

Rearranging to Fit the Times

Reallocating the use of brewery space to serve the community—this short vignette is part of our “Virginia Food Systems and COVID-19 Story Collection Project” that aims to highlight, collect, and share stories of hope and resilience in our food system amidst the pandemic. Find out more about this project and view our entire series on [our website](#).

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After receiving 300 cases of food donations, Apocalypse Ale Works of Bedford, VA opened their spaces for a pop-up food bank. The food bank’s intended patrons were local restaurant workers who were “in a financial bind” due to the pandemic and a lack of work (Louissaint, 2020). The food donations came from Sysco in Harrisonburg—a bulk food distribution company utilized by restaurants. The donated food would have previously been shipped to restaurants as normal, but the Coronavirus outbreak halted such plans.

Just as innovative as it was necessary and clever, Apocalypse Ale Works utilized their outdoor beer garden to set up the pop-up food bank. The brewery even donated its refrigerator space to help preserve perishable food items. Having this outdoor space allowed for better social distancing and a safer open-air experience. The number of patrons allowed inside the food bank was monitored and limited to help individuals stay at a distance from one another. At



People queuing at a 6-foot distance to wait their turn for receiving their food pick up. Photo courtesy of WSLs.

entry, each person visiting the food bank was given a plastic bag for their goods, a pair of gloves, and guidelines on social distancing.

The Director of Sales and Operations at Apocalypse Ale Works, Austin John, made it evident that the brewery is “struggling just like everyone else, but we still have a platform that we can use to help those who are struggling more than us, and we’ll take advantage of that” (Louissaint, 2020). John went on to say that this collective effort “is just about being good neighbors” (Louissaint, 2020).

The idea for pop-up food banks of this sort originated in Harrisonburg, and it has since made its way down to the Lynchburg area. At the time of Apocalypse Ale Works’ food distribution efforts, community members in Roanoke Virginia were exploring something similar..

To read up on Apocalypse Ale Works, [visit their website](#) or [check out their Facebook page](#). Apocalypse Ale Works also created a separate website for updates on their efforts of community care, [Apocalypse Helps](#). For more detailed information on Sysco and its roots, [click here](#). This short vignette was adapted from an original WSLs article from April 8, 2020.

References

Louissaint, M. (2020, April 8). *Bedford brewery opens beer garden, pop-up food bank for restaurant workers*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wsls.com/news/local/2020/04/08/bedford-brewery-opens-beer-garden-pop-up-food-bank-for-restaurant-workers/>