

Bergen County Food Security Task Force



Quarterly Newsletter April-June 2023

Announcing the Bergen County Office of Food Security.

On June 7th, 2023, at the 3rd Annual Bergen County Food Pantry Summit, County Executive Jim Tedesco announced that the Food Security Task Force will become a permanent office in the Bergen County Department of Human Services and will be officially titled the Office of Food Security. While our name is changing, our mission is not. We will continue to advocate for food pantries, provide valuable resources to pantry staff and their clients, and foster connections between government and service providers. Thank you for your continued support and we are excited for the future of the Office of Food Security.

Newsletter Highlights

3RD ANNUAL FOOD
PANTRY SUMMIT

SOCIAL SERVICES
DIRECTORY

CLIENT REFERALLS

FCDC RENOVATION

MEADOWLANDS YMCA
200TH DISTRIBUTION

MENSTRUAL
PRODUCT DRIVE

VETERANS SERVICES
STAND DOWN

SOUNDS FOR
HOPE 17

FEEDING NJ
CONFERENCE



County Executive James Tedesco III
Bergen County Board of Commissioners
Thomas J. Sullivan, Chairman | Germaine M. Ortiz, Vice Chairwoman |
Dr. Joan D. Voss, Chair Pro Tempore |
Mary J. Amoroso | Rafael Marte | Steve Tanelli | Tracy Silna Zur

3rd Annual Food Pantry Summit



Thank you to the fifty-eight food pantries and service providers who took part in our 3rd Annual Bergen County Food Pantry Summit. The Summit was a day full of meaningful presentations and discussions on how we can work together to combat the prevailing issue of food insecurity in our communities. The Summit would not have been a success without every group who attended. We look forward to seeing everyone next year!



A special thanks to our keynote speaker, Mark Dinglasan, the Director of the New Jersey Office of the Food Security Advocate. Under his leadership, New Jersey is developing new comprehensive policies to combat food insecurity, to advocate for food pantries, and to address the root causes of hunger. New Jersey is the first state to have a state-level Food Security Advocate.

Social Service Directory

Bergen County Social Services Directory 2023

County, state, and local nonprofit agencies providing food, financial aid, childcare, mental health, substance abuse, and many other resources for County residents



Bergen County
**Food Security
Task Force**



Our Social Services Directory has been updated, and now features over forty organizations equipped to aid Bergen County residents. The update features QR codes to quickly access an organization's website. To view the most up-to-date version of the directory, please visit bergenfightshunger.org/flyers-and-directory. The directory will be continuously updated and new pages will be available on our website.

Oasis Insights Client Referrals

Our food pantry database management software, Oasis Insights, now has the ability to send and receive client referrals. With this feature, pantry staff can quickly generate a referral to provide a warm handoff for their clients to receive services that will assist them and their families. In addition, service providers can now send referrals to food pantries. If you are interested in sending or receiving referrals please contact Stephen Shuler at sshuler@co.bergen.nj.us



Case Referral - John Smith

Service: BC Food Security Task Force
Amount: 1 Visit
Current Status: Pending
Requested Due Date: Not Specified

[John Smith](#) was referred to your agency by [Stephen Shuler](#) from [Stephen's Test Agency](#):

"Hello. My client John Smith is need of assistance. He is a disabled senior, lives in Bergen County, and is looking for additional resources to help him and his wife. The best way to get a hold of his to call him at 201-111-1111 or email at test@gmail.com
 Thank you "

Franciscan Community Development Center Grand Re-Opening

After months of hard work, the Franciscan Community Development Center (FCDC) in Fairview, NJ, has completed its renovation and now offers a choice-model pantry. The new pantry features a walk-in refrigerator and freezer, space for their clients to browse the shelves, and an ADA-compliant bathroom and entrance. Thank you to Habitat for Humanity, Kuiken Brothers Company, RSC Architects, and Community Food Bank of New Jersey for their generous donations of time and materials.



Meadowlands YMCA 200th Distribution

Congratulations to the Meadowlands YMCA for completing their 200th Food Distribution. The Meadowlands YMCA, like many pantries, was formed as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2020 the pantry has become a permanent fixture of the Meadowlands YMCA, serving approximately 1,200 families a month. The pantry offers a monthly food distribution as well as a customizable pantry bag for the families they serve.



Inaugural Menstrual Product Drive



The YWCA of Northern New Jersey, Girl Scouts of Northern New Jersey, Bergen County Food Security Task Force, Bergen County Commission on the Status of Women, and the Junior Commission on the Status of Women joined forces to bring awareness to the need for menstrual products and collected valuable hygiene products for our community. Menstrual products are not eligible for SNAP or WIC benefits and take a huge dent out of a family's monthly food budget. Thank you to those who participated in our donation drive and awareness campaign!

Cross County Collaboration with the Hudson County Food Security Task Force

The Bergen County and Hudson County Food Security Task Forces met to exchange practices and highlight areas of collaboration to fight food insecurity. Both Bergen and Hudson are working on new initiatives to inform their residents of available services and are creating accessible pathways to obtain them. After meeting at One Bergen County Plaza, we visited the Meadowlands YMCA Food Pantry for a demonstration of Oasis Insights, our food pantry database software. Thank you to Amanda from the Meadowlands YMCA for your time and we look forward to future collaborative efforts with the Hudson County Food Security Task Force!



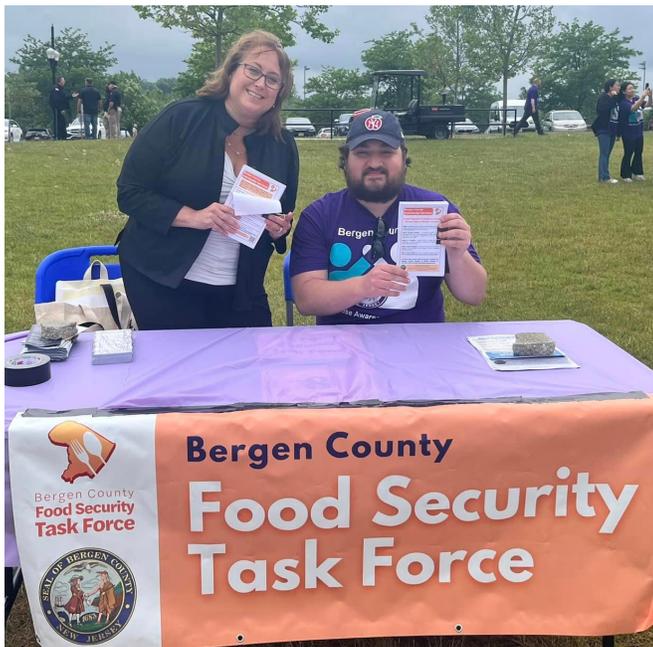
Veterans Services Stand Down

The Bergen County Division of Veterans Services held their first Stand Down. Over seventy veterans in need attended and received a hot meal, a bag full of essential items, and a chance to meet with over twenty-five service providers. The Stand Down also marked the Food Security Task Force's official debut as a resource table. At the event, we provided a list of food pantries in Bergen County, information on what to do when food insecure, and a senior-specific food program flyer. Thank you to the Division of Veterans Services for hosting a wonderful and informative day for our veterans!



Elder Abuse Walk

The Bergen County Division of Senior Services' 2nd Annual Elder Abuse Walk brought together members of the community and providers to raise awareness about elder abuse and to highlight our support for older adults in Bergen. The Task Force's most recent survey estimates that nearly 30% of those going to food pantries are seniors. To help raise awareness of this issue, we collaborated with the Division of Senior Services to create a senior-specific resource guide. This guide contains a list of food programs available to adults aged 60+ in Bergen County. To view our flyers, please visit <https://bergenfightshunger.org/flyers-and-directory>.



Sounds for Hope 17

Thank you to the students and staff of Bergen County Technical School (BCTS) Teterboro for selecting the Food Security Task Force as the recipient of their Sounds for Hope 17 donation. It was an honor to be included in the event and see the talent of our BCTS students on display.



Feeding NJ Conference

The Task Force staff had the opportunity to participate in the first-ever Feeding New Jersey Conference. The conference brought together the five primary food banks in New Jersey to discuss and share ideas affecting pantries throughout the state. The Food Security Task Force benefitted by deepening its understanding of statewide challenges and vocalized the issues faced by pantries in Bergen County.



Lunch & Learn Seminars

This quarter, we held another successful round of Lunch & Learn seminars. Thank you to Bergen Volunteer Medical Initiative, Bergen Job Center, BC Division of Family Guidance, BC Office for Children, and BC Special Child Health Services for your insightful presentations! To view our previous Lunch & Learn Seminars, please visit <https://bergenfightshunger.org/lunch-and-learn-series>. Our Lunch & Learn Seminar series will continue in the second half of 2023. Stayed tuned for the next session in July!



Bergen County
**Food Security
Task Force**



Lunch & Learn

September is

**Hunger
Action
Month.**

FEEDING
AMERICA

Hunger Action Month

Hunger Action Month is fast approaching and the Food Security Task Force is preparing for a month full of events, initiatives, and advocacy throughout Bergen County. If your organization has an event you would like us to participate in, please contact us at bcfoodtaskforce@gmail.com.