

MealConnect FAQs for Affiliate Food Bank Partner Agencies

NOTE: For all technical questions about how to use the MealConnect platform, please login to <https://mealconnect.org/>, then go to “Help & Resources”. This is where you will find the most updated version of all training materials.

For future reference on OFB Network-specific information related to MealConnect, agencies can bookmark this document or add a shortcut to their Google Drive (recommended over saving a hard copy in case updates are made). AFB staff can also access links to training materials for their agencies on [OFB Portals](#) (requires a login).

GLOSSARY

Feeding America (FANO): The organization that coordinates the nationwide network of food banks, food pantries, and meal programs which the Oregon Food Bank and its network of Affiliate Food Banks are a part of. Feeding America is also the creator of the MealConnect platform.

Partner Food Bank (PFB): A food bank that is partnered with Feeding America to coordinate food assistance and distribute food in a designated region of the country. Oregon Food Bank is a Partner Food Bank.

Affiliate Food Bank (AFB): A food bank whose operations are affiliated with but not directly managed by a Partner Food Bank. In the Oregon Food Bank Network (encompassing Oregon and SW Washington), these are also sometimes referred to as independent Regional Food Banks (RFBs).

Partner Agency (PA): An organization that is partnered with either a Partner Food Bank or an Affiliate Food Bank to provide direct food assistance to their local community.

Receipt: A record of products received from a donor including the receiving partner agency’s ID #, the donor’s ID #, the pickup/delivery date, and pounds separated out by [product category](#). All Fresh Alliance donations are required to be reported in this format.

ACCESSING MEALCONNECT

Q: How do I access MealConnect?

A: MealConnect can be accessed in two ways:

- Via the web browser at <https://mealconnect.org/>
- Via the mobile app, which can be downloaded from the Apple Store or Google Play (links available on the landing page of <https://mealconnect.org/>)

Q: What are my login credentials?

A: Email addresses for personnel at each agency were provided by a staff member at your AFB. If you are unsure which email address(es) were given, please contact the Fresh Alliance support person at your AFB. Additionally:

- Your organization may only have one set of login credentials using a shared/generic email address, or you may have had 1+ sets of login credentials made for your account using the email addresses of individuals.
- The default password for your account is a combination of your AFB's initials and "2024!" (e.g., OFB2024!). AFB initials are as follows:

○ ACCESS	○ CCNO	○ FU	○ MPFS
○ CAPECO	○ CPFB	○ JCFB	○ NI
○ CCA	○ FFLC	○ KLCFB	○ SCFS
○ CCFB	○ FSLC	○ LBFS	○ YCAP

Q: How do I change my password?

A: Please consult someone at your AFB before making any changes to your account password. It is recommended that you do not change your password to avoid accidental loss of account access.

- If your organization is using one shared set of login credentials, you should not make any changes to the password unless authorized. Be sure to document the new password in a central location for all users.
- If you are using login credentials with an email address personal to you, you can click on the "Forgot your password?" link on the login page to change your password. (again, consult an AFB staff member first)
- If necessary, you can contact RetailDonationData@oregonfoodbank.org and/or your AFB's Fresh Alliance support person to have your password changed or reset.

MEALCONNECT FEATURES

Q: Can I use the "chat" feature to communicate with my assigned store(s)?

A: No; the Oregon Food Bank Network does not currently utilize this feature for any of our in-network donors. Please continue communicating with your assigned store(s) via phone or email, as messages sent in MealConnect will not reach them.

Q: Can I use the "chat" feature to communicate with my AFB or Oregon Food Bank?

A: No; the Oregon Food Bank Network does not currently utilize this feature for partner communications. Please continue communicating with your AFB and OFB via phone or email, as we may not see messages sent in MealConnect in a timely manner.

Q: Is my MealConnect account set up with the pickup schedule for each of my assigned stores?

A: It depends; it is up to your AFB to decide if they would like to use this feature, so please check in with the Fresh Alliance support person at your AFB to learn more. If OFB was provided with that information, it will be in your account.

Q: Am I required to enter a description for products I received in each category when submitting a receipt?

A: No; use of this field is completely optional.

Q: Am I required to include pickup and drop-off temperatures for refrigerated and/or frozen products when submitting a receipt?

A: It depends; it is up to your AFB to decide if they would like agencies to continue recording Fresh Alliance pickup and drop-off temperatures on paper logs or if they would like to start using MealConnect for this purpose, so please check in with the Fresh Alliance support person at your AFB to learn more.

Q: Can I save receipts as “pending” and come back to them later?

A: Yes, but please be aware of the following:

- If using MealConnect in a web browser: you must use the same browser that you originally used when returning to complete the pending receipts. If you switch browsers (e.g., from Chrome to Safari), you will not see the pending receipts. You will also need to be logged into the same user account in order to see the pending receipts (i.e., you will not be able to see your pending receipts from someone else’s user account).
- If using the MealConnect app: pending receipts that were entered “offline” (i.e., out of internet service), will automatically submit once you return to internet service.

REPORTING SPECIFICS

Q: Which donors do I need to report for in MealConnect?

A: MealConnect is only for reporting donations from **designated Fresh Alliance donors** (with a few exceptions). These could be either *FANO national donors* (i.e., large chains that span across the country & have a contractual relationship with FANO) or *local donors* (i.e., donors that are local to our area & have a relationship with 1+ organizations in the OFB Statewide Network). A few additional details:

- Donations received from other sources (food drives, individual donors, other non-Fresh Alliance food industry donors, etc.) will still need to be reported via your monthly statistics report to your AFB. Fresh Alliance donations that have been recorded in MealConnect should not be included in your monthly stats report.
- Sometimes individuals at grocery stores will not be familiar with the terminology of Fresh Alliance, however, that does not mean they aren’t part of the program. If the store is providing regularly scheduled donations to an organization in our network, they are part of this program. Please refer to the document linked above.
- If you pick up from a donor listed in the document linked above but it’s not in your MealConnect portal, please contact RetailDonationData@oregonfoodbank.org and/or the Fresh Alliance support person at your AFB to get it added—we likely just didn’t know you were picking up there.

Q: The product category options in MealConnect are different from what I'm used to. Where can I find descriptions of what items go in each product category?

A: This document includes descriptions of each product category: [FA Product Categories_MC](#)

Q: Do I have to submit a separate receipt for each pickup date at a given store or can I add up all donations received for the month and just submit one "summary" receipt for that store?

A: Receipts need to be submitted per pickup date. There are several reasons for this, including:

- This is how the grocery retail program (and reporting platforms like Primarius and MealConnect) are set up
- Receipts have to be submitted by pickup date in order to use the temperature fields in MealConnect
- Ability of your AFB/OFB to track and coordinate pickup schedules using this data
- Ability to analyze the average number of pounds received per pickup (and maximize donations accordingly)
- Prevent data errors & data loss that can occur when adding up & recording monthly totals

Q: Do I need to submit a record when a scheduled pickup was not attempted and/or a pickup was attempted but no pounds were received?

A: Yes; this helps your AFB and OFB to differentiate these instances from cases of missing or overdue data. It also helps us to identify and remedy ongoing patterns that may be negatively impacting the agency/donor relationship, such as a store that frequently has no donations to provide when the agency arrives at their scheduled pickup time, or agency personnel who frequently cancel or no-show for their scheduled pickup time.

- You do not need to submit anything for days when no store pickup is scheduled (i.e., if you only pick up on Saturday and Sunday, you don't need to submit anything for Mon-Fri).

Q: Is the Fresh Alliance reporting deadline still the same?

A: Yes; all data must be submitted in MealConnect **no later than the 5th of the following month** (i.e., January data is due by February 5th). However, you now have more options in terms of how you accomplish this:

- **Real-time reporting:** Every time a store pickup is completed, the receipt is logged in MealConnect (either via the web browser or mobile app) at the same time the donations are being sorted and weighed.
 - If using the mobile app, you can record data even if there's no internet connection where you are. Any receipts logged while in "offline mode" will be saved in the app, and can then be submitted once you have internet access again.
 - If reporting is done this way, there is no need to do anything else at the end of each month.
- **Reporting at a later date:** Every time a store pickup is completed, the receipt is logged on a shared paper or digital tracker. Then at some point before the reporting deadline, all receipts are entered into MealConnect.
 - This option generally makes the most sense for PAs that have one designated data entry person and/or require support from someone at their AFB to submit data online for them.

Q: How long do I have to edit a receipt that's already been submitted?

A: Receipts can be edited for 5 days after they are submitted in MealConnect.

- See related question and answer under the Technical Support & Troubleshooting section below regarding who to contact if you need to delete a receipt or edit one that has already been locked for editing.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT & TROUBLESHOOTING

Q: Who should I contact if I have general questions about using MealConnect, need additional training, and/or need help submitting or editing my data?

A: Please first contact the Fresh Alliance support person at your AFB to ask for help. If no one at your AFB is able to answer your question, they can refer you to RetailDonationData@oregonfoodbank.org for further assistance.

Q: Who should I contact if I need to delete a receipt or edit one that has already been locked?

A: Please contact OFB at RetailDonationData@oregonfoodbank.org and CC your AFB's Fresh Alliance support person. Receipts that are already locked for editing can only be updated by Feeding America (FANO). OFB will be your liaison with FANO to get the issue resolved, but it is helpful to loop in your AFB support person as well.

- PLEASE NOTE: receipts cannot be fully deleted from the system *even during the 5 day editing window*. To get a receipt deleted, OFB will have to contact FANO for assistance.

Q: Who do I contact if I need an additional set of login credentials created for someone at my organization?

A: Please contact RetailDonationData@oregonfoodbank.org and CC your AFB's Fresh Alliance support person. This responsibility will be decided among OFB and your AFB depending on capacity and other factors.

Q: Who should I contact if I need a donor added or removed from my account?

A: Please contact RetailDonationData@oregonfoodbank.org and CC your AFB's Fresh Alliance support person. This responsibility will be decided among OFB and your AFB depending on capacity and other factors.

Q: Who should I contact if the MealConnect website or mobile app isn't working correctly? (e.g., a button or feature is malfunctioning)

A: Please contact OFB at RetailDonationData@oregonfoodbank.org and CC your AFB's Fresh Alliance support person. OFB will be your liaison with Feeding America to get the issue resolved, but it is helpful to loop in your AFB support person in case other agencies are experiencing the same issue.

- We ask that you please not reach out to the MealConnect team at FANO directly in order to help streamline communications and prevent duplicate inquiries that will only slow down response times.
- PLEASE NOTE: the "Report an Issue" feature in the MealConnect mobile app is not for reporting system issues or malfunctions; it is to report an instance where no donation was collected from a store.