



COVID-19 Foodbank FAQs

Reimbursement from CDEM Groups

- 1) Are CDEM Groups able to reimburse food charities and services which support vulnerable people affected by the COVID-19 restrictions?

Yes: CDEM Groups provide welfare support to people affected by emergencies. They may engage eligible services/NGOs to provide the assistance needed. These providers would seek reimbursement from their local authority/CDEM Groups who in turn would claim these costs from NEMA. NEMA can only reimburse councils/CDEM Groups.

- 2) What costs are allowed for reimbursement by CDEM groups?

There is some flexibility around what costs can be recovered, as long as they are:

- Costs faced by the foodbank or other community organisation that are temporary and additional to their normal operating costs,
- Reasonable costs that are directly related to the provision of food and other essential household items to people who have immediate needs as a result of COVID-19,
- Agreed to or requested by your CDEM Group Welfare team.

This flexible approach recognises the different operating models and cost structures of foodbanks and community providers (e.g. donated / purchased goods; paid staff / volunteers; packaging and delivery approaches).

- 3) What are examples of costs that local authorities / CDEM Groups can provide foodbanks and other community organisations with funding to meet?

- Costs associated with the making up (including packaging) and delivery (if required) of food and household supplies (e.g. cleaning products, personal care items, pet food for companion animals, over-the-counter medication, blankets etc) to meet immediate, essential needs
- The purchase of PPE for staff and volunteers, where this is considered necessary by the foodbank / community organisation (taking into account Ministry of Health guidelines and advice)
- Petrol or other costs associated with the delivery of food and other household supplies to people who are self-isolating or otherwise unable to access them themselves
- Temporary hire (not purchase) of plant / equipment (e.g. chillers/coolers, forklifts, pallets, waste disposal, vans or trucks) required for the storage, preparation or delivery of food
- Short-term leasing of additional premises or facilities to meet additional COVID-19 related demand

- The hiring of additional staff (including security guards if required) to support the safe preparation and delivery of food and other household goods and services

4) What costs are not reimbursable?

- The provision of food and any other costs associated with animals that are not companion animals including stock and animal rescue operations and support
- Business-as-usual costs that have not been impacted by increased demand, reduced donations, or additional costs due to COVID-19.

5) How long will CDEM Groups provide these reimbursements for?

Eligible reimbursements are linked to an emergency (as defined under the CDEM Act) and apply whether there is a state of emergency in place or not. In the case of COVID-19, CDEM Groups have activated their CDEM arrangements in support of the response to COVID-19, in order to limit the extent of the emergency. The expectation is that once movement restrictions are eased, and businesses start to move towards more normal operations, emergency welfare support from CDEM Groups will no longer be required. However, decisions have yet to be made about how long CDEM arrangements will remain in place. Work is underway across government on the transition from the COVID-19 response, to recovery.

6) Are food rescue initiatives able to be reimbursed by CDEM as well?

Where food rescue initiatives assist with the provision of food to foodbanks and community food services, foodbanks or community food services can seek reimbursement of costs incurred from CDEM/Local Authority in the sourcing of food from a food rescue organisation.

If a food rescue organisation provides food directly to people in need, as arranged and / or agreed with the CDEM Group or local authority, they can seek reimbursement from the CDEM Group/Local Authority

7) What is the process that foodbanks, food rescue and community food services should follow for reimbursement?

Foodbanks, food rescue and community food services should:

- a. Make contact with their CDEM Group welfare team and agree the services and support to be provided
- b. Where additional costs are being incurred as a result of COVID-19 and the scale of the emergency, provide details and agree the extent and level of costs that will be reimbursed with the CDEM Group / local authority. These costs may include additional staff, security guards if required, short term rental of equipment and incidental costs etc, as referred to in Question 3 above.
- c. Where possible provide cost estimates or a quote for indirect costs
- d. Reach agreement with your CDEM Group welfare team on services and costs that are reimbursable, and the process for and timeframes for reimbursements

- e. Submit an invoice to your CDEM Group, as per the arrangement and agreement between the foodbank, community organisation and the CDEM Group / local authority

8) How long will it take to receive reimbursement?

This process will differ by region. We encourage you to talk with your CDEM Group welfare team and to let them know your situation is urgent. There is no time limit regarding the submission of invoices and supporting documentation for reimbursement claims, however we would encourage all organisations to submit claims as soon as possible. It is not necessary to wait until the end of the COVID-19 emergency to submit a claim.

9) What should be done when a foodbank, food rescue or community food service has an urgent need, and CDEM have advised they are unable to help?

Please contact MSD at community_information@msd.govt.nz and outline the situation and steps you have taken so far, and we will see if we can help.

10) Are CDEMs able to directly provide food to restock our foodbank?

It is recommended that in the first instance you contact bulk food providers, manufacturers, and producers to source supplies for your foodbank, or if necessary, supermarkets if these are not available or suitable for your needs.

You should also contact your [local food rescue organisation](#) for supplementary supplies. These are still operating in most areas.

11) How will CDEM coordinate with foodbanks and other social services in our region to ensure that people needing food and other support are triaged to the right service?

Your local CDEM Group will have a plan to ensure that people in your region get the help they need in an emergency. A number of government and non-government organisations and agencies play a role in providing welfare support in an emergency. Please ask your CDEM Group about their plan, and discuss the role of your organisation within it.

12) Is our foodbank, food rescue or community food service able to provide cooked or prepared food?

Advice from MPI states that foodbanks, food rescue and community food services must not provide (or sell) cooked and prepared food, except where **all** of the following criteria are met:

- The foodbank, food rescue or community food service is [registered as an essential social service](#) with the Ministry of Social Development.
- The essential social service is connected to, and working together with their local [CDEM Group](#).
- The essential social service is the only way for people to access food they need to live day-to-day.

- Ordering, payment (if any) and delivery is contactless and the essential social service is operating safely within the [general health guidelines](#) such as physical separation and hygiene.

13) What is best practice for foodbanks working in a COVID-19 environment?

We have heard about the following good practices by foodbanks, food rescue and community food services working in a COVID-19 environment which might be suitable for your organisation:

- Collecting required information from people by phone or email. Using an 0800 number makes this more accessible for people who don't have mobile data
- Delivering food parcels to clients' front gate / door
- Delivering the parcels without engaging with people, sending a text once they are delivered
- A drive through service with people loading their own parcels into their vehicle if delivery is not possible
- Coordinating with other foodbanks and social services ensure needs are appropriately identified
- Minimising the numbers of staff and volunteers operating the service and maintain strict physical distancing
- Staff and volunteers using PPE where appropriate.

14) How can we let the people and whānau we support know about other support available?

The Covid19.govt.nz website includes information on welfare services, including the Welfare Contact Card with numbers for Services and support. You may wish to print copies out of the latest version from the website and add it to your food parcels.