



- Cooking groups have the option of cooking off-site if they have access to a commercial kitchen space. Otherwise, we ask that they cook on-site with our Meal Site Coordinator.
- Desserts can be prepared ahead of time- please package or wrap individually before transporting to the site!
- When planning your meal, please bear in mind that we strive to offer complete, nutrient dense options. This means including:
  - A protein
  - A vegetable, preferably green! Salads or roasted vegetable medleys are great!
  - A fruit
  - Whole grain or bean pasta, brown rice, sweet potato, squash or other starch (please try to stay away from white pastas or white potatoes)

For help planning your menu, please refer to our [menu planning guide](#)

*We have made a greater focus on adding the availability of fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains to our meal program and on reducing the amount of saturated fats, trans fats, and sodium in our meals. Any efforts your group is able to use to aid us in achieving this goal will be greatly appreciated. (As you keep in mind that some guests may have food allergies, please list ingredients on casseroles that may contain fish or nuts, in particular.)*

- All supplies needed for packaging are provided by FCCMP and available on-site.

*Weather or timing of the meal (our numbers tend to be larger at the end of the month or when the weather is particularly bad) can sometimes affect the number of attendees.*

- For planning purposes: a 9 x 13 pan will feed 12 – 15 people for a main dish, or can be cut into 24 pieces for dessert.
  - On average, we have been feeding approximately:
    - Greenfield: 120 meals per service
    - Northfield: 85 meals per service

Suggestions for Volunteer Groups

- Orange: 65 meals per service
- Turners: 125 meals per service
- Each of our meal sites have differing dates and start & end times for service:
  - Greenfield: Tuesday and Wednesday 4:45 - 5:45
  - Northfield: 4th Thursdays 5 - 6
  - Orange: Thursday 5 - 5:30
  - Turners Falls: Monday 4:30 - 5:30

Things to do one month before your day of service:

**Plan your menu!** Refer to our guide & contact either the Meal Site Coordinator (or our Program Associate if volunteering in Greenfield) to receive access to the Food Bank shopping list and any pantry items we have on hand.

**Be responsive!** We need frequent and open communication from our cooking group leaders! Our Site Coordinators know the nutritional needs of their patrons and can inform you of any allergens that need to be accommodated. They can also help you prepare a timeline to guide your order of operations in the kitchen.

**Recruit your volunteer team!** You'll want at least 3 to 4 volunteers in the kitchen, and if possible, another 2-3 volunteers to help with packaging. If you are struggling with finding volunteers, please let our Site Coordinator know as soon as possible so that we can try to accommodate you!

Things to know the day you serve:

- You, **the volunteer group leader, need to arrive 15 minutes before the rest of your cooks** to touch base with the Site Coordinator and get oriented in the space.
- Volunteers are responsible for all food preparations and cleaning! Our Site Coordinators are there to help steward the process and ensure the group is following ServSafe guidelines.
- Meals need to be ready about an hour before service to allow enough time for packaging.
- Reminder: Per the Board of Health:
  - Any volunteer or staff member touching food needs to wear gloves, whether in the kitchen or serving food to guests. Gloves need to be changed each time you change activities, or touch your face or hair.

You are wonderful for being a part of this community by nurturing and caring for each other. Enjoy the good company of a Community Meal, and thank you.