



FIGHTING HUNGER 101

- **How to operate a non-profit 501(c) 3 pantry or onsite feeding program including some key resources**

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How to operate a Food Pantry or Onsite Feeding program

What is a Food Bank?

--A non-profit organization that procures and distributes food and grocery products to non-profit member organizations such as food pantries, onsite feeders, etc.

What is a Food Pantry?

--A non-profit organization that distributes food for home use directly to individuals and families that meet established eligibility requirements.

--The following will help give you an idea of what may be needed to start a Food Pantry in your community. It is not all-inclusive but is intended to help answer some questions you may have.

AGENCY REQUIREMENTS

Most Food Banks have requirements that must be met in order for your agency to successfully gain access to their product. The following is a list of requirements for your group to follow:

- I. Be a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization
- II. Be an “established” food center. Food banks require that all agencies applying for membership are active in food distribution. You need to have been distributing food for at least 6 months to qualify as “established.” When describing your food outreach program make sure you state what you’ve done in the past and what you plan to do in the future.
- III. Be “self-supporting” and able to provide your own food, money and staff: You will probably need other sources of food besides your local Food Bank.
- IV. Keep outside donations of food items coming in. Your food site will be inspected before admittance into the food bank. Have your shelves filled when representatives visit your facility. There are several ways to gain food donations.
 - a. Local food drives - Hand flyers out in your community asking for donations which will be picked up on a set date. Ask your local food store manager for donations and for permission to set up a donation box in his store. Ask other churches, clubs, organization, or places of employment to sponsor food drives for your center.
- V. Money – A shared maintenance fee will be charged for food, so those in charge will want to know how you plan to pay for your product. One acceptable way of paying for the food is by including it in the budget and collecting donations. Once a Member Agency, the food bank will also have a program where volunteer hours by your agency members or other groups can be applied to paying for a portion of the product you receive.
- VI. Staffing - The food bank will want to know who is going to run the program and coordinate volunteers and their time transporting and sorting food. It can easily take a couple of hours a week to sort and stack your product.

- VII. Distribute food to the community “at large” - Food banks require that service is given regardless of race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, political belief, or national origin.
- VIII. You will need to establish guidelines for those whom you serve. (Example: Zip codes, cities or a certain part of town.)
- IX. Have “established” days and hours you are open to the community (Example: Monday 10:00 a.m. until noon.) You need to have established hours of operation for your center. You may distribute food at other times of the week by referrals or on an emergency basis.
- X. Have “written” guidelines for all recipients. Determine what minimum requirements your clients will need to qualify for assistance. Remember there are always people looking to take advantage of the system.
Income - It is all right to help a family on an emergency basis, but a large percentage of the people you help will be repeat clients. Months with five weekends are especially hard on families on food stamps and the elderly on fixed incomes.
- XI. Have a separate “locked” storage facility with “refrigerator and freezer” space. You need to have a designated dry-food room with off the floor storage. Metal shelving units or wall lockers work very well. You need to have a separate refrigerator/freezer unit from the one your church or community center uses. Thermometers need to be placed in the unit to monitor the temperature the days your agency is open.
- XII. Have a current contract with a licensed pest control company for all food storage and preparation areas.
- XIII. Keep accurate records - Most food banks are partially funded by government programs or grants which require them to report records, such as number of families and individuals served and number of breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks served. You may also want these figures available to show what you are doing in your community. You need to record how many people you serve, their ages and verify household income.
- XIV. Have a current Health Department Permit (only if preparing food for individuals) or State License (if a day care or residential rehabilitation center)

Collaboration: Think about creating a collaborative effort with other non-profit or faith based organizations to improve access to food for the ill, needy and children. Create a sustainable food pantry by working together and sharing resources. Become a partner with the North Texas Food Bank and America’s Second Harvest to improve the quantity and quality of food product available to families and individuals experiencing food insecurity.

Organizing a Successful Pantry

1. Who do we help?

- Widows
- Single Parents
- Senior Adults on limited fixed incomes
- Unemployed

- Working poor
 - People experiencing a crisis
2. **How do I find them?**
 - Look inside the church family
 - Ask nearby smaller churches in low-income areas
 - Ask nearby community and local government agencies
 3. **How often do I help them?**
 - Depends on the needs of the community & a food purchasing budget
 4. **Where do I get the food?**
 - A local church food drive
 - Local Food Bank
 - Local grocery stores and food distribution centers
 - Government Commodities through the local food Bank

Whether a pantry hires for the position or chooses to remain a totally volunteer effort, having a coordinator is essential. Someone must take responsibility for day-to-day operations, scheduling, training and supervising volunteers, acting as liaison with the community, bookkeeping, compiling monthly reports, and maintaining inventory control. The coordinator should be comfortable dealing with people directly and with speaking before large groups. Organizing talents are invaluable, as are contacts within the local civic and church communities.

FOOD STORAGE, MATERIALS AND TRANSPORTATION

Refrigeration is recommended but not essential; the room(s) must be safe, sanitary and secure. Regular pest and rodent control is necessary, as is shelving to keep the food 6" off the floor. When searching for a location, consider its accessibility to the customer or referring agencies the pantry will serve. Consider the need for a vehicle to transport food. Aside from office supplies, the materials most frequently used by pantries are grocery bags and small cardboard boxes. Asking stores, your congregation and families to save these items can keep a pantry well supplied.

Having a food bank located in your area can be invaluable to a pantry, but in order to stock and distribute a variety of well-balanced foods, pantries must also run occasional food drives and purchase foods as well. When several congregations support a single pantry, they frequently take turns passing the collection plate and putting out a receptacle for food donations. Other food drive ideas include: raffles, hunger walks, bake sales. Some pantries report that for food purchases they watch the local supermarket sales.

Content guides for food boxes should be posted in the pantry so that the boxes can be tailored to fit a family's size and needs (i.e. infant formula for a baby), and pre-sorting the foods as they are stocked will save time later. A simple inventory system that adds food as it goes on the shelves and subtracts it as it goes into emergency boxes will provide a check on the system and ensure that the food is going to those who need it.

Store food off the floor and away from the walls so pests won't have a place to hide and to protect the food from moisture. Separate edible food items from non-food

items. Check cans for leaks, bulges, rust and big dents, and when in doubt, throw it out. Contact the local health department for training in food handling and safety.

CUSTOMERS AND REFERRALS

The pantry needs only to obtain basic information about the customers and their food needs for record keeping and statistical purposes. Referring agencies should be kept up to date on the pantry's procedures and hours of operations. The best way to do this is by contacting the local community help line (211). In some communities, the lack of referring agencies may necessitate a pantry's accepting self-referrals, walk-in clients, and/or further screening referrals from other kinds of agencies.

In that case, the pantry must develop an intake procedure and determine who will be eligible, under what circumstances, and how frequently individuals can return for food. It also becomes essential for the pantry to seek training for its volunteers in interviewing techniques, the use of intake forms and making referrals to other assistance agencies. (Because the goal of most pantries is to provide needy families with food for a short period of time, it is important that provisions be made to refer clients to other agencies for more permanent solutions to their needs.) Pantries that are dependent on volunteer staff may want to seek assistance from other agencies or churches with help in creating initial intake forms and referral work.

The issue of personal safety should also be addressed in volunteer training sessions. However it serves its clients, every pantry should keep records of who, why and how many it serves. These figures will document the causes and extent of the local hunger problem and will be invaluable in gathering support. Coordinating with other pantries will minimize abuse by repeat users.

FUNDS

Even an all-volunteer pantry housed in a church will have a few bills to pay. Food is expensive, and neither telephone nor utility companies have been known to donate their services to anyone. Many other businesses will donate their services however, and many pantries never have to buy office supplies and equipment or pay for printing. The key to both raising money and getting donated services is simple: ASK! Talk up the pantry. Prepare a brief presentation that describes the people involved with the pantry (steering committee members, volunteers and clients).

Enthusiasm is infectious; tell people about the pantry and ask for their help. Today's "no" could be tomorrow's "yes", so don't give up. Special events can be good money-raisers as long as they don't take more in the planning, staffing and staging than they add to the cash box. Pantries have made money holding bake sales, auctions, potluck dinners and much more. As ongoing sources of support, however, churches have no equal. A \$6,000 annual budget breaks down to \$500 per month. Five churches taking monthly collections of \$100 each could support a pantry.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Public relations might best be described as an organized and systematic way of keeping a community informed. Before people will volunteer or give money to any program, they have to know about it. Here are a few tips:

Use statistics and anecdotes to bring the problem of hunger to life. Print brochures. Provide supporting churches and civic clubs with brief updates for their Sunday bulletins and/or newsletters.

- Cultivate the local media. Send regular public service announcements to the radio stations and local newspapers or when a special activity is planned.
- Start a mailing list of the names of supporters, volunteers, donors and contacts.
- Publish (type and copy) a monthly newsletter - nothing fancy or lengthy, just interesting and informative.

Unless they prefer anonymity, thank everyone publicly for anything they do. This can be done in the newsletter or in some special cases, through the local press. Take pictures and put a slide show together.

Selecting Food for the Pantry: Malnutrition and hunger go hand in hand. Encourage the collection of wholesome foods as opposed to highly processed, expensive foods. Also encourage the collection of foods low in sugar or salt and high in nutrients or vitamins. The following suggestions for stocking a food pantry may be useful as a guide for preparing emergency food boxes. Most pantries post this type of information for the benefit of their volunteers. Packaging sizes and styles should be specific to the client population. Would you need to stock pop-top or tab-top cans? Are most clients' single elderly persons, families, or transients with no cooking facilities? Consider, too, that some non-food items are necessary but expensive to your clients.

How to Determine What Groceries to Distribute: Pre-bagging groceries saves time, but a client may not eat certain items in the bag. Client choice is one way to ensure that food does not go to waste. The questions you ask the person requesting help will be a good source of information for determining his or her food needs.

Size and composition of family: How many people are in the household? Teenagers eat more than small children.

Special dietary needs: Diabetics should not have sugar-laden food. Elderly people may need some soft foods. Infants may need formula or baby food. You may have a small percentage of clients with kosher food needs.

Living situation of person needing help: Is refrigeration available? Are cooking facilities working? Is the person intellectually challenged and only capable of preparing very simple meals?

Logistics: Will the person be walking, traveling by bus or by car? How much can he or she carry? The kinds and amounts of food that you distribute will vary with your food supply. Make an effort to provide for well-balanced meals. Some groups include an information sheet suggesting recipes and menus that could be made from certain food items. For instance, creamed soup, rice and tuna together with a can of green beans could make a nice casserole. Foods that are good sources of protein are important to have on hand. These include meat, eggs and fish (which generally are perishable), as

well as dried beans, peas and lentils. You can get a protein value equivalent to that of meat by combining grain products with peas, beans and lentils. The best guideline is your own knowledge of meal planning and grocery shopping. Use your good common sense!

PROPERTY SAFETY

1. Have a permanent sign on the pantry door indicating exact hours and days the pantry will give out food.
2. Have a wide-angle viewer installed in the door to the pantry. Before opening the door, be sure there aren't more people than you expected.
3. Have a dead bolt and chain on the main entrance of the pantry.
4. Have all windows bolted or nailed to prevent entrance by intruders.

PERSONAL SAFETY

1. Have one or two other people at the pantry during indicated hours the pantry gives out food. If alone, arrange the pick-up times when someone else will be with you at the pantry.
2. Never invite referrals or "walk-ins" to accompany you into the pantry. You do not want to be in an isolated place with an unknown person.
3. When speaking on the phone to those needing help, be cautious about telling them you are alone, or when you will be leaving the pantry. Give no indication of your routine arrival and departure times, or information about your home address, phone number, etc.
4. Call the police at the slightest infringement of your rights as a person. Give the police accurate information as to what is happening in order that they may respond rapidly. This is another good reason to work in pairs.
5. Whether you are at work or at home always let someone know where you are going. Even if you live alone, leave a note, so that in case of an emergency, someone will know where to find you.
6. No, matter how nice or innocent a person may appear to be, never take any chances with your personal safety!

KEEPING PANTRY RECORDS

Record keeping is important so that you can document who and how many people you are serving, how often they return and the reasons for hunger in your area. As a member agency, you will need to report this information to your local food bank on a monthly or quarterly basis.

SCREENING RECIPIENT CLIENTS

Ask people for the following basic information:

- Name, address, phone number
- Number and ages of people in household.
- Usual source of household income.
- Unusual circumstances (i.e. broken stove or refrigerator)
- If anyone in the household is physically challenged or disabled.
- Public assistance programs from which they receive help.
- If special dietary needs are required by any family member.
- The reason they are without food resources.
- If they have been helped previously.
- When their next financial assistance arrives.
- The source of their referral to you.

This information can be taken over the phone or in person. If you have criteria limiting eligibility, it is better if you tell people they are ineligible before they come in to pick up food. Check their identification to verify walk-in people

PERMANENT CLIENT RECORDS

Basic permanent information can be recorded on an intake form and arranged alphabetically in a file cabinet or stored on a computer software program. Although documenting your program is important, names of people and specific information about their lives and problems should be confidential and accessible only to appropriate individuals.

INVENTORY RECORDS

It is also important that you keep a simple inventory record so that you can keep up with monies spent in supplying your pantry as well as pounds distributed to the needy: Documenting your history will give you a foundation and guideline for future efforts.

HOW OFTEN A FAMILY MAY BE SERVED

Some people will put you on their list and visit as often as possible. Helping anywhere from once every month to every quarter is a good policy. It's very unlikely for a person who receives food stamps each month to need food early in the month. Try to identify why the person is in need so you can better assist them. Not all people are getting the government assistance to which they are entitled. Sometimes you may need to refer them to a government agency. Keep a list of other agencies available for referral.

IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

A driver's license or ID card is an easy way to verify name and address. If they do not have either, a utility bill will work.

FOOD CANNOT BE SOLD

- a. You may not charge, solicit dues, fees or donations from recipients of food.
- b. You can ask your community for donations through a mail appeal or other drives.

By implementing these guidelines into your program you will be well on your way to successfully gaining a valuable resource.

OTHER DECISIONS YOU WILL NEED TO MAKE

1. The geographical area your pantry will serve: Where is the local need? How far away are other pantries?
2. The number of families you will help monthly: What is realistic in terms of your resources? How much time do committee members have to volunteer?
3. Your referral policy: Can you accept referrals from other hunger related groups? How many each month? What are other referral sources? Will you have enough food?
4. The criteria that will be used to determine whom you serve: How often can someone receive assistance? Will you only help in emergencies or can you assist those with more chronic needs?
5. The method of distributing food: Will you distribute as need occurs or have regular distribution days? Will you deliver to everyone or only to those without transportation?
6. Your hours of operations: Will there be certain times (for example, three mornings each week, or every afternoon) that someone in your group can be reached with requests to relay to those who distribute food? Will you have a designated distribution day?
7. The types of food you will provide: Will you only distribute dry and canned goods or can you include fresh and/or frozen items or non-foods? What do your facilities and budget allow?
8. If other local organizations will be encouraged to participate in your work: Can you benefit from more hands, more resources? Can you establish workable channels of communication? Can you focus on the work and not on differences?
9. By what means will the pantry be maintained: Are food drives enough? Is there an existing fund or will one be established?

FOR SAMPLES (SEE FORMS BELOW)

ENROLLMENT FORM

Name _____
(Last) (First) (Middle or Maiden)

Address _____ City _____ State _____

Zip Code _____ Phone _____ Family Size _____

Household Members

Name	Sex	Age
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Income Sources _____ Currently Employed? (Circle one) Yes No

Monthly Household Income \$ _____ Annual Household Income \$ _____

Referred by:

Client Signature _____

Member Agency Name operates in accordance with the US Department of Agriculture and Texas Department of Human Services policy, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, political belief, or national origin.

Member Agency Name funciona de acuerdo con la póliza del Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos y el Departamento de Servicios Humanos de Texas, que prohíbe discriminación a raíz de raza, color, sexo, edad, incapacidad, religión, creencia política, u origen nacional.

Pantry use only

Months Assisted: Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

(Agency Name) Food Pantry Guidelines

1. Each person coming to the (Agency Name) Food Pantry for the first time is required to complete an application and show proof of residency in the area served by (Agency Name). Some of the information requested on the application is applicant's name, home address, employment, income and fixed expenditures.
2. Once the application has been recorded the applicant is interviewed. The interviewer asks about personal, financial and family needs which affect their ability to provide food for their family. The interviewer assess the current need, and determines if assistance is appropriate and how often. Normally a person is eligible for assistance once a month.
3. Eligibility for assistance is based on income guidelines from the Texas Department of Human Services and the current situation.
4. (Agency Name) does not provide money to an applicant. Referrals to other agencies are made when applicable.
5. The area's serviced by the (Agency Name) are local zip codes (13 county area).

(Director's Name)

Director, (Agency Name) Food Pantry

(Agency Name) operates in accordance with the United States Department of Agriculture and Texas Department of Human Services policy, which prohibits Discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, political belief, or national origin.

ITEMS TO STOCK

SUGGESTED FOODS TO STOCK IN FOOD PANTRIES:

Baby foods & infant formula
Canned meats or stews
Cereals, oats or grits
Milk (dry or evaporated)
Coffee & tea
Pancake mix
Cooking oils or solid shortening
Pasta (macaroni, spaghetti, etc.)
Cornmeal or cornbread mix
Peanut butter
Crackers Potatoes (fresh or instant)
Diet foods (low in sugar or salt)
Pork & beans
Dried beans, peas or lentils
Rice
Flour Salt & sugar
Fruits (canned or dehydrated)
Soups (canned or dehydrated)
Honey, syrup or jelly
Spaghetti sauce or tomato sauce
Juices (canned or dehydrated)
Tuna or canned chicken
Mayonnaise, mustard or catsup
Canned vegetables
If refrigeration or freezer space is available, you can add:
Bread Fresh fruits
Cheese Fresh vegetables
Eggs Frozen juices
Margarine Meats, poultry or fish

SUGGESTED NON-FOODS TO STOCK IN FOOD PANTRIES:

Soap & Shampoo
Diapers & sanitary napkins
Toothpaste & denture cleanser
Detergent & cleaning supplies
Toilet paper
Foil or film wrap
Have plenty of grocery bags on hand and some boxes. Bags with handles are better for people who will need to carry them for a distance.

PREPARING EMERGENCY FOOD BOXES

The following is a suggested guideline for the amount of food to distribute from one person up to four people for a need of three days, using different food choices to show the variety of foods it is possible to use. Also, you should consider each family's specific needs such as baby foods, diapers, special diet foods, etc.

ONE PERSON/TWO PEOPLE

- 1 Loaf of bread
- 1 Jar peanut butter
- 1 Jar jelly
- 1 Can tuna or chicken
- 4 Cans soup
- 1 Can pork & beans
- 4 Cans vegetables
- 1 Can stew
- 2 Cans meat or stew
- 1 Can ravioli
- 1 Can chicken & dumplings
- 1 Box macaroni & cheese
- 1 Lb. spaghetti
- 1 Box cereal
- 1 Jar spaghetti sauce
- 1 Can juice
- 4 Cans fruit
- 1 Box cereal or oats
- 1 Lb. cheese
- 1 Can evaporated milk

THREE PEOPLE/FOUR PEOPLE

- 2 Loaves bread
- 1 Jar peanut butter
- 1 Jar jelly
- 6 Cans soup
- 6 Cans fruit
- 1 Can juice
- 2 Boxes cereal or oats
- 6 Cans vegetables
- 1 Lb. pasta or rice
- 1 Lb. pasta (macaroni or spaghetti)
- 1 Box crackers
- 1 Lb. cheese
- 1 Box crackers
- 1 Box tea
- 2 Cans pork & beans
- 1 Lb. margarine
- 1 Lb. dry milk
- 1 Can stewed tomatoes
- 1 Jar spaghetti sauce
- 4 Cans meat, chicken or stew
- 1 Box pancake mix
- 1 Bottle cooking oil
- 1 Bottle of pancake syrup
- 5 Lbs. potatoes

MENU SUGGESTIONS

The USDA recommends the following guidelines for a well-balanced meal:

MEAT OR MEAT ALTERNATE - Two servings per day of one of the following or a combination of any of these items to give an equivalent in quantity to:

2 oz. lean meat, poultry or fish, 2 oz. cheese
2 large eggs 8 oz., cooked dry beans or peas
4 tablespoons peanut butter

VEGETABLE AND/OR FRUIT - Four servings per day of vegetables or fruits or both equal to a serving total of: 4 oz. vegetables, fruits or fruit juices.

BREAD OR BREAD ALTERNATE - Four servings per day of bread or bread alternate, or four servings of each of the following:

1 slice whole grain or enriched bread
½ hamburger bun, hot dog bun or English muffin
4 oz. cooked rice
4 oz. cooked macaroni, spaghetti or noodles
4 oz. breakfast cereal, oats or grits

MILK - Four servings per day of milk or milk alternate:

8 oz. milk
8 oz. pudding or custard
16 oz. cottage cheese
8 oz. yogurt

BASIC SUGGESTED MENUS USING THIS GUIDELINE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

BREAKFAST

2 eggs, pancakes w/syrup, cereal w/milk
Fruit juice, sliced fruit or
2 slices toast w/milk

LUNCH

1 can vegetable soup, 1 Apple, 1 orange
Peanut butter sandwich, milk
Tuna salad sandwich, crackers
2 slices cheese

DINNER

1 canned stew or spaghetti w/meat sauce, cooked beans w/rice Mixed Fruit
Tossed salad, cooked carrots or green beans Tea or Coffee
1 slice bread or toast

RESOURCE PAGE

Food Bank of West Central Texas
5505 N. 1st St.
Abilene, TX 79603
325.695.6311
www.fbwct.org

Feeding America
35 E. Wacker Dr., #2000
Chicago, IL 60601
1-(800) 771-2303
www.feedingamerica.org