

# INNOVATIONS IN THE EMERGENCY DINING NEEDS OF TODAY'S ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES

## Who is taking care of your essential workers during the COVID-19 crisis?

As the COVID-19 crisis sweeps through the country, Aramark asked our partners: How can we help during this uncertain time? Their response:

***Help minimize the uncertainties about food and other necessities of our essential workforce.***

***We delivered.***

Essential employees are on the frontlines of the COVID-19 battleground. They must work to provide a wide range of critical services to their communities, such as taking care of patients, keeping healthcare facilities clean, keeping facilities running and procuring goods and services. But who is taking care of them?

The employee experience has changed during the coronavirus crisis — and workers now have different needs than they do during normal times. Among them, essential workers now need safe and convenient access to healthy food and meals on-the-job and at home for themselves and their families, along with essentials like toilet paper, milk, and eggs.

Aramark is leading the way in fulfilling this dire need at several locations with a swift response and a wide range of emergency provisions, such as pop-up grocery stores, meal kits, curbside delivery and more.

In this guide, we've compiled some best practices and feedback from the field, so other organizations can also overcome the challenges of taking care of essential workers with innovative programs that soothe their insecurities about access to food and essential goods.

### Essential Workers are Facing Unique Challenges:

- Long workdays and little time to prepare or access healthy food options
- Ever-changing work schedules and little free time to stand in long grocery lines
- Fewer convenient dining options due to closed restaurants
- Healthcare workers avoiding grocery stores to protect others
- Eating well and staying healthy in a stressful work environment
- Feeding their families after long, stressful workdays

### Aramark Brings Specialized Tools and Resources to the Table

Setting up a wide variety of new food access options is not easy. Aramark's specialized skills and experience helped our teams hit the ground running to deliver emergency food and provision resources to today's essential workers.

- Direct conversations about needs with our partners
- A robust dining services program that provides a strong foundation
- Ready access to a wide range of food sourcing options
- Real-time support from retail store experts
- Merchandising expertise and deep knowledge on product pricing

# 7 Innovative Ways to Help Your Essential Workers Access Food and Provisions — Safely and Conveniently

When you're on the job in the middle of an emergency, accessing quality dining options and other essentials can be a challenge. Making the situation worse are the risks to personal health and safety created by the coronavirus. Ensuring that essential workers have what they need requires innovative solutions.

Aramark immediately recognized this challenge for several of its partners and created seven ways to give essential workers convenient and safe access to food options and more in an emergency situation.

## 1. Provide access to grab-and-go items — pre-packaged pizza, salads and more

With most restaurants and fast-food chains closed, essential employees need access to grab-and-go items, so they can keep the gears of society operating.

## 2. Prepare boxed meals

Pre-made breakfast and lunches can be a godsend to workers who have unpredictable schedules and spend long hours working under stressful conditions.

## 3. Open pop-up grocery stores

Essential employees still need basics on the home front, including everything from milk and bread to toilet paper. Giving them easy access to a pop-up grocery venue is a perfect way to meet their needs.

## 4. Offer take-home dinners and meal kits

Long, stressful workdays leave little time for preparing meals at home. With restaurants closed, workers are left with few options. Aramark recognized this need and delivered access to ready-made meal options like meal kits.

## 5. Partner with a farmers market

Because essential workers have little time to seek out healthy options, Aramark set up farmers markets that included pre-sliced and pre-bagged fresh vegetables for workers.

## 6. Offer curbside food pickup

For convenience and to lower the risks of virus transmission, workers' food orders are available for fast and convenient drive-up delivery.

## 7. Provide cashierless checkout

To ensure optimum safety for all workers, all of these food options can all be paid for electronically, using Mashgin technology. This limits the risks of virus transmission through money handling.



# Dining in the Workplace After COVID-19

Will I have a salad bar in my café or dining hall when this is all over? Among the many questions our companies ask, this is the most asked question. It's natural to wonder about the future of dining services during a time of widespread change. After all, the changes we've experienced so far during the COVID-19 pandemic have been so dramatic, we can't help but wonder what to expect in the future.

This crisis will create a new business model that will be based on consumer behaviors and expectations as we move forward in a post-crisis world. How we plan, how we go to market, how we communicate and collaborate, and how we interact with consumers is all going to change. Some of the new normal will consist of:

**Food-safety-first mentality.** Consumers will have less patience for employees not using gloves, mishandling of food, as well as associated "cleanliness indicators" like dirty restrooms and over-flowing garbage cans.

**Expanded sanitizing behaviors.** The increased use of sanitizers, wipes and hand-washing will likely continue in the post-COVID environment. Employee health depends on a safe and clean work environment and people will want greater access to and visibility of hygienic products.

**Keep safe distances.** Expand spaces in cafés or dining halls, breaking up larger rooms into smaller sections, add additional room between diners and limit the numbers for in-house dining at one time. Unless people are wearing face masks, the 6-foot social distancing rule should apply in the physical workspace until there is a COVID-19 vaccine and the coronavirus is no longer a health threat to employees.

**Contactless pickup/delivery will become more popular.** People have become used to curbside pickup and seamless delivery and will expect contactless options for ordering food moving forward. Consider mobile ordering options where food is delivered to a pick-up station or locker where the recipient can easily retrieve the food without coming in contact with another person.

A survey from Datassential provides some insight into dining in a post-COVID world. Consumers were asked, "If dining rooms re-open, what can restaurants do to make you feel safe?" Top answers included:

- 71% visibly wiping down tables and other surfaces**
- 57% more food coverage, like sneeze guards**
- 54% providing disinfectant wipes for customers**
- 54% employees wearing masks, gloves and hairnets**
- 53% visible food safety inspection results**
- 50% more space between tables**

**Single-Use Alternatives.** There will be a switch to disposable glasses, plates and cutlery, which prevents employees from having to wash previously handled items. Other items include single-use menus that can be thrown out after customers have placed their orders and individually wrapped packets of condiments that can be delivered upon request.

**Improved take-out/delivery packaging.** Packaging will need to maintain food's temperature, moisture, presentation and be tamper-evident. Consumers are about to demand higher-cost packaging and now may be willing to pay for it.

**Pre-packaged items.** Food items such as pizzas and salads will be prepackaged for employees to easily grab while knowing they were safely prepared and stored.

**Servers behind the counters.** Instead of self-service, servers will be the only point of contact behind the counters in restaurants that offer buffets or salad bars.

#### SOURCES

QSRweb, [COVID-19 Will Forever Change the Foodservice Industry](#)

Genster, [What Happens When We Return to the Workplace?](#)

Datassential, [COVID-19 Report #7: Pent-Up Demand](#)

To learn more about how to better serve both the emergency and long-term dining and grocery needs of your employees, contact Aramark experts today.

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