HOW TO START A FOOD RESCUE

Lesson (4): Expanding Your Nonprofit Distribution Network



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

Weblata follow-up meeting

→ Next webinar



WEBINAR SERIES LOOK AHEAD:

Lesson 4: Introduction

Lesson 2: Funding

SSON 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
- 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

FOOD RESCUE HERO | foodrescuehero.org

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 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 $\ensuremath{^{\star}}$
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



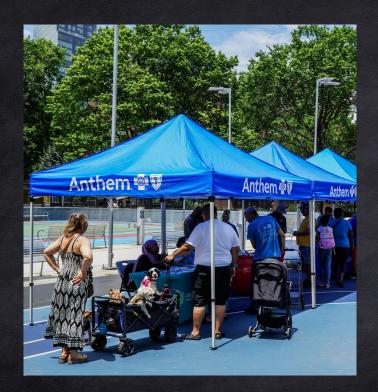
Offer training, volunteer help, and resources



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

- ldentify broadly: partners exist in every neighborhood
- **Engage with respect**: trust through listening
- Leverage elected officials as connectors
- Use intake + feedback forms to guide growth
- Start small: strong systems prevent burnout & expand impact
- 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



NEXT MONTH'S CLASS:



A FOOD RESCUE HERO™ WEBINAR SERIES

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ACTIONABLE & INNOVATIVE



Making greater impact, together.









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