBONE OF FOOD RESCUE



Shared Mission – ensuring neighbors have access to fresh, nutritious food

No one can do it alone – food rescue thrives when nonprofits, tenant leaders, schools, libraries, and senior centers join forces

Community Trust & Access – local partners know their communities best

Shared Capacity – pooling food donors, drivers, storage, volunteers prevents burnout

Sustainable Growth – strong foundations allow food rescue to scale effectively and feed more people with dignity



IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS



Schools: afterschool programs, family resource centers



Senior Centers: consistent demand, trusted hubs



Libraries: community anchor spaces



Faith-based organizations: trusted networks



Shelters & housing communities: high-need sites



Local elected officials: connected to tenant associations & shelters



LEVERAGING ELECTED OFFICIALS



Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar's Chief of Staff volunteering at a food distribution in Queens, NY

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Community connectors: officials know greatest needs

Introduce to tenant associations, senior centers, shelters

Helps build credibility & open doors quickly

Frame food rescue as a solution to food insecurity in their district



APPROACHING NEW PARTNERS



Lead with shared mission: 'We both want to feed our neighbors'



Listen first: Ask what their community needs most



Share a **clear value proposition**



Lean on introductions from trusted officials & partners



Build excitement with stories & impact



BUILDING TRUST FROM DAY ONE



Be transparent about what you can and cannot provide



Offer **small pilot collaborations** before scaling



Respect their time and capacity



Ensure food safety and **dignity** in distribution



USING INTAKE + FEEDBACK FORMS

Intake forms for new partners: capacity, storage, days/times

Identify volunteer availability & additional needs

Community Trust & Access: local partners know their communities best

Quarterly feedback forms: what's working, what's not

Use data to adapt and strengthen collaborations

PARTNERS INTAKE FORM

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. The more information we have, the better we serve your residents.

🔒 Not shared

* Indicates required question

1. COMPLEX NAME: *

Your answer _____

2. COMPLEX ADDRESS (For Deliveries) *

Your answer _____

3. NUMBER OF TOTAL RESIDENTS IN YOUR COMPLEX *

Your answer _____



START SMALL, BUILD STRONG



Begin with pilot distributions
(one day/week,
smaller loads)



Adjust based on
feedback and
capacity
assessments



Focus on building
trust and systems
before growth



A solid foundation prevents burnout & rescues more food long-term



ESTABLISHING COMMUNICATION + EXPECTATIONS



Decide: Who's the main contact?

Confirm logistics: schedule, storage, volunteers

Set expectations: type, frequency, roles, food safety protocols

Use MOUs to document agreements



MAINTAINING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS



Check in regularly, not just when you need something



Celebrate wins together: photos, press, stories



Offer training, volunteer help, and resources



Stay adaptable: needs and capacity will evolve



GROWING YOUR NETWORK



Use current partners for **referrals**

Reliability builds word of mouth

Host community events for **cross-connection**

Engage local officials: amplify, connect, and legitimize



ENSURING DIGNITY IN DISTRIBUTION



Prioritize **fresh**, high-quality food

Set up **welcoming, respectful** distribution sites

Train volunteers in **food safety** procedures

Train volunteers **in trauma-informed service** and **de-escalation practices**

Empower partners to shape local food distribution



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **Identify broadly:** partners exist in every neighborhood
2. **Engage with respect:** trust through listening
3. **Leverage elected officials** as connectors
4. **Use intake + feedback forms** to guide growth
5. **Start small:** strong systems prevent burnout & expand impact
6. **Sustain partnerships** for long-term success



Q+A DISCUSSION

Let's talk about what this
could look like in your
community



THANK YOU!

Douglas Silver



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www.gothamfoodpantry.org

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NEXT MONTH'S CLASS:



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FOOD RESCUE CONFERENCE

OCT 16 + 17

**THE ONLY
CONFERENCE
FOCUSED SOLELY ON
ACTIONABLE &
INNOVATIVE
FOOD RECOVERY
SOLUTIONS.**





Making greater impact, together.



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