



Message to Agency and Program Partners Regarding the Government Shutdown

January 11, 2019

To Agency and Program Partners,

The first impacts of the partial federal government shutdown are being felt across our region. As the shutdown enters its fourth week, Harvesters would like to provide an update on impacts related to you, our network partners. We understand many of the people you serve may be feeling additional strain or confusion during this time. You also may start receiving inquiries from federal employees who may not have needed assistance from you before.

As a result, you may experience an uptick in demand as the shutdown continues. Harvesters stands ready to assist you, if there is a need for additional food or volunteers during this time.

We have received word that federal nutrition assistance programs, such as SNAP, WIC, and commodities are in good shape as far as funding and inventory through February (and some a bit longer).

Here's a summary of the latest information we have:

Agency Network

- If the shutdown impacts the ability for people to receive benefits from federal nutrition assistance programs, there may be more people seeking help from food pantries, community kitchens, and mobile food pantry distributions.
- There may be an increase in need from workers who are furloughed or working without pay across our region.
- Please consider expanding the eligibility guidelines at your food pantry for people who may be affected by this shutdown.
- If you are seeing an increase in need due to the shutdown and need additional support from Harvesters, please contact your Agency Services representative. Or you can contact Customer Care at any time at 816-929-3220 or customercare@harvesters.org.

TEFAP and CSFP

- Currently, Harvesters has adequate inventory in-house for the USDA commodities programs. This includes The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).
- These programs will continue as usual, with no disruption, at this time.
- If the shutdown continues for a longer term, there may be impact or delays in these programs, which will be fully communicated.

Kids Cafe

- Kids Cafe programs are able to operate as usual.
- If the shutdown continues for a longer term, there may be impact or delays in these programs, which will be fully communicated.

SNAP

- The USDA announced this week SNAP benefits will be fully funded through February.
- However, in order to ensure February benefits are distributed and fully funded, States are working through plans to request and load SNAP benefits on participants' EBT cards by January 20.
- **Please note:** The benefits loaded by January 20 will be February's benefits, and therefore there would be no additional funding available until it's time to distribute March benefits.
- Distributing February's benefits earlier will create a longer time between allotments than usual and families may need to turn to food pantries to fill in any gaps.
- March benefits are not guaranteed at this time.
- Both Missouri and Kansas will continue to accept and process SNAP applications during the shutdown.

As you all know, the shutdown is a very fluid situation and things can change at any time. We are closely monitoring the situation and will continue to share important program updates as we receive them. You also can find these updates on our website at <https://www.harvesters.org/Agencies> and on our Agency Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/605289596312307/>

Thank you for your partnership and your continued commitment to serving your community. Please contact Harvesters' Customer Care with any additional questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,



Valerie Nicholson-Watson
Harvesters President & CEO