



4P Foods, in coordination with community organizations throughout Virginia, the DMV and food hubs across the east coast, is prepared to serve as one of the lead organizations in the regional effort to feed our communities and keep small farms and food businesses afloat in the face of COVID-19. We are activating schools, food banks, kitchens, delivery vehicles and more to mobilize the supply chain that will get food to people who need it in the immediate term and beyond. This regionally coordinated, hyper-locally executed effort will require a significant expansion of organizational capacity for 4P and our partners, and we estimate that \$10 Million will be needed for immediate deployment. We ask that you join us in this movement.

Local food systems feed communities—they drive economies, create connections, provide nourishment, and employ countless people from farm laborers to dishwashers. The small farms that form the backbone of local food systems are at the forefront of environmental sustainability, land and biodiversity conservation, and rural revitalization. They are in a moment of extreme uncertainty and vulnerability, as many of the buyers they rely on (universities, K12 schools, corporate dining, restaurants) shut their doors or trim their operations, with the growing season just around the corner.

Disasters hit the poor and vulnerable the hardest, and disproportionately affect communities of color. As schools and offices close and more and more people have to stay home, children, the elderly, and others who rely on free and reduced-price food will not get the nutrition they depend on. At the same time, small farmers and food hubs will lose most of their food service sales, small food businesses who rely on food service or in-person sales will close, and farm and food system workers will lose their livelihoods.

All of that will happen unless we mobilize the local food system to do exactly what it does best: be agile, resilient, and responsive. In the midst of this crisis, people need to eat, work, and stay healthy, all of which the local food system can accomplish. We have a robust regional food network with the capacity to produce and distribute food locally and the connections in place to get food to the people who need it via partners like schools, food pantries, and other organizations serving at-risk and marginalized communities.

It is imperative that we invest in the local food system now to keep farms and food businesses viable and to provide food access to the most vulnerable in our communities so that food production and supplies remains stable and all people have equitable access to food in their communities.

Over the next 30 days, 4P Foods anticipates the following gaps and potential solutions:

Food Access:

- Gaps:
 - With the closing of schools, schoolchildren will lose access to a critical food source.
 - Traditional feeding organizations (food banks, soup kitchens, etc.) may be stymied by lack of volunteers - many have already reported reduced capacity due to insufficient volunteer numbers.
 - General public will increasingly seek food sources in compliance with social distancing and self-quarantine. Home delivery is a natural solution.
- Solutions:
 - Funding for additional organizational capacity. Many groups and individuals are eager to help. There is a need, however, for organizational leadership and coordination so that all efforts are strengthened, not duplicated.
 - At present, the most efficient approach to replace school feeding is to work with existing food service providers to continue to prepare meals at school kitchens that are then distributed to kids via alternative channels. Many schools are implementing a version of their summer feeding programs, making cold meals available for pickup at various sites throughout the district. This approach will inevitably miss some kids who can't make it to the pickup site (due to transportation issues, quarantine, etc.), which is where 4P and our partners can help with home delivery.
 - Beyond school feeding, expanded home delivery services are also needed, both for vulnerable populations such as the elderly and for the general population. 4P Foods is ready to take our current home delivery system and scale it to meet the needs of this crisis. We are developing subsidized pricing models for our food, such that everyone will be able to access home delivery services.
 - Funding is needed for additional delivery vehicles and drivers, both within 4P Foods and other partner businesses and organizations. Due to widespread closings throughout the state, there are under/unutilized vehicles, drivers, and food service workers that will be leveraged.

Farm/Food System Support:

- Gaps:
 - Without appropriate market channels in place, farms face significant reductions in sales, and the very real possibility of going under. The widespread failure of family farms will have lasting impacts on our food system, communities, and agricultural landscape.
 - Institutions such as universities make up significant portions of sales for food hubs. At 4P specifically, institutions constitute nearly a quarter of sales. Farmers

have planned crops around these sales and will see a significant reduction in revenue if that product is not diverted elsewhere.

- As public awareness spreads, people will eat out less frequently. Many small businesses are already reducing hours, further reducing farm sales.
- As a region, we face a risk of predatory land grabs by industrial, corporate farms and developers as small farms go under. This could shape our landscape for years to come.
- Solutions:
 - To mitigate reduced wholesale sales, 4P plans to transition current wholesale farmers into the greatly expanded home delivery service. With funding, those who are able will pay market price for the bags of food traditionally delivered by 4P: produce, dairy and protein, with others served on a sliding scale.
 - 4P plans to divert sales staff traditionally focused on institutional sales to refocus on home delivery sales as needed, thereby shifting capacity to handle home delivery expansion.
 - Under- or unemployed food service workers at commercial kitchens will be leveraged to make prepared meals that can be sold and delivered via 4P's regular home delivery program or utilized to expand emergency feeding capacity for those in need.
 - As COVID-19 spreads, food typically brought in from other regions may become harder to access, and distributors will turn to local food systems for supply. 4P Foods and community partners will advocate for eliminating red tape that dictates where emergency food comes from and how people can access it, so that should the industrial food system falter, regional food systems can step in.
 - If and when the time comes that FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) steps in to manage emergency feeding, they will turn to contractors to support that work. 4P's work now as a figurehead in the emergency food movement, will make it a compelling choice of contractor, allowing 4P to continue to serve small farms throughout the region.

Existing Resources

- Warehouse Space – 4P has two warehouses, one in Warrenton and one in Charlottesville, with four different storage zones (frozen, two cold zones, and ambient), including roughly 40,000 cubic feet of cold storage and significantly more in dry storage.
- Lots of food – Both in inventory and in our supply chain of 14 food hubs from as far north as Maine to as far south as South Carolina. These food hubs represent about 600 farmers, providing a robust supply of fresh produce, meat, dairy, and value-added/shelf stable items outside of traditional supply chains. While shelf stable product supply seems to be in good shape, fresh food supply chains may be disrupted in short order.

The local supply chains represented by Dreaming Out Loud, FRESHFARM Markets, 4P Foods, and others have the benefit of being resilient at times like these.

- Vehicles – We have seven refrigerated trucks of our own. We also have a confirmed partnership with Olde Dominion Transportation, which operates a fleet of 600+ cabs that have implemented the use of CDC-approved virucide to keep drivers and passengers safe. They are ready to use their fleet to move both food and people (who will inevitably need access to support services).
- Team – There are 25 of us at 4P Foods, and we are working in lockstep with Local Food Hub (based in Charlottesville, but coordinating regionally). Responding to this crisis has become the focus of everyone on the team. We're ready.

Why 4P Foods:

4P Foods has in place the infrastructure needed and, critically, the relationships and experience required to quickly grow this effort to the necessary scale. Driven by our mission of helping small farms thrive while ensuring that all people—regardless of income, race, or zip code—have access to Good Food, 4P has consistently demonstrated the ability to adjust to market needs, think creatively, scale up, and stay at the forefront of the Good Food movement.

Over the last five years, 4P has successfully built an extensive food distribution network, starting with delivery of personalized CSA-style shares to homes and offices in the greater DMV region. In 2019, 4P Foods acquired Local Food Hub's wholesale book of business, which sourced from a network of 75 farms to serve wholesale accounts throughout VA and DC, as well as Shenandoah Produce, another home delivery service. In recent months, 4P has strategically built relationships, fostered communications, and encouraged transactions between food hubs across the east coast resulting in the formation of the Eastern Food Hub Collaborative.

With two warehouses in Virginia (over 20K sq ft total), both food safety-certified and equipped with ample cold storage, a fleet of seven refrigerated delivery vehicles, and an experienced team, 4P is well-positioned in this effort. Additionally, through the Eastern Food Hub Collaborative, 4P has relationships with food hubs with still more storage (including cold storage) and delivery capacity in the region. Finally, 4P Foods has relationships with vehicle providers and transportation fleets who have expressed desire to assist.

Partners in this effort:

Local Food Hub: LFH is a fully committed partner in this effort. In addition to strong relationships with their 75 partner farmers, they are deeply embedded in food equity work in Charlottesville, and will serve as liaison and connection point for Charlottesville City Schools, the Charlottesville Food Justice network, and all emergency feeding efforts in Charlottesville. The board and staff is also committed to diverting staff time as necessary to assist 4P as

needed. Local Food Hub is also running point in coordinating any Eastern Food Hub Collaborative efforts.

DC Central Kitchen, PB&J Fund, and Hatch Kitchen: These organizations have offered their commercial kitchens as space for meal prep. They also offer staffing opportunities, as many food prep staff at those organizations suddenly find themselves underemployed.

Eastern Food Hub Collaborative: EFHC is a network of 14 farms, stretching along the East Coast, from Maine to South Carolina. The network is actively sharing pertinent details in their own work and communities, and is committed to collaborating through idea-sharing, transactions, cross-docking, and delivery.

Food Access and Equity Organizations that have been mobilized: DC Greens, FreshFarm Markets, DC Food Policy Council, Capital Area Food Bank, Arcadia, Dreaming Out Loud, DC Food Project, Martha's Table, Charlottesville Food Justice Network, YMCA of Greater Washington, Good Food Markets, FRESHFARM Markets, Create Connect, and others.

4P Foods is also in communication with K12 school systems, state and local governments, colleges and universities, and others throughout Virginia and the greater DMV. As the situation progresses, we are committed to collaborating and leveraging the strengths that each group brings to best serve their communities. To this end, Local Food Hub and 4P Foods are coordinating a regional Slack workspace (with 50+ members so far) for partners to share updates and coordinate efforts.

Conclusion:

This is a challenging time in our country and our world. It is difficult to distinguish myth from reality, and impossible to know what will ultimately happen. But chaos and panic are not foregone conclusions. We have spent the last several years advocating for and building an equitable, resilient regional food system, and now is the time to fully leverage it. What we do know for sure is that our communities—particularly vulnerable communities—need support to keep people fed and farmers growing. We intend to have the tax-deductible fund infrastructure set up this week, with the goal of getting \$10 Million committed by Friday, March 20th, 2020. This is our collective movement. This is our collective moment. We hope you will join us.

With Gratitude & Urgency,

Tom McDougall



Founder, 4P Foods