



**July 2020**

**Position Title: Director, National Food Solutions**

**Reports to: Chief Program Officer**

## **BLESSINGS BACKGROUND**

Blessings in a Backpack (Blessings) mobilizes communities, individuals and resources to provide food on the weekends for elementary school children across America who might otherwise go hungry. Each week of the school year, Blessings and its thousands of volunteers and partners send bags of food home with children who, during the week, are fed by the free and reduced meal program.

Prior to school closures during the 2019-2020 school year, Blessings provided weekend nutrition to 88,000 kids. When schools closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Blessings adapted its traditional school-based distribution method to align with schools' weekday food distribution plans. Blessings is proud to have provided approximately 640,000 bags of food to 64,000 kids once schools were closed due to COVID-19 and to continue operating certain program locations during the summer months.

## **BLESSINGS NATIONAL FOOD SOLUTIONS INITIATIVE**

Effective for the 2018-2019 school year, Blessings established a National Food Solution (NFS) with a focus on providing nutritional food items with the convenience of food delivery. This national solution established a consistent, replicable and scalable food offering available to Blessings programs across the country, regardless of size or location.

Under a Master Distribution Agreement with Sysco, Inc., with Sysco Louisville serving as the "lead house", Blessings program volunteers order designated menus from Sysco to be delivered to their local program locations. By having food delivered, rather than volunteers shopping at local grocers, programs are able to fully function with fewer volunteers and Blessings has significantly more control over the type of food provided, enhancing nutritional value by maximizing proteins and fiber and reducing processed sugars.

Two menu types are offered:

1. "Line item" menus: an approved list of case goods, which typically include six food items that local volunteers pack into bags for distribution to the kids



*Who will feed the kids this weekend?*

2. Prepacked Weekend Food Packs: items selected for their nutritional value and appeal to children, typically including six to eight food items in a pre-assembled “kit”, and shipped in quantities of 30 packs per case.

Beginning in 2019, all new school programs are required to use the National Food Solution. Currently, appx. 50% of total food purchases are through Sysco. Recently, COVID-19 impacts have resulted in increased use of the Weekend Food Kits. As we look forward, Blessings expects to continue to increase the number of children fed with these solutions.

## **POSITION SUMMARY**

This position requires a take-charge, self-starter to lead the Blessings national food solution. The Food Solutions Manager will have overall responsibilities for coordinating the current NFS program with Sysco, including menu planning to meet Blessings nutritional standards, and will develop and maintain relationships with food manufacturers. Additionally, the Food Solutions Director will support Blessings Program Managers (staff) and volunteer Program Coordinators in promoting the nutritional and other benefits of the national food solutions to convert programs to the solutions. The Food Solutions Director will work in close collaboration with the outside food logistics consultant.

This position is a direct report to the Chief Program Officer of Blessings.

## **ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### Promotion

- Proactively reach out to our volunteer Program Coordinators, with the support of the assigned national Program Manager (a Blessings employee) to educate volunteers on the nutritional and other benefits of the national solutions. Understanding that many long-standing volunteer program coordinators are resistant to this change, be prepared to address the enhanced nutrition value of the available solutions
- Develop a Food Safety training program for staff and volunteers
- Working with Blessings Marketing Department, create collateral materials and maintain website to convey benefits of menu offerings

### Relationships with Food Manufacturers

- Develop relationships with food manufacturers interested in supporting Blessings and / or including products in “Blessings bags” with an emphasis on identifying products that meet Blessings nutritional standards and price point
- Work with Sysco and prepack suppliers to identify new / alternate products and incorporate those products into Blessings offerings



### Forecasts

- Create annual forecasts of expected demand for line item products and prepack Weekend Food Packs
- Update forecasts as needed throughout the school year for changes in demand to ensure ready availability of product at Sysco locations which meet Sysco turnover requirements

### Food Ordering

- For nationally managed "school investors," place and coordinate food orders with Sysco
- Trouble-shoot food order complications with Sysco as needed

### Menu Planning

- Not less than annually, work with suppliers to update menus
- Work with internal and external resources, including registered dietitians / nutritionists, to ensure that all menus provide maximum nutrition and meet Blessings nutrition standards

### FY21 RFP Process

- Work with food logistic consultant to determine national food solutions for the 2021-2022 school year and beyond.

## **BASIC QUALIFICATIONS**

Education: Bachelor's degree

Food Logistics/Supply Chain: Minimum five years of supply chain experience, preferably in the food industry

### Community Relations

- Demonstrated effectiveness in working with diverse groups of people
- Ability to build and maintain effective internal and external interpersonal relationships

Financial Management: Experience in budget development

### Communication

- Writing skills for effective presentations, reports, memos
- Public speaking experience in addressing various sized groups in both informal and formal meetings



### Measurement and Results Orientation

- Demonstrated success in working in organizations with accountability systems with metrics for outcomes and results
- Ability to handle and prioritize multiple tasks/projects while maintaining attention to detail

### Computer Skills

- Proficiency in Microsoft Office programs

## **PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS**

- Sales and customer relationship management experience
- Qualifications in food nutrition such as an RDN (registered dietitian nutritionist) or SNS (school nutrition specialist)
- A minimum of 3-5 years working with school nutrition programs
- Knowledge of effective marketing strategies and tactics
- Work experience in a face paced, growth oriented, entrepreneurial organizational environment
- Project management experience

## **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

- The position is remote and a home based office is required
- Personal car transportation (mileage is reimbursed in accordance with IRS rules)
- Valid driver's license
- Ability to travel overnight by airplane on a limited basis
- Desire to make an impact on food insecure children

## **BENEFITS**

Medical Insurance, Dental Insurance, Vision Insurance, Paid time off (PTO), Paid Holidays, Paid Winter Break, Summer Fridays, FSA Plan, 403(b) Plan

Applicants should send cover letter and resume to [carolb@blessingsinabackpack.org](mailto:carolb@blessingsinabackpack.org).

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