

Waukesha County Nutrition Coalition Minutes
February 24, 2026
at Sussex Outreach Services

Attendance: Michael Egly- Food Pantry of Waukesha County; Mark Lisowski- Hunger Task Force/Hunger Relief Federation; Eva Platte- Waukesha Head Start; Judith Amorsen, Celine Kleist- Eras Senior Network; Jill Herz- UW-Madison Extension FoodWise; Lisa Topp, Benjamin Johnson (WIC intern)- Waukesha County WIC; Alyssa Pisarski- Waukesha Public Library; Chloe Bingenheimer- Community Smiles Dental; Jessica Kapsos, Amanda Denning-Hebron Housing Services; Jennifer Waltz- Sussex Outreach Services.

Sussex Outreach Services- Overview and Tour:

Sussex Outreach Services and Food Pantry is located in the Civic Center building on Main St. next to the library, N64 W23760 Main St. Sussex, WI 53089. The pantry was hosted in various churches and then the village hall, before they ended up in the building they are in today. They serve Hamilton School District, which includes Sussex, parts of Lannon, Lisbon, Pewaukee, Menomonee Falls, and Butler. They are currently serving 125 unique families each week and about 400-500 people per month. Distribution Hours are Monday 5:30-7, Wednesday 1-2:30, Saturday 10-12, and they are open Monday-Friday 10-12 for donations. Sussex Outreach is a choice food pantry, where people can shop for their own food and select items. They also have a boutique with clothing and household items. Guests can visit once per week. For your first visit, bring your ID and address verification such as a piece of mail with current date and address. They use a pager system when people check in, which is working well and avoids people needing to line up outside. When you check in, you receive a pager and you can go through the boutique or wait. When pager goes off, you can get a cart and begin to shop. There is a suggested number of items on shelves, but people can take things as they need them. Foods come from several sources. Sussex Outreach is a TEFAP site, so they will be getting two items in March (TEFAP foods have decreased recently, so they are adjusting to that). They purchase some items from Meijer and also pick up from stores such as Costco, Target, and Metro Market and Kwik trip. These stores supply many fresh food items such as meat and produce. In addition to regular food distribution, Sussex Outreach Services provides items for special occasions such as Easter baskets, Thanksgiving meals, Christmas hams, birthday bags, and a holiday toy distribution. They also try to provide resources in the lobby on some days including having a FoodShare specialist 1x/month, medical social workers from Froedtert, and senior farmers market voucher distribution. They take part in the Boy Scout food drive in March and the Post Office drive in May. Sussex Outreach Services has a solid group of dedicated volunteers.

Question: *Can you pick up food on someone's behalf?* **A:** *Yes, many people do that for those who are unable to come to the pantry. The pantry does some delivery to those who are homebound, but they do encourage sending a family member, friend, neighbor if possible to make food selections and get the items they need.*

Agency Updates:

Community Smiles Dental- Chloe Bingeheimer: Community Smiles has two dental clinics, in Menomonee Falls and Waukesha. They serve children who have state insurance or are uninsured, as well as pregnant women and adults with special health care needs. They still have a small or no wait list at both clinics, so keep the referrals coming. Referral form available on their website. In 2025, saw the most unique patients ever in the past calendar year. Annual fundraiser, Laugh for a Smile is on April 9; it is a comedy show, food and drinks. Tickets are available on the website too. The Barstow building where their Waukesha clinic is located is under construction. Right now, the admin suite on 1st floor is emptied out, with the admin team working remotely.

Eras Senior Network- Judith Amorsen: Eras Senior Network provides transportation for seniors and people with disabilities. Serving seniors in Waukesha County and Milwaukee County. They also provide yard cleanup services. Volunteer base has declined 5%; looking for more volunteers. In their research, they have found that Gen X is least likely to volunteer. Would be open to brainstorming ideas on how to change that trend.

Eras Senior Network- Celine Kleist: Celine introduced herself to the group as the new program coordinator at Eras.

Hunger Task Force/Hunger Relief Federation- Mark Lisowski: Through the Hunger Relief Federation, they form statewide partnerships with hunger relief organizations. Food Pantry of Waukesha County and Sussex Outreach Services are part of this group that meets monthly; the next meeting is this Thursday. With most recent biennial budget, there was funding specifically for food purchases, and Hunger Task Force is one of the awardees to administer that funding. They were awarded 2.5 million for food purchasing. They recently issued award letters to constituents throughout the state to participate. This is coming at a good time, because TEFAP foods are down across the state and nation. Bolstering it with own private funding of about 1 million. Feeding America also received 2.5 million. Public health has been pushing for more funds for administration of FoodShare. If they reach certain level of error rates, they could be on the hook for penalty fees. As a state, they are looking to put in resources to keep the error rate low. Assembly did approve that funding last week. Hopefully this will help Wisconsinites manage the caseload for FoodShare, keep the error rates low, and taxpayers won't have to pay penalty fees. Thankfully, WI has one of the lowest error rates in the nation so we are in pretty good shape. HTF has 11 outreach advocates that support FoodShare enrollment and troubleshooting. On the Hunger Relief Federation call this week at 10 AM, they will be talking about new FoodShare work requirement changes. Mark can forward the link to the meeting for anyone who wants to join.

Question: *Where are the FoodShare advocates located?* **A:** *They are Milwaukee-based, but as state liaison, Mark has been able to connect some people from across the state to answer questions.*

Question: *Does Senior Stockbox program have a waitlist statewide?* **A:** *There is a waitlist if they are new, or if they have not received it for 2 consecutive months. The waitlist has been active since Dec 1. It is caseload-based.*

Question: *Does the new funding help with the waitlist?* **A:** *No, stockbox is federally funded.*

Waukesha Head Start- Eva Platte: At full capacity this year with 225 students. Have waitlist for half days and full days. Starting enrollment for next year already. Since they lost FoodWise nutrition program, they are now collaborating with WCTC and going to start doing food experiences with families. Their federal visit is happening in March.

Hebron Housing Services- Amanda Denning and Jessica Kapsos: Hebron Housing services has two shelters, one for families- Juno House, and one for singles and men- Sentry House. Sienna House is a transitional shelter where people can stay who need a bit of extra time to find housing. They can stay at the Sienna House for 3 months. They have waitlists. Call 211 to get connected to one of their shelters, and they will do intake assessment.

Extension FoodWise Program for Waukesha, Milwaukee, Racine & Kenosha Counties- Jill Herz: The elimination of SNAP-Ed in the federal budget eliminated the majority of FoodWise's nutrition education funding. Program is adjusting statewide to the huge loss of staff and programming. FoodWise still receives EFNEP (Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program) federal funds in Waukesha, Dane, Rock, Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha counties. With this grant, FoodWise teaches parents and youth, specifically: youth in 1st, 2nd, and 5th grade in schools, 3rd-5th grade afterschool programs, middle school and high school programs, and programs for parents, grandparents caring for children, and young adults. Jill's role is now with multiple counties—Waukesha, Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha. Always looking for more older youth groups (middle and high school) and groups of eligible parents and grandparents. FoodWise teaches programs to groups where the majority of participants are eligible for FoodShare, free/reduced price lunch, WIC, and other similar resources. During Eating Smart & Being Active program for

parents, participants who attend all 7 sessions receive a graduation certificate and cookbook, and throughout the series they receive cooking tools such as measuring cups and cutting boards. The workshops include hands-on cooking, simple physical activities, and nutrition info. Reach out to Jill if you are interested in learning more.

Waukesha County WIC- Lisa Topp: WIC's funding was secured with the last continuing resolution. Fish was added with latest food rule. In April, there will be a new food rule that adds additional fruit and vegetable dollars for some participants. Fresh herbs will now be included. Other nut butters will be added (almond and cashew); previously peanut butter was the only nut butter option. They are adding 18 new whole grain cereals, bringing the cereal options to 43. They are also adding more whole grain options such as whole wheat bagels, whole wheat English muffins, whole wheat pitas, wild rice, quinoa, and corn masa. They will add additional milk as well. Participation continues to be high and they are bringing in new families. The trend lately has been enrollment of postpartum moms with older infants.

Waukesha County WIC-Ben Johnson: Ben introduced himself as an intern with Waukesha County WIC, through MATC. He is working on projects for March nutrition month, including educational pamphlets and other materials.

Sussex Outreach Services- Jennifer Waltz: Getting ready for Easter basket distribution and Mom's baskets for Mother's Day. We have seen increase in food pantry usage- up 10% over the past 3 years. Most updates will be covered in the Sussex Outreach services overview and tour.

Food Pantry of Waukesha County- Michael Egly: Very busy year in 2025; served 9399 unique individuals over the year, 39000 pantry visits. Continuing to increase (although starting to plateau a little now). The Postal food drive is coming up in May. They have a fundraiser on April 18th. There is a waitlist for the senior stockbox; still distributing, but are not currently signing up new seniors. The food pantry offers in-person shopping, appointments, and express pickups. Purchased a building with their capital campaign, and they are doing fundraising to complete the renovations of it. An opening date has not been set for certain. It is located 1 mile south of current location, on Prairie.

Waukesha Public Library- Alyssa Pisarski: Had a really successful program in January for MLK day on food equity. Thanks to all who came to speak. Looking ahead to summer programming and opportunities. Developing a chef-in-residence program for their demo kitchen, to provide monthly food programs. They want to focus on cost-saving meals and healthy meals. They have had strong success working with registered dietitians. If you know someone looking to do a public program like this over several months, please connect them with the library.

Next Meeting: April 28, 2026

VIRTUAL

Teams link will be shared prior to the meeting