

Pandemic Hampers

In 2007 the Calgary Food Bank was contacted by the City of Calgary to partner with them to assemble Pandemic Hampers in the event a pandemic strikes the city. Their main focus was to feed sick, housebound Calgarians who do not have adequate food supplies at home, are unable to get out to purchase food as they are too ill and do not have support people to assist them with this.

We had a committee of 7 decide the points that should be considered, the content to be included, the budget amount and who will purchase the content, assemble the Pandemic Hampers and store them.

We had a number of brainstorming meetings and over a period of time, points emerged as to how to proceed with this project.

Possible Points to Take into Consideration:

- Where will the budget for the hampers come from?
- Who has to approve the budget?
- Is there a budget in place to take into consideration when content in the assembled hampers come close to their expiry date and must be replaced?
- What age group will the hampers serve?
- Will you be including a baby hamper if required? Diapers?
- What content will you include in the Pandemic Hampers? Most people who are sick neither want nor need large meals. Think of content that is easy for most people to digest. The content to be considered should:
 1. Require very little preparation
 2. Not be perishable

Content that should not be considered:

1. Do not include content that many in the general population may be allergic to or not able to tolerate such as nuts, spicy foods and milk. Beans may cause gastric problems for a number of people.

We did, as a committee, decide to include peanut butter for a variety of reasons.

2. Do not include close dated content.

- Will you add a small manual can opener? Not everyone will have one in their home as many people have electric can openers.
- What criteria will you use for those asking for the hamper?
- Often people outside the city will migrate to a larger centre when a crisis strikes. Will you be able to serve them also?
- Where will the hamper content be purchased and by whom?
- Who will be responsible for organizing groups to assemble the hampers?
- Where will the food be stored? Food can't be stored in the heat, near a heater or in an area where there is a risk of freezing.
- Who will be responsible for ensuring the close dated content is removed from the hampers and new content added? Ensure that there is a budget for when this replacement is required.
- How will pallets of Pandemic Hampers be transported between sites if the hampers are not stored at the same site as they are assembled?
- If the Pandemic Hampers are required, who will deliver them? Do not assume that drivers with your organization will not be ill also. Even if they, themselves, are not ill they may have family members that are and so may be absent. Think seriously who would be available. Someone thought of the Scouts but I can't think of a parent who would allow their child to deliver food to someone who is suffering from an illness related to a pandemic, can you?

Don't Assume the Following:

- That everyone has a can opener. Many people use an electric can opener in their home which they may not be able to use if they are bed ridden.
- That when content is purchased that suppliers will ship items with the longest expiry dates. Ask them specifically about this. This will save money as you will not have to replace expiring items as often.
- That suppliers will be able to fill large orders for food on very short notice. Most of them store only a small amount of food on site. If you decide not to make arrangements for food requirement in case of a pandemic it would be highly unlikely that you could make those arrangements if a pandemic strikes.

Pandemic Hamper Content

- 7 Granola Bars
- 4 Canned peaches 398ml
- 3 Canned applesauce or other fruit 398ml
- 1 Jar peanut butter 500g
- 1 Sleeve soda crackers
- 7 Instant oatmeal (individual packages)
- 4 Cans mini ravioli
- 3 Cans tuna
- 7 Individual instant soup packages
- 1 -4 pack pudding cups
- 4 Individual instant hot chocolate packages
- 1 Container apple juice 2 liters or 4 drinking boxes
- 1 small manual can opener, if it is decided that you will add this.

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- Decide on what age group will likely be the recipient of the Pandemic Hampers.
- Decide on content and amount of each item to be included.
- Purchase the hamper content.
- Decide what you will pack the content into. We decided to pack the content into bags and pack the bags into banana boxes because those are readily available to us.
- If bags, what will you pack the bags into for storage?
- Organize volunteers to assemble the hampers.
- Our Pandemic Hampers are assembled on the conveyor belt that is used to assemble our regular hampers but you could put the pallets in an area in a line or square and have volunteers physically go to each pallet and put the proper number of items into a bag.
- All content for 1 hamper is set into 1 bag. Bags are then set into banana boxes with 2 bags per box.

- Banana boxes are stacked on pallets 4 high which enables the pallets to be stacked on top of each other, if need be.
- Pallets are wrapped using the pallet wrapper for stability, safety, and security.
- Transport pallets to storage if Pandemic Hampers are to be stored at a different site than where they are assembled.
- Ensure that pallets while in storage are not in the direct heat or in an area where they risk possible freezing.

This was the process we used which I hope helps some of you in making decisions about whether you want to make this type of hamper and if you do possible points to consider in making your decisions.

Thanks for your interest in being proactive in your community in case a pandemic strikes.

If anyone has any questions about this process, please contact me at 403-312-7597.

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