



## **Capital Region Task Force Formed to Assist Low Income Families in Accessing Formula Amidst Supply Chain Disruptions**

***For Immediate Release***  
**August 01, 2022**

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**Capital District, N.Y** — The Food Pantries for the Capital District is announcing the formation of the Capital Region Formula Task Force, a collaboration between area nonprofits, WIC, and health care organizations invested in making sure lower income families have access to formula amidst the ongoing supply chain disruptions which are causing distress for area families.

Even in a year without supply chain issues, thousands of families with infants seek assistance from food pantries. Pantries regularly distribute formula, diapers, and food for those needing assistance. In 2021, nearly 700 cans of formula were distributed through The Food Pantries' Infant Needs program. Seeing an increase in need, The Food Pantries has already distributed 618 cans of formula through June 30 this year. Other organizations, such as Mom Starts Here, also distribute formula and diapers, and the collaborative partners in the Task Force all provide resource assistance.

Oftentimes, families who require specialty formula due to allergies and medical conditions are having a more difficult time. The Capital Region USDA's Women, Infants, and Children programs (WIC) are a resource to those who qualify for assistance. However, the group is also struggling to acquire or identify specific formulas. Pantries and other programs will provide formula for households and working parents whose income falls above WIC guidelines but whose expenses still leave them in need.

"To streamline the increase in requests for specific formulas, and to help identify the availability of formula, the Task Force is working together to meet community needs," said Natasha Pernicka, The Food Pantries' Executive Director. "For babies who rely on formula, this shortage is detrimental to their development. Caregivers resort to watering down formula or substituting it with milk or juice, which do not have the nutrients and calories needed for healthy development. We are doing our best to identify where formula is located and coming up with solutions for accessing it to prevent families from going without." added Pernicka.

Mom Starts Here Program Director, Paige Convis, states, "This shortage has highlighted what low-income families have known for some time: raising a family takes a village that often fails them. The way that we respond has to take into consideration the limited resources these families are living with, including only being able to purchase WIC-approved sizes and brands, difficulty finding transportation to different stores, and the lack of support networks to help in the search."

If a family is experiencing difficulties accessing formula due to lack of resources or availability of the product, the Capital Region Formula Task Force encourages community members to:

- Use [www.findmybabyformula.com](http://www.findmybabyformula.com) to locate formula at area stores.
- Call multiple stores in the area to see if they have your formula type in stock.
- Use the NYS "[Find a WIC Store](#)" website to locate stores near you that accept WIC.
- Call your doctor or insurance company to see if they have suggestions on supplementing with a different formula
- Look at generic alternatives and look for the "compares to the nutrition of your brand" on label to replace the brand-name formula you're looking for.
- Reach out to your local food pantry to see if they have formula – for a map of New York state pantries with contact information, click here: [www.thefoodpantries.org](http://www.thefoodpantries.org).
- Join collaborative social media groups that have been set up to find formula, including Capital District Moms – Formula Hunt on Facebook.
- If you still need assistance, call The Food Pantries for the Capital District food access referral line at (518) 458-1167, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

#### **Capital Region Formula Task Force Members**

CEO

CDPHP

The Food Pantries for the Capital District

Mom Starts Here

MVP Health Care

Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York

***About The Food Pantries for the Capital District:*** Working together to feed the hungry in our community, The Food Pantries for the Capital District is a network of over 65 food pantries located in Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga & Schenectady Counties. Annually, The Food Pantries helps fund, collect, and deliver enough food for approximately 3.9 million meals to their member food pantries who feed more than 65,000 people in the Capital Region. For more information, visit [www.thefoodpantries.org](http://www.thefoodpantries.org) or call 518.458.1167.

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