

SHIFT MEALS



A LOCAL FOOD RESPONSE TO COVID-19



What's in this Report

- Summary of the ShiftMeals Pilot March - May 2020
- Why use restaurants for mass feeding?
- Opportunities for expansion.
- Analysis of restaurant fit for mass feeding.
- Projected scenario of statewide expansion with 10 operators.
- Testimonials.

Summary of existing pilot program:

- Launched by the Skinny Pancake restaurant group, based out of Burlington with 10 Vermont locations.
- Founding partners include Vermont Community Foundation, High Meadows Fund, and Intervale Center.
- First meals delivered March 27, 2020.
- Through 5/25: 25,000 meals produced and delivered from a single commissary kitchen in Winooski.
- Meals are frozen, ready for heat and serve.
- Meals distributed weekly to sites in 5 counties: Franklin, Lamoille, Chittenden, Washington, and Windsor.
- Vermont Foodbank contracted 20,000 meals. Additional meals funded through philanthropic contributions. Meals priced at \$6/meal in order to match costs of existing vendors (e.g. Trio Foods).
- 21 Vermont workers brought back to work due to this program
- Over \$10,000 spent on Vermont grown food through ShiftMeals.



Distribution through two channels:

Direct Distribution: We prepare, transport and distribute ~1000 meals/week through restaurant pickups in Burlington, Montpelier, Waitsfield and Quechee. Individuals sign up on our website [here](#) 24 hours in advance of pick up. Pickups are scheduled for 2 hour windows during which individuals are scheduled to pick up by last name. Direct distribution collapses more of the supply chain onto the participating restaurant, therefore incurs higher costs more per meal.



Direct Distribution has been unique in serving many individuals who are newly food insecure as a result of COVID-19. We have targeted our messaging to restaurant and gig economy workers.

However, this program has been open to anyone who requests a meal and we have had all walks of life utilize the service.

SHIFTMEALS 

Distribution through two channels:

Indirect Distribution: We prepare and transport meals in bulk to food shelves and community sites. Deliveries range from 30-2000 meals/delivery. Some of these sites are Vermont Foodbank network partners. Some are COVID-19 responses like Stowe Vibrancy (deliver 1000 meals to Lamoille Co each week). These partners then manage the distribution (and associated costs) to the end user of the food.



Indirect Distribution has been particularly well suited to providing support to community organizations that

- Have been tasked with serving sheltered populations.
- Serve elderly and other house-bound populations.
- Have community kitchens that need support in addressing the surge in demand for meals.

A number of our partners utilized volunteers to provide last mile distribution.



Why use local restaurants for mass feeding?

- Vermont restaurants have infrastructure and assets sitting idle, these can and should be deployed to help feed Vermonters.
- Developing local community solutions for mass/emergency feeding, including ready to eat and heat & serve meals, creates resilience and security in our supply chain.
- Maintain viability of foodservice industry and workforce.
- National Restaurant Association estimates that every \$1 spent in the restaurant industry contributes more than \$2 to the State's economy. Spending emergency feeding dollars locally, supports Vermont's economy.
- Clients appreciate restaurant quality food, provides dignity and a sense of community support.



Opportunities for expansion

- Leverage FEMA funding while supporting Vermont economy.
 - ShiftMeals is exploring the possibility of FEMA reimbursement for Contract 1 4/15/20-6/5/20.
- ShiftMeals was created to be open source and shared. Efficiencies gained through shared recipes and SOP's and streamlined supply chains.
- Vermont Hospitality Coalition - new coalition of Vermont's independent restaurants facilitates recruitment process for statewide expansion.



Restaurants considering mass feeding must ask:

- Infrastructure
 - Size of kitchen: can it be used for large batch production?
 - Cooler/Freezer: ample cold storage for hundreds of meals?
- Culinary
 - What menu items are nutritious, satisfying and can withstand mass production, freezing, and reheating?
- Transportation/Distribution
 - Loading dock accessibility?
 - Access to refrigerated trucks?
 - Staff capacity & physical space to manage safe distribution?
- Supply chain
 - How to overcome turbulent supply of to go containers?
 - How can vermont ingredients best be incorporated?
- Customer Service
 - Staff capacity to manage customer service needs?
- Admin & Accounting
 - Ability to manage cash flow based on reimbursement/delayed receivables?



Competency and resource requirements for participating foodservice groups:

- Demonstrated history of safe food handling practices and ability to meet COVID-era health and safety requirements.
- Demonstrated history of administrative competence to manage invoicing and cash flow.
- Demonstrated ability to manage food cost.
- Ability to produce at least 500 meals in a single delivery at least once a week. Ability to produce up to 5000 meals a week is a plus.
- Ability to transport food via company-owned vehicle or distribution partner. Loading dock / ability to palletize food is a plus.
- Ability to creatively utilize local food and donated food supply chains leverage greater programmatic impact.



Projected scenario of 10 operations at our same scale positioned around Vermont:

- 260,000 meals produced/month
- \$1.56 million in monthly revenue put back into the VT foodservice economy. Based on the NRA's data point, that means \$3.12M a week going back into the State's economy in third party associated jobs like distribution, payroll taxes, income taxes and other economic multipliers.
- \$100,000/mo sent directly back into local food production (at 6% local purchasing rate)
- Diversified production allows for reliability in the event of a coronavirus outbreak in one location.



Can this program work with smaller restaurant operators?

- Operations with large commissary kitchens have the best ability to match the scale efficiencies.
- Smaller operations may lack the physical and HR resources to manage the volume. Lack of resources may include: inadequate refrigerated and frozen storage space, inadequate space for a team to manage the prep during covid-era requirements, lack of financial reserves to manage the cash flow demands of necessary invoicing terms, lack of culinary and accounting experience to track food cost accurately and ensure restaurant can afford the program, lack of economy of scale to help ensure the food can be produced efficiently.
- However, smaller operations may be able to be subcontracted through a hub and spoke model. See next slide.



How could this program work with smaller restaurant operators?

- Identify a larger or ‘managing operation’ that could sub-contract to smaller operators. This ‘managing operator’ has capacity to manage cash flow, make up on volume shortfall if necessary, monitor and coach smaller operators on safe food handling, coordinate aggregation of food from a collection of smaller operators, etc.
- Smaller operators are charged with producing a few hundred meals a week. They are paid more more quickly by managing operator who can manage cash flow better while awaiting State-level reimbursement.



Testimonials

"The folks who have been receiving The Skinny Pancake/ShiftMeals, have expressed so much gratitude, and appreciation. We have many folks who are still awaiting an unemployment check, and have had their resources devastated as they wait. This food has—quite literally—been a life saver."

-Jim P., organizer at Lamoille County Mental Health.

"Thanks for continuing these meals- our guests that pick them up are extremely grateful, as are we- our budget would not have allowed us to provide 3 meals each week- so again, thank you for expanding your program and putting in the extra work to include us!" -Rachel L., Bethany Bowl Church, Montpelier

"Couldn't Recommend Skinny Pancake ShiftMeals highly enough. Requesting a meal was easy, pickup was safe, and like, seriously heartwarming. If you work in the industry and have been laid off, take advantage of what my friends are doing. I'm like emotional right now." -Anna W., Restaurant Manager, Stowe

"First, I'd like to applaud Skinny Pancake's efforts and response to this crisis. It seems there was no hesitation to shift focus towards the community and utilize your resources to provide much-needed relief for so many Vermonters. I'm so grateful and thoroughly impressed. THANK YOU" -Brittany M., Musician, Burlington



Contacts and more info

Website: www.shiftmeals.org, [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)

ShiftMeals Director: Jean Hamilton, Jean@skinnypancake.com, 802-777-6546

Skinny Pancake Founder and CEO: Benjy Adler, benjyadler@gmail.com, 802-598-3028

ShiftMeals Operations Manager: Brittany Sperber, brittany@skinnypancake.com

Partners

Vermont Community Foundation: Chelsea Lewis, Clewis@vermontcf.org

Vermont Foodbank: Andrea Solazzo, asolazzo@vtfoodbank.org

