



Partner Agency Manual

Food Bank of West Central Texas

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Abilene, Texas 79603
Office 325.695.6311
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www.fbwct.org

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Glossary of Terms

Backpack Program

A program providing children with bags of nutritious, easy-to-prepare food to take home over weekends or school holidays when school meals are unavailable.

Contracting Entity (CE)

An entity that holds a TEFAP Agreement with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) to receive, store, handle, and deliver USDA Foods.

Federal Poverty Level Guidelines

Federal poverty income thresholds that are updated annually to determine eligibility for income-based programs.

Feeding America Network Organization FANO)

A national network of over 200 food banks. This organization sets operational standards, brokers food donations from national manufacturers, leads advocacy and research, and offers training and conferences. Members pay an annual fee and undergo compliance audits every two years.

Feeding Texas

A nonprofit organization uniting all Texas food banks affiliated with Feeding America. Founded in 1986, it coordinates statewide resources, facilitates transportation and product transfers, collaborates on anti-hunger initiatives, provides education and training programs, monitors state and federal legislative issues, develops legislative strategies and advocates for neighbors we serve.

Food Bank of West Central Texas (FBWCT)

A nonprofit organization serving a 13-county coverage area. Its mission is to alleviate hunger by providing food access to individuals and families in need, working through direct distribution and partnerships with local agencies and programs.

Hot Meal or Congregate Meal

Prepared meals served free of charge in a clean, secure environment.

Meal Connect Service Insights

A web-based system for tracking neighbor eligibility and electronic signatures, creating a paperless record-keeping process.

Partner Agencies

Organizations partnering with the Food Bank to provide meals or distribute food to neighbors in need.

Monthly Statistics Reports

Reports submitted by all Food Bank partner agencies detailing the number of meals, individuals, and households served each month, including certain demographics.

Neighbors

Individuals or households eligible to receive food assistance.

Pantry

An organization that provides nutritious food to individuals and families facing food insecurity.

Proxy

A person authorized to collect supplemental food on behalf of a recipient.

Purchased Food

Staple foods purchased by the Food Bank to ensure consistent availability of low-cost inventory for member agencies.

Service Area

The geographic area where the Food Bank and its agencies provide services. Agencies may have additional defined territories due to capacity or funding limitations.

Shared Maintenance Fee

A handling fee, as established within parameters of the Food Bank's contract, with FANO charged to agencies for services provided including transportation, warehousing, and distribution of goods. Produce, dairy, and bakery items are exempt from this fee.

Shelter

A facility providing temporary or transitional housing for individuals and families, including specific groups like survivors of domestic violence or runaway youth.

Product Availability List (PAL)

A daily updated, computer-generated list of available products from which agencies may order, accessible via the Food Bank's website.

Site

A place at which an emergency feeding organization (EFO) certifies applicant eligibility and/or distributes USDA Food packages or meals to needy persons. A site may work directly with a CE or a sub distributing agency. A site can include, but is not limited to, a food pantry or soup kitchen.

Supplemental Feeding

Programs providing on-site snacks, such as those at Boys and Girls Clubs, after-school care, or group homes.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

A federal program providing supplemental emergency USDA Foods to income-eligible households.

Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)

A state agency within the state of Texas, which is responsible for matters pertaining to agriculture, rural community affairs, and related matters, including the administration of the federal USDA TEFAP program.

USDA Foods

Food provided by the USDA through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP).

US Department of Agriculture (USDA)

The US federal executive department is responsible for developing and executing federal laws related to farming, forestry, and food.

Partner Agency Welcome Letter

Welcome, Member Agency Partners!

Welcome to the Food Bank of West Central Texas. We are pleased to have your agency join our network. Nearly 150 agencies work hand-in-hand with us to help alleviate hunger in West Central Texas.

Since 1983 the Food Bank of West Central Texas has existed to address the critical issue of hunger in our area. At that time, concerned citizens secured donations of surplus unmarketable, yet wholesome, food and grocery products for re-distribution. Several thousand pounds of food were disbursed that first year. In 2024, 5 million pounds were distributed. This was possible with the help of our member agency pantries and food programs just like yours.

There is much work to do in our thirteen-county region. In Brown, Callahan, Coleman, Comanche, Eastland, Fisher, Jones, Mitchell, Nolan, Runnels, Shackelford, Stephens, and Taylor counties, 53,000 of our fellow community members are facing hunger.

Thank you for your willingness to be a part of the solution. Our Food Bank staff members are ready to assist you in your endeavor and look forward to hearing your insights into our work as well. We are truly partners.

Brandon Forrest
Chief Executive Officer

Summer Menchaca
Director of Programs

FBWCT Staff Directory

Brandon Forrest - brandon@fbwct.org

Chief Executive Officer

Patrick Dembach - patdembach@fbwct.org

Director of Operations and Administration

Summer Menchaca - summer@fbwct.org

Director of Programs and Agency Relations

Randy Wilkerson - randy@fbwct.org

Volunteer and Response Coordinator

James Wagstaff - james@fbwct.org

Development Director

Michael Pecoraro - michael@fbwct.org

Agency Relations Coordinator

Kyra Hudson - kyra@fbwct.org

Social Services Coordinator

Thomas Saverance - thomas@fbwct.org

Administrative Assistant

Jason Keefer - jason@fbwct.org

Warehouse Manager

Nate Mays

Warehouse

Damon Whisenhunt

Warehouse

Ronnie C. Kidd - ronniekidd@fbwct.org

Chief Transition Officer

General Information

How to Reach Us:

Physical address.....5505 N. First St. Abilene, TX 79603
Mailing address.....5505 N. First St. Abilene, TX 79603
Telephone number..... (325) 695-6311
Fax..... (325) 695-6827
Warehouse Fax.....(325) 695-3948

Who to Call:

To request or change a pickup day and time..... Warehouse Manager
For billing questions.....Administrative Assistance
FBWCT Programs.....Director of Programs
Food Safety Training.....Agency Relations
Nutrition Education.....Social Services Coordinator
Product Integrity.....Warehouse Manager

Office hours are as follows:

- Monday - Thursday: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Warehouse hours are as follows:

- Monday - Friday 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Food Bank Closure Announcements: In the event of closures due to weather, holidays, or other operational needs, notifications will be sent out to all partner agencies via email and posted on our Facebook page. During inclement weather, the Food Bank will follow and mimic all Abilene ISD closures and delays. Check local media outlets for information.

Scheduled Closings: The Food Bank is closed for the following holidays and observances:

- New Year's Day: January 1
- Good Friday: Friday before Easter Sunday
- Memorial Day: Last Monday in May
- Independence Day: July 4
- Labor Day: First Monday in September
- Veteran's Day: November 11
- Thanksgiving: Fourth Thursday and Friday in November
- Christmas Eve: December 24
- Christmas Day: December 25*

*Additional closings may be announced around the Christmas and New Year's holidays.
Advance notice will be provided.

Food Bank of West Central Texas (FBWCT) Overview

Our Mission

The Food Bank of West Central Texas is committed to procuring and distributing nutritious food to a network of qualified agencies that serve individuals facing hunger in our region. By partnering with local organizations, we aim to alleviate food insecurity and enhance the quality of life for residents across the Big Country. Our work helps ensure that no one in our communities goes without the nourishment they need to thrive. In short: fighting hunger ... feeding hope.

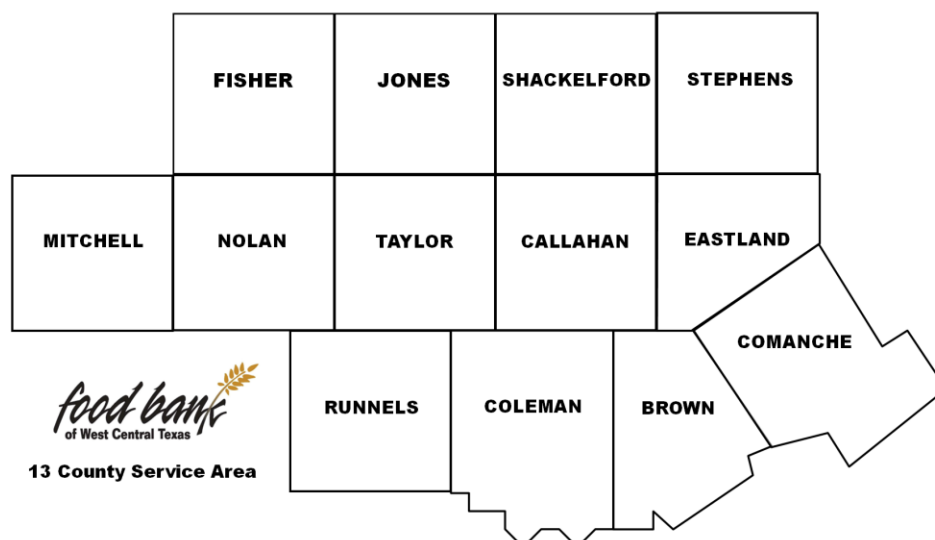
Service Area

The Food Bank of West Central Texas provides vital food assistance to 13 counties, serving a wide network of charitable organizations dedicated to alleviating hunger. These counties include Brown, Callahan, Coleman, Comanche, Eastland, Fisher, Jones, Mitchell, Nolan, Runnels, Shackelford, Stephens, and Taylor. Our partner agencies distribute food to those who are hungry, ill, or in need, ensuring that vital support reaches the most vulnerable members of our community across the Big Country region.

Funding

The operations of the Food Bank of West Central Texas are sustained through a combination of public and private funding sources, including grants from foundations, corporate partnerships, individual donations, and government contracts. These critical resources enable the food bank to purchase food, maintain operations, and support a variety of food programs that serve thousands of individuals facing hunger. Through the generosity of our donors and partners, we are able to continue our mission of fighting hunger and feeding hope, building a healthier, more resilient community.

Together, with the help of our partners, donors, and volunteers, the Food Bank of West Central Texas is making meaningful strides in ending hunger and providing hope for a brighter future for those in need.



FBWCT Programs

Backpack Program

Operating since December 2006, our Backpack Program provides backpacks filled with child-friendly, nonperishable, and easy-to-consume food. These backpacks are discreetly distributed to children on Friday afternoons or before holiday breaks to ensure they have access to food over the weekend or during school holidays when meals are not readily available. This program is designed to combat child hunger and provide nutrition during critical times when children may otherwise go without.

Mobile Food Pantry Program

The Mobile Food Pantry Program brings essential food staples to communities throughout the West Central Texas area. The food bank delivers food at no cost to designated sites, each of which provides a location, a site coordinator, and volunteers who manage the distribution process. This program ensures that residents in underserved areas have access to necessary food, often in areas where traditional food pantries may not be accessible.

Social Services Outreach Program

Families and individuals who seek food assistance from partner agencies are often eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp Program. SNAP is a federal nutrition assistance program that helps low-income and temporarily unemployed people purchase nutritious foods. FBWCT's SNAP outreach staff assist clients with completing applications for Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) programs, which include SNAP, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Medicaid, and/or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

The Social Service Outreach Coordinator can also assist clients who need to make changes to their HHSC accounts, such as a change of address, income updates, or family dynamic changes.

For more information about the Social Service Outreach Program, please contact our Social Services Team at 325-721-9197.

TEFAP Program in Texas

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a federal program that helps supplement the diets of low-income individuals and families by providing emergency food assistance at no cost. In Texas, TEFAP is administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) and is part of a network of food banks across the state. This program ensures that those facing temporary crises or long-term food insecurity have access to nutritious food.

GOOD SAMARITAN FOOD ACT

On October 1, 1996, President Bill Clinton signed the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act into law. This Act was designed to encourage food donations to non-profit organizations by providing liability protection to donors. Under the law, individuals and organizations are protected from civil and criminal liability should donated food, given in good faith, cause harm to a recipient—provided the food is not knowingly unsafe or unfit for consumption.

The Food Bank of West Central Texas strictly adheres to the Good Samaritan Food Donation Act to ensure the safety and quality of all food distributed. Compliance is a shared responsibility among food bank employees, agency partners, and volunteers. Every individual involved in handling and distributing food must remain vigilant to uphold food safety standards.

If you observe any of the following, immediately notify Food Bank staff to prevent potential risks and maintain compliance:

- Food that appears unwholesome or unfit for consumption due to age, contamination, spoilage, or insect infestation.
- Containers that have been opened or appear tampered with.
- Canned goods that are leaking, swollen, badly dented, or no longer airtight.

Your cooperation in ensuring that all food items remain wholesome, safe, and fit for distribution is essential to the mission of the Food Bank of West Central Texas. By working together, we can provide nutritious, high-quality food to those in need while upholding the integrity and safety of our food supply.



Partnership Guidelines

FBWCT is dedicated to building a robust network to meet the food needs of the 13-county West Central Texas service area. To achieve this, FBWCT takes a strategic approach to identifying gaps between areas of high need and available services.

FBWCT reserves the right to deny or deactivate partnerships with any organization that fails to meet its minimum requirements, does not align with its mission, or does not adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook.

Authorized Programs for Partnership

Food Pantry - An emergency/supplemental food distribution program that provides groceries to clients in need. Pantries have regular, published distribution times. Food is consumed off-site. Examples of this type of program are:

- Church or faith-based organization pantries
- Community Centers
- Social Service organizations, faith and non-faith based
- Senior Citizen Programs

Meal Program – An agency that provides meals to clients on-site at regularly scheduled hours. Examples of this type of program are:

- Soup Kitchens
- Emergency Shelters
- Senior Citizen Centers
- Low-income child-care programs

Snack Program – An agency that provides a snack to clients on-site on a regular basis. Examples of this type of program are:

- After School Programs
- Low income/Sliding Scale Child Care
- Senior Citizens Centers

**Some programs may fall into more than one of the above categories*

Partnership Eligibility Requirements

To gain and maintain membership with FBWCT, a Partner Agency must meet the minimum requirements established by Feeding America, the IRS, USDA, and FBWCT. In accordance with federal law, a 501(c)(3) or other tax-exempt organization must be fiscally, programmatically, and legally responsible for the proper handling and distribution of donated food received from FBWCT.

To ensure compliance and accountability, FBWCT has an application process for organizations seeking to become a Partner Agency. FBWCT accepts partnership applications from organizations that distribute food for charitable purposes to the ill, needy, or infants. Eligible partnerships include, but are not limited to, emergency and non-emergency food pantries, emergency congregate meal providers, shelters, transitional living facilities, backpack programs, and snack programs

To partner with FBWCT an agency must:

- Hold 501(c)(3) or equivalent tax-exempt status.
- Have a minimum of three months food distribution experience prior to applying for partnership.
- Display required posters and complete any survey requests from FBWCT.
- Meet FBWCT's minimum requirements (see below).
- Submit a completed FBWCT New Partner Agency application along with a non-refundable \$25 application fee.
- Complete an online new agency orientation training.
- All key staff or volunteers must complete the online Civil Rights Training annually.
- Obtain all required food handler/manager certifications as applicable.
- Successfully pass an initial physical site inspection.
- Meet all technology requirements (see below).

Note: Agencies **may not** re-distribute FBWCT donated products to other agencies.

Non-Profit 501(c)(3) Status

All agencies receiving donated products from FBWCT must be federally exempt 501(c)(3) organizations, affiliated with a 501(c)(3), or a 501(c)(3) equivalent (e.g., churches). Agencies must comply with IRS Code 170(e)(3).

Church-affiliated programs may use the nonprofit designation of their parent organization (e.g., Southern Baptist Convention, Diocese of Austin, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod) and must submit a letter on church letterhead confirming this affiliation.

Independent or non-denominational churches without IRS nonprofit designation must provide a letter, signed by their Chief Executive Officer, affirming they meet at least nine of the fourteen IRS criteria for defining a church. This signed form will be placed on file before membership approval.

A 501(c)(3) determination letter, letter of affiliation, or affirmation letter must be submitted before membership activation.

Three Month Experience Requirement

The following requirement is for food pantry and congregate feeding programs only. FBWCT requires three months (prior to FBWCT partnership) of food pantry or similar emergency food program distribution experience to a minimum of 25 families per month in order to qualify for partnership. Exceptions to the 25 family minimum will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Partnership with FBWCT is meant to enhance the work your agency is already doing. Commodities available from FBWCT should supplement your inventory, not be the sole source. The experience requirement is meant to show FBWCT that your agency has acquired adequate food/financial support from the community, which is one key to long-term success and stability.

Direct distribution to clients and record keeping can be difficult, so the experience requirement also shows your commitment to human service and accountability requirements.

Technology Requirements

All Partner Agencies must have the necessary technology and skills to effectively utilize the cloud-based neighbor intake database and reporting software. These requirements are essential for maintaining accurate data collection, streamlining operations, and ensuring compliance with agency guidelines. The following minimum technology standards must be met:

- **Device:** A laptop, desktop, or tablet capable of accessing and operating the neighbor intake database.
- **Internet Access:** A stable internet connection to support real-time data entry and system functionality.
- **Browser Compatibility:** A modern web browser (e.g., Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, or Firefox) that supports the intake platform.
- **User Proficiency:** Staff or volunteers responsible for intake must have basic computer literacy, including the ability to navigate web-based applications and enter data accurately.
- **Security Compliance:** Agencies must ensure data security by using password-protected devices and following best practices for safeguarding recipient information.

Agencies that do not currently meet these requirements will be responsible for acquiring the necessary technology and training to remain in compliance with partner guidelines.

Membership Requirements

1. The member organization must be a tax-exempt non-profit organization as determined by the IRS under section 501(c)(3). A copy of the IRS Letter of Determination must be on file at the Food Bank.
2. The member organization must have been providing food services or assistance for at least three months prior to the application date. Records verifying food distribution during this period must include the number of families and/or individuals assisted each month.
3. The member organization must demonstrate the financial ability to contribute the shared maintenance fee for products received from the Food Bank. The member organization must also pay an annual membership fee of \$40.
4. Key representatives of the member organization must attend the initial orientation meeting and any additional meetings or training sessions required by the Food Bank.
5. The member organization must maintain up-to-date information at the Food Bank office. Significant changes, such as agency distribution hours, location, or changes in leadership, must be reported using the Change of Information form provided in the appendix.
6. The Food Bank must be informed of all changes in the use of its products. Products may only be used for the program(s) for which the member organization is approved.
7. Member organizations participating in Food Bank of West Central Texas programs (e.g., TEFAP) must submit all required documentation, reporting tools, and financial documents as specified for each program.
8. The Food Bank reserves the right to review, amend, suspend, or terminate any program or membership found in non-compliance with policies and procedures.
9. The member organization must provide food directly to low-income individuals or families, as defined by TEFAP guidelines (185% below the poverty level in Texas).
10. Member organizations must have adequate refrigeration and storage facilities for Food Bank products.
11. Facilities operating a Food Pantry must receive pest control treatment at least once per quarter. Facilities serving as Hot Meal Sites must receive pest control treatment on a monthly basis.
12. Member organizations providing food assistance must visibly post their hours of operation outside the facility. Food may also be distributed at other times by referral or on an emergency basis.
13. Members must have written guidelines for recipients to ensure equitable treatment. "What you do for one, you must do for all."
14. Food Bank products must be used solely for feeding the needy, ill, or children. Products cannot be used for fundraising, sold, transferred, bartered, or exchanged for money, property, or services. They must not re-enter commercial channels.

15. Member organizations serving cooked meals must comply with all local and state environmental health regulations. Cooked meal programs must have at least one staff member with a valid Food Manager's certification. For Food Pantries, at least one staff member must be trained in food handling and safety, with training available through the county extension service. Current documentation (e.g. valid certificate) must be submitted to the Food Bank.
16. Partner agencies providing services to fee-paying clientele can be accepted as Food Bank members if at least 51% of the clientele are classified as needy. Reasonable documentation of this requirement must be provided.
17. The member organization agrees to abide by all donor restrictions placed on products.

FBWCT Partner Agency Agreements

Annual Agreement

Partner agency agreements are automatically renewed in January each year. The annual partner agency membership fee of \$40 will be billed to agency accounts at that time. As the agency's recertification monitor visit approaches each year, a representative from the Food Bank will request that the agency's Director signs a new Membership Agreement. This ensures that the agreement is up to date and reflects the signature of the current agency Director.

Either party may cancel the membership with 30 days' notice. However, no refunds will be issued for any unused membership fees.

All Partner Agencies are expected to adhere to the rules and regulations outlined in the Membership Agreement and the Partner Agency Manual. It is important that key staff members within your organization are familiar with both the contract and the requirements. Failure to comply with the Food Bank's policies may result in the termination of membership and access to food bank resources.

Financial Management and Accountability

The Food Bank of West Central Texas (FBWCT) is an organization that makes every effort to provide low-cost, quality food and non-food items to its partner agencies so they may distribute them to clients. Many of our products are purchased by FBWCT to supplement donations and are distributed at a reduced cost to the agency. The fee associated with all USDA products is called a "shared maintenance fee." An agency can view this fee as a recuperation of the cost of having a variety of products shipped and stored from all over the country.

Payment Methods

An agency check is the preferred method of payment, although cashier's checks and money orders are also accepted. To make alternative payment arrangements, such as ACH, please contact FBWCT. Information on agency checks must match information on file with FBWCT. Checks must be drawn on the sponsoring 501(c)(3) organization or church. **NO PERSONAL CHECKS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

- The agency must maintain good credit with FBWCT by keeping their agency account current at all times.
- During the first three months of partnership agencies must pay before or when receiving their orders to ensure they are financially viable and able to meet their financial obligation to FBWCT.
- A **fee of \$25** will be charged on any returned checks. If a check is returned, payment will then have to be made using another form of payment (i.e., cashier's check, money order, cash, etc.). Recurring returned checks may result in termination of the member agency agreement.
- The agency must keep all financial records for a minimum of three years.

Late Payments

- Payments are due within **30 days** of the invoice date. The Food Bank is willing to work with Partner Agencies during unusual circumstances and encourage Partner Agencies to call with questions.
- FBWCT reserves the right to place a member agency on “**Financial Product Hold**” for unpaid balances over **30 days old**. Failure to pay within 30 days may cause an interruption in service. Continued failure to pay an account in a timely manner may result in other required financial arrangements, such as a pre-payment agreement or termination of partnership with FBWCT.

For questions regarding your account, please contact the Agency Relations staff at 325-695-6311.

New Agency Orientation

All new member agencies are required to attend New Agency Training and Orientation as part of the onboarding process. This training is designed to familiarize new agencies with FBWCT's policies, procedures, and expectations, ensuring that the agency can effectively and efficiently serve their community.

The training may be offered through one of the following formats:

- One-on-One In-Person Training
- Live Video Conferencing Call (e.g. Zoom, Webex, Teams, etc.)
- Pre-recorded Presentation with Materials

This training is mandatory for all new agencies, **and the pantry director or coordinator must be in attendance**. The training will be scheduled no later than **14 days after the approval of the new agency**. Agencies are expected to complete the training within this time frame to maintain their partnership status.

Failure to attend the required training within the specified time may result in a delay in receiving products and services from FBWCT.

Biennial Agency Conference

Attendance and participation in the Biennial Agency Conference is required for all agency partners. Agencies are encouraged to submit suggestions for topics of instruction and discussion. The conference also offers valuable opportunities for networking with other agencies. Agencies that fail to attend may be subject to a non-attendance fee and/or the loss of access to food bank resources. **Partner Agency Leadership, director or intake staff must be in attendance.**

Monitoring Visits and Re-Certification

At least once every two years a representative from the Food Bank of West Central Texas (FBWCT) will visit your agency to ensure that sanitation and safety standards are being upheld. These visits also provide an opportunity for deeper dialogue between the agency and the Food Bank. Agencies are expected to verify compliance with the established policies and procedures of the USDA, Feeding America, and the Food Bank.

What to Expect During a Site Monitoring Visit

The FBWCT monitor will contact the partner agency to schedule an appointment for the site monitoring visit. In addition to scheduled visits, FBWCT also reserves the right to conduct unannounced monitoring visits.

The monitor will ask about all aspects of the partner agency's program including clients served, service area, and days and times of operation, etc. Food storage and preparation areas will be inspected to ensure food safety requirements are met. All agency records including invoices, monthly reports, temperature logs, and client records will be reviewed. Current copies of all licensing and certifications must be provided to the monitor.

If the monitor determines that there is a minor food storage or record keeping violation, he/she will suggest how to correct the situation, give a time frame for the correction, and do a follow-up visit if necessary.

Major food storage, usage or record keeping violations will result in immediate probation. The monitor will notify the Pantry Director in writing of actions to be taken by the agency and a follow-up visit will be required before the agency can resume product pick-up with FBWCT.

Pest Control Records

Food storage areas are particularly susceptible to rodent and insect infestation. A visual inspection of the Partner Agency's facilities should be done at least monthly, with prevention and treatment at least quarterly or as needed, Partner agencies must maintain pest control records.

AGENCY STATUS

INACTIVE AGENCIES

FBWCT reserves the right to deactivate accounts for any Partner Agency if it has not placed an order for a period of six months or greater. If an agency wishes to reactivate its account, it must complete the application process again. This includes submitting a new application and scheduling a site visit with Food Bank staff. Please note, reapplying does not guarantee that the agency's account will be reactivated.

SUSPENSION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

A member agency may be suspended immediately without prior probation if it is found to have one or more violations. Additionally, a suspension may occur if violations during a probationary period are not rectified by the end of that period, or if new violations arise during the same probationary period. An agency will also be suspended if placed on probation more than twice within any twelve-month period. Suspension notifications will be issued in writing.

Upon suspension, an agency loses its rights and privileges of membership, including access to donated products. Suspension will terminate when the agency has rectified the violation(s) to the satisfaction of FBWCT management.

Member agencies may be suspended for any of the following violations:

- Exchanging donated products for money, property, or services.
- Removing donated products from the agency for personal or private use.
- Using donated products for purposes unrelated to the agency's exempt status under Section 170(e)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, which may jeopardize the 501(c)(3) status of both the agency and FBWCT.
- Failing to resolve financial issues, including insufficient funds and any associated bank fees.
- Disregarding warehouse policies, such as opening packages, exceeding quantity limitations, entering non-public areas, demonstrating inappropriate behavior.
- Violating any state or local laws, ordinances, codes, or regulations related to food distribution and safety.
- Stockpiling donated food products instead of distributing them in a timely manner. TEFAP guidelines recommend that food should be distributed as soon as possible.
- Improper handling of food, including inadequate storage, refrigeration, preparation, or transportation. To maintain safe temperatures, distribution partners are required to transport time/temperature sensitive foods with visible active or passive temperature-controlled systems.
- Repacking or separating products from their original packaging without authorization.

Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in corrective action, including suspension or termination of partnership with FBWCT.

RECORD KEEPING & REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Monthly Reporting

As a member of the Food Bank of West Central Texas (FBWCT), the following information is required to be reported on a monthly basis. The monthly Partner Agency Activity Report should include the following information:

- Number of households served
- Number of neighbors served
- Name and address of each household
- Household income
- Household demographics

There are two distinct report formats: one for pantries and one for on-site feeding programs.

Submission deadlines

- Monthly reports are due by the 10th of the month following the reporting period. If no neighbors were served during the reporting period, please submit the report with zeros filled in for all categories.
- If reports are not submitted by the 10th, an email notice will be sent, and immediate submission will be required.

* *Note:* Significant delays in submitting reports may result in suspension of services until all reports are properly submitted.

If requested, neighbor (food recipient) records must be made available during FBWCT monitoring visits. Food Bank personnel will protect neighbor confidentiality at all times.

* *Note:* Agencies must retain all documentation for a minimum of three years and ninety days, ensuring that neighbor confidentiality is protected.

Food Bank Invoices

All Food Bank invoices must be retained for three years. Invoices must include two signatures: one verifying goods received during pick-up and the other verifying goods delivered to the agency's storage facility. Signatures should be affixed only after items have been confirmed as present.

Member Agency Agreement

A new agreement must be signed annually and a current, signed Food Bank of West Central Texas Member Agency Agreement must be kept on file and will be reviewed during annual site visits.

Non-Compliance Resolution

Product Hold

A product hold is a temporary suspension of a partner agency, prohibiting the pickup of product at FBWCT. Delinquent monthly reporting, past-due balances, and failure to fulfill annual training requirements are the primary reasons a partner agency may be placed on a product hold.

Policy on Product Hold for Delinquent Monthly Reporting:

Agency reports are due by the 10th of each month following your distribution. If reports are not received by the 10th day of the month, the partner agency could be placed on a product hold until all reports are current at FBWCT.

Policy on Product Hold for Past Due Balances:

FBWCT reserves the right to place a member agency on “Financial Product Hold” for unpaid balances over 30 days old.

Policy on Product Hold for Delinquent Annual Civil Rights and Food Safety Trainings:

FBWCT reserves the right to place a member agency on product hold until all trainings are complete and proof of completion is received.

Ordering

Note: Agencies should aim to provide a multi-day supply of food, with sufficient variety, at each distribution. Generous sharing is important as access to emergency food assistance is in many cases limited to once per week or more. Supplemental to TEFAP commodities, no-cost and low-cost food items and pre-packed boxes are often available at the Food Bank to enable generous sharing. It is also highly recommended that, whenever possible, agencies provide at least one protein item per household. FBWCT recommends “client choice” pantry models, where neighbors are able to select from products available at the pantry in such a way that will suit their individual needs. For more information on how to operate a “Choice” pantry, please contact the Agency Relations staff.

Ordering Process

The product availability list is updated daily and can be accessed on the Food Bank’s website at www.fbwct.org under the “partner with us” tab. Agencies can print the list and submit their completed order form by email to orders@fbwct.org. If submitting a screen shot, please make sure that the form is legible. **Be sure to include a phone number for the contact person on the order sheet.** You may call the warehouse at (325) 695-6311 to confirm that your order was received.

Please allow 48 hours for orders to be processed. This will give Food Bank staff sufficient time to pull your order and have it ready for pick-up. Be sure to specify a pick-up date when submitting your order. If your scheduled pick-up time cannot be met, please call us as soon as possible. We are able to hold an order for up to three days past the scheduled time. Please contact warehouse staff to make special arrangements.

Product Pick-up

Parking and Arrival

Please proceed to the parking lot located on the east side of the Food Bank. Park at the loading dock, and enter the warehouse through the loading area access (bay) door. Then proceed to the Warehouse Manager's office for check-in and further instructions. Please remain in the designated area. **Freezers, coolers, product racks, warehouse equipment, and all areas beyond the immediate bay door and warehouse office are off limits.**

Sign and Review Your Invoice

Once checked in and ready to load your order, you will be asked to sign the total invoice. If your agency leaves without signing the invoice, the Food Bank will not be able to make any adjustments to your account. A second copy of the invoice will be provided for your agency.

Safe Transportation of Product

It is the agency's responsibility to ensure that all products are transported safely. Items should be properly secured and stored in appropriate conditions (e.g., refrigeration for perishables, covered for dry goods) during transit to maintain food safety and prevent damage. The Food Bank is not responsible for the product once it has left the warehouse. *Please see the transportation section for additional information.*

Documenting Receipt at Your Facility

A second person is required to check in the order upon arrival at your facility and sign the invoice to confirm that the entire order was received in full.

By following these procedures, we ensure that all food items are accurately documented, transported safely, and delivered in good condition to your agency. The Food Bank of West Central Texas is not responsible for any product once it has left the warehouse. If you feel that you have received product that is not distributable or significantly flawed, please call the Warehouse to discuss.

Delivery

Product delivery arrangements shall be established through mutual agreement between the Food Bank and partner agencies. Delivery service availability is not guaranteed and may change at any time without prior notice. Agencies are advised to contact the Warehouse Manager at 325.695.6311 for current information and availability. Additional charges may apply.

Transportation

Your vehicle must be clean and in safe working conditions to transport food from the Food Bank. Distribution partners are required to transport time/temperature sensitive foods with visible active or passive temperature-controlled systems. When transporting fresh produce, chilled, and frozen products, it is essential to keep the products at a safe temperature to prevent bacteria from causing serious illness or even death. Ensure that you have the proper materials to maintain the temperature during transport. Plan to bring insulated blankets or coolers of sufficient size for chilled and frozen products.

Agencies can purchase insulated blankets from the Food Bank to assist with safe transportation. Additionally, a limited supply of free ice is available at the Food Bank to help keep your products at the correct temperature on your return trip. Warehouse staff will not release these items unless the proper

measures are in place to ensure their safe transport.

Before arriving, estimate the size of your load and ensure you have a vehicle that can accommodate it. A cargo van can hold up to 2,000 pounds, while a minivan or standard-sized truck can hold between 1,000 and 1,500 pounds. Remember that lighter, bulkier items, like chips, can take up more space, so make sure your vehicle has enough room to accommodate the load without obstructing your vision.

Always consider the weather when planning your trip. In rainy conditions, bring a tarp to protect the products. In hot weather, take the most direct route back to ensure that chilled products are quickly returned to cold storage.

Warehouse Safety

To maintain a safe, organized, and efficient workplace, the following safety rules are in place at the Food Bank of West Central Texas. It is expected that all employees, agency partners, and volunteers adhere to these rules.

All individuals must enter the warehouse through the loading area access door and check in at the warehouse office. Children are not allowed in the warehouse; please make arrangements to leave children elsewhere when picking up orders. The Food Bank maintains a smoke-free environment, and smoking is only permitted in designated areas outside the building.

Closed-toe shoes are required for anyone in the warehouse. Power equipment is to be operated exclusively by Food Bank staff members. Agencies are restricted to the designated area in front of the bay doors only; straying outside of these designated areas is prohibited. Freezer, cooler, and warehouse rack access is reserved for Food Bank staff only.

Good housekeeping practices are essential for accident prevention. Any spills or damaged product should be immediately reported to staff. Unsafe conditions or practices must also be reported promptly. All individuals are expected to follow staff instructions without issue or complaint.

Given that the warehouse environment includes forklifts, cars, and trucks, it is crucial to remain alert and careful at all times.

Retail Pick-Up for Member Agencies

Purpose

This policy establishes guidelines for agencies that are approved for direct retail grocery store pick-up. Agencies must follow standardized procedures and food safety protocols when picking up and storing retail food donations. Strict compliance with all relevant guidelines is mandatory.

Eligibility

Only agencies that have been authorized by FBWCT to participate in retail pick-up are permitted to collect donations directly from retail partners. Approval is based on the agency's capacity to handle food safety, proper storage, and distribution practices.

Pick-Up Procedures

1. Scheduled Pick-Up:

Agencies must schedule pick-ups directly with the retailer in advance and do so consistently. Retail partners may have specific times for donations, and it is the agency's responsibility to coordinate pick-up during designated hours.

- Pick-up times will be communicated to agencies and should be strictly adhered to.
- Partner agencies must treat retail staff with respect and kindness recognizing that they are generous in their effort to provide food for hungry neighbors and it requires extra steps on their part.
- If there is a delay or issue in the scheduled pick-up, agencies must notify FBWCT immediately.

2. Authorized Representatives:

Only authorized agency representatives who are listed with FBWCT may pick up retail donations. A valid ID may be required at pick-up. A regular volunteer or staff member who picks up, transports and/or distributes food donations, or a person who supervises those activities.

Authorized representatives must be trained in food safety and handling procedures as specified by FBWCT this may be a regular volunteer or staff member who picks up, transports and/or distributes food donations, or a person who supervises those activities.

3. Transportation:

Agencies are responsible for providing suitable vehicles for transporting retail donations.

- Vehicles must be clean, and in good condition to ensure food safety and prevent contamination during transit.
- Agencies are responsible for ensuring that food is transported in compliance with temperature requirements (e.g., cold storage for perishables).

4. Product Handling:

Agencies must handle all donated products with care, adhering to food safety guidelines and ensuring items are properly stored upon return to the agency's facility. Distribution partners are required to transport time/temperature sensitive foods with visible active or passive temperature-controlled systems. When trained staff or volunteers turn over, food safety training must be provided for the new person(s) within 60 days of their start date.

- Items must be inspected for safety and quality before leaving the retail location.
- Any products that are found to be unsafe or unsuitable for distribution must be reported to FBWCT and not taken or distributed.

5. Inventory Tracking:

Agencies must keep an accurate record of all retail pick-up donations, including quantities and types of products received.

- A record of each pick-up must be maintained for at least 3 years.

- Records should include the source of the donation, the date, and any special conditions (e.g., temperature requirements).
- Product must be weighed and pounds reported to the FBWCT. *Failure to do so will result in suspension of retail pickup privileges.*

6. Sign-Off Requirements:

A representative from the retail location must sign an acknowledgment of the donations provided. The signed record must be kept by the agency for tracking and reporting purposes.

Food Safety and Compliance

Agencies must adhere to all food safety protocols as specified by FBWCT, including but not limited to:

- Proper temperature control during transportation and storage.
- The inspection of food for damages or contamination at the point of pick-up.
- Compliance with all local, state, and federal regulations regarding food safety. Any violations of food safety standards will be subject to corrective actions, including suspension of retail pick-up privileges.

Reporting Requirements

Agencies must submit a monthly report of their retail pick-up activities, including details on the types and quantities of products received as well as weight. This information is used for tracking donations, maintaining inventory records, and meeting compliance requirements with FBWCT and regulatory authorities. *Failure to do so will result in suspension of retail pickup privileges.*

Monthly reports are due by the 10th of each month, and failure to submit reports may result in suspension of retail pick-up privileges.

Liability and Risk Management

Agencies participating in retail pick-up are responsible for ensuring that food donations are handled safely and that any issues with the donations (such as spoiled or damaged products) are reported to FBWCT.

- The Food Bank is not liable for any issues arising from improper handling or failure to adhere to food safety standards.
- Agencies must indemnify FBWCT from any liability arising from the misuse or mishandling of donated goods.

Non-Compliance and Suspension

Failure to adhere to this policy, including repeated violations of food safety practices, failure to submit required reports, or any other breaches of FBWCT's guidelines, may result in the suspension or revocation of retail pick-up privileges. Agencies will be notified in writing if they are in violation of any policy terms and will be given an opportunity to rectify the situation.

Continued non-compliance may result in permanent suspension from the retail pick-up program.

Client Eligibility

For agencies distributing TEFAP USDA food, please see the TEFAP manual and contract for additional guidelines.

Non-USDA Distributions

Partner agencies must establish clear guidelines for determining eligibility for **non-USDA** foods. Agencies may determine their own verification requirements, such as photo identification or proof of residency, or may choose to provide food to all individuals who request assistance. An intake process should be in place to collect necessary household data to assess eligibility.

All Food Bank products are strictly for the consumption of individuals who are needy, ill, or children. These products may not be sold, transferred, bartered, used for fundraising, or exchanged for money, property, or services.

Agencies must ensure that all client eligibility procedures align with Food Bank membership guidelines and restrictions.



USDA/TEFAP GUIDELINES

The Food Bank of West Central Texas participates in the TEFAP Program (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) through the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. Member agencies who are recipients of food through this program must adhere to the requirements described below.

Neighbor Eligibility

Partner Agencies must utilize only the eligibility criteria and methods established by TDA. Prohibited additional criteria would include limiting the distribution of USDA Foods to a certain subset of the eligible population. Eligibility for receipt of USDA foods for home consumption is established at up to 185% of the current federal poverty level as adopted by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA).

Income considered for eligibility includes:

- Regular wages or salary
- Self-employment income (farm and non-farm)
- Social Security, Veteran's, and Unemployment benefits
- Worker's compensation, Military allotments, child support, and rental income

Income not considered includes:

- Income of categorically eligible households (TANF, Food Stamps, SSI, Medicaid)
- Vendor payments, in-kind assistance (food, clothing, furniture)
- Earnings of children under 18
- Loans, lump sum payments, and VISTA stipends

A food pantry must determine eligibility by using the Household Application for USDA Foods or the Alternate Household Application for USDA Foods (H-1555 or H-1555B) for any neighbor receiving USDA commodities for home consumption.

The eligibility intake process must include the applicant's name, address, number of people in the household, and applicable eligibility (Categorical, Income, or Crisis) as indicated on the USDA application form.

The USDA application must be completed before all other intake applications the partner agency may require and the neighbor must meet the eligibility guidelines before being certified to receive USDA products.

If a neighbor cannot demonstrate ongoing need through means such as SSI, TANF, Food Stamp participation, Medicaid, or another objective measure of income, they must apply for Emergency Household Crisis and meet the eligibility requirements as such, which grants eligibility for six months of support from the pantry or distribution site.

A neighbor may be certified for up to one year, eliminating the need to complete the USDA application each time they receive commodities. However, the pantry is responsible for ensuring that individuals certified for longer than one month continue to meet the income guidelines by conducting periodic income inquiries.

Neighbors are not required to provide proof of eligibility for the sole purpose of receiving USDA food from the pantry.

Congregate Meals

Participants seeking congregate meals are assumed eligible simply because they are seeking a meal. In other words, there are no eligibility requirements for congregate meals. This includes, but is not limited to,

- residency,
- identity,
- income, and
- citizenship.

USDA Foods must be provided without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability. Congregate meals must be served equitably. TDA recommends first come, first serve.

Residency

Households must establish residency in the service area. Proof of residency may be requested but is not required. Agencies must provide USDA foods even if proof of residency is not provided. Non-residents may be referred to pantries in their area.

Identification

At every distribution, the household member is not required to provide identification, but a proxy is required to show identification. If certified, participants are required to reapply at least annually based on the current application standards income eligibility guidelines.

Proof of identification may be requested but is not required.

Homebound Participants (Proxy)

A client or program participant who is unable to visit a TEFAP food pantry may designate a relative, friend or caregiver as their proxy for receipt of the food package. The proxy must provide appropriate identification to receive the client's benefits.

Distribution

A food pantry receiving TEFAP commodities must allow clients to access food at a minimum, on a monthly basis. A food pantry must establish and post regular hours of operation and may establish a procedure for on-call access.

Civil Rights

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the FBWCT partner agency is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

By adhering to this policy, your organization helps uphold the values of equity and fairness in providing services to those in need. Failure to include the statement may result in non-compliance and could impact your partnership with FBWCT.

Please notify FBWCT within three days of the filing of a civil rights complaint.

The Food Bank is required to provide Civil Rights Training for all of our member agencies. The link to the on-line civil rights training can be found under the agency tool kit tab on our web site. This training is mandatory and must be completed annually. All key volunteers and staff members involved in distributing food must complete this study each year. Agencies are required to document the training of their staff and volunteers, and a form for this purpose is provided in the appendix. Volunteers that do not have direct interaction or access to neighbor information will be allowed to take a condensed version of the civil rights training and must sign the civil rights volunteer tracking sheet at the agency site. The study guide is available in both English and Spanish.

As a participating organization in the TEFAP Program, your agency must display the "Justice For All" poster prominently in your facility.

If your organization uses a website, flyers, printed materials, or social media posts to promote your

program and mentions food provided by the Food Bank of West Central Texas (FBWCT), you are required to include the USDA nondiscrimination statement. This statement must be displayed prominently to ensure compliance with federal regulations and to inform clients of their rights.

On printed materials where the entire statement is too large, a Condensed Nondiscrimination Statement “This institution is an equal opportunity provider” will suffice.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

Neighbor Complaints

Partner agencies must properly handle civil rights complaints by providing instructions to the complainant for reaching the U.S. Office of Civil Rights at (833) 620-1071 or directing to USDA website.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant’s name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
Program.Intake@usda.gov

Prohibited Activity

TEFAP commodities are not to be sold, exchanged or used for personal gain.

No commodities can be opened, repackaged, altered or removed from the unit containers except for meal preparation. Except for approved meal preparation sites that have signed contracts to do so.

Food pantries shall not charge participants any fees, require membership or require individuals to obtain a referral for service from another social service agency, church or referral service as a condition for receipt of commodities.

Agencies cannot require individuals to attend religious or political meetings or make a statement of faith to receive services. Nor can they include any religious or political materials.

If you are to be out of compliance with any of the above you will not be eligible for USDA TEFAP food effective immediately. The Food Bank is bound by a contract with USDA that specifically stipulates that we cannot allow this.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOOD & NUTRITION HOUSEHOLD APPLICATION FOR USDA FOODS (H1555) THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The *Household Application for USDA Foods* (Form H1555) is an application to qualify households to receive United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foods through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) administers TEFAP in Texas by contracting with organizations for distribution of USDA Foods.

Sites should complete the *Household Application for USDA Foods* (Form H1555) when a household initially requests distribution of USDA Foods through TEFAP. After, CEs or sites should complete this form at least yearly if the household requests to continue TEFAP benefits.

Notes

CE or site may request but must not require proof of information on this form.

Complete one original per household.

Keep the original on file.

Maintain separate records for each household.

Make additional copies as needed or download *Household Application for USDA Foods* (Form H1555) at www.squaremeals.org. (Choose Programs, The Emergency Food Assistance Program, TEFAP Administration and Forms, then enter the form number in the appropriate search field.)

Retain the applications and distribution records of households for three years following the end of the certification periods corresponding to the documents.

Exception: If audit findings, claims, or litigation have not been resolved by the end of the retention period, keep all forms and records until all issues are resolved.

Retain records of household denials for three years following the decision date.

TDA does not require the CE or site to use *Household Application for USDA Foods* to determine eligibility. Instead, the CE or site can use an alternate form as long as it contains **all** the information that appears on the H1555. CEs may also refer to TEFAP Handbook, Section 3, Managing the Program, “Household Application for USDA Foods.”

Section 1 — Household Information

Name of household member — name of the household member applying on behalf of the household.

Number of household members — Enter the number of household members for whom USDA Foods are requested.

Address — Enter a zip code at minimum. Sites may ask for the full address, but it is not required for eligibility. CEs or sites may request but must not require proof of address.

Name of proxy (person given the authority to act on behalf of household) (optional) — Enter this information if it is applicable. To change a proxy, CEs and sites must collect a written statement from the participant that contains the following information:

Participant's name

Proxy's name

Date of proxy change

Duration of time the proxy designation will be in effect

Section 2 — Categorical Eligibility

If a household currently receives one or more of the specific types of assistance listed, mark the appropriate assistance type(s). If the household does not receive any of the assistance types listed, leave the assistance types blank. CEs or sites may request but must not require proof of other assistance.

Section 3 — Income Eligibility

Total gross income — This information is optional if the household is categorically eligible. (See Section 2.) Enter the total gross income of all household members, as stated by the household, and mark whether the income is received yearly, monthly, or weekly. CEs or sites may request but must not require proof of income.

***Note:** Farmers and self-employed persons may report net income (the amount after business expenses). This net income will be added to the gross income, if applicable, of other household members, to arrive at the total gross income for the household.*

Section 4 — Household Crisis Eligibility

Complete Section 4 only if the household is ineligible because of information obtained in Sections 2 and 3.

Households qualify based on unexpected and unavoidable expenses of a household crisis.

In the space provided, document the cause of the household crisis.

Indicate eligibility and length of certification. (Must not exceed six months.)

Section 5 — Certification

Please ensure the applicant reads the full acknowledgement statement or read it to applicant.

Section 6 — Eligibility or Ineligibility

Indicate eligibility and length of certification. ([Must not exceed one year.](#))

Indicate ineligibility then complete Section 4 if necessary.

Section 7 — Signature and Date

The CE or site's representative must sign and date the form.

Right to Refuse Service

To maintain a high standard of service and ensure a safe work environment for employees, volunteers, and client families, FBWCT empowers partner agencies to refuse or discontinue service to unruly clients.

Service may be denied to clients who disrupt the normal provision of services or whose behavior or environment threatens the safety of employees, volunteers, or other clients. Inappropriate behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Unreasonable demands for service
- Threatening or erratic behavior
- Misrepresentation of service needs
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Personally threatening or offensive language

Food Safety and Storage

On-site feeding programs are required to have a Food Manager's Certification for at least one of their staff/volunteers. A certified food handler's certificate is required for all those who are handling food. A link to information regarding these trainings can be found on our website or by calling the Food Bank.

All on-site feeding sites are required to follow all local and state environmental and health regulations.

Food Storage:

All USDA food product must be stored separately from other food items to ensure proper identification and compliance with program regulations. These items should be clearly labeled and distinguished within your storage area to prevent any confusion or misuse. Food storage areas must be protected from weather, fire, theft, and pests. The following guidelines must be adhered to for all USDA and non-USDA foods:

- Aisles between pallets or shelves must be wide enough for easy inspection, inventory, and product retrieval.
- Dry food and canned goods must be stored away from direct sunlight.

- Store food 6” off the floor using pallets, platforms, or shelves
- Store food 4” from the walls for air circulation and pest control.
- Store food 6” from the ceiling to avoid excessively high temperatures.
- USDA Food items should not be stored for longer than 6 months.

Stacking Product:

- Limit stack height to prevent crushing food at the bottom.
- Cross-stack cases on pallets to ensure stack stability and prevent collapse.
- Use corrugated paper between layers of cans on shelves.
- Store non-food items separately, and keep toxic items (such as cleaning and maintenance supplies) away from food.
- Clean floors, pallets, and shelving regularly, and address spills immediately.
- Ensure doors, windows, and roofs are well-sealed to prevent pest entry and water damage. Keep doors and windows locked when storage areas are unattended.

Stock Rotation:

Follow the "First In, First Out" (FIFO) method to ensure that food with the oldest received date is used first. It is recommended to date each case upon receipt to avoid mistakes.

Pest Control:

- Maintain a licensed pest control service with quarterly servicing for pantries and monthly servicing for on-site feeding programs.
- Use traps and glue boards instead of poison.
- Store non-canned foods (e.g., flour, rice, beans) in rodent-proof bins with tight-fitting lids.

Equipment Maintenance:

- Regularly check freezer and refrigeration units for leaks and follow a defrosting and cleaning schedule.
- Maintain proper temperature logs for all storage areas. Thermometers must be placed in each freezer and refrigerator compartment:
 - Dry storage should be kept between 40° and 75°F.
 - Freezers should be kept at 0°F or below.

- Refrigerated storage should be between 33-40°F.
- A combination refrigerator/freezer unit requires two thermometers.

Damaged Product:

Do not accept food that appears unsafe. Product from the Food Bank of West Central Texas that is contaminated, spoiled, deteriorated, or infested (e.g., bulging cans, sharp dents, or rust on seams) must be reported immediately. This product will not be charged. Contact Food Bank Warehouse at 325-695-6311 for assistance.

Product Recall:

If there is any indication that a product may be unsafe, the Food Bank may initiate a recall. Our computer system can track products distributed to agencies; however, to trace products further, we rely on your agency's daily records. This underscores the importance of maintaining accurate and detailed records.

FOOD USAGE GUIDELINES

- **Expiration or "Use By" Date:** The last day the product should be consumed to ensure quality.
- **Sell By Date:** The last recommended date for sale, allowing enough time for home storage.
- **Best If Used By Date:** The date after which the product may lose peak quality or flavor. This includes prepared packaged foods, Rice/Soy Dream products, and most dry goods.

Guidelines for specific products:

- **Milk:** 4-7 days past stamped date
- **Yogurt:** 7-10 days past date
- **Soft Cheeses (cottage, cream, ricotta):** 7-10 days past stamped date
- **Hard Cheeses (e.g., cheddar, swiss):** 7 days past stamped date
- **Luncheon Meat:** 4-6 days unopened
- **Powdered Milk:** 6 months past date
- **Eggs:** 3-5 weeks past stamped date
- **Dry Cereal:** 6-12 months
- **Unopened Canned Food:** 12 months past stamped date
- **Canned Foods:**
 - Acidic (tomato products): 12 months
 - Non-acidic (vegetables, soups): 2-5 years

- **Bread Products:** 7 days after date if refrigerated
- **Rice/Pasta (dry):** 1 year after receiving

All refrigerated products must be stored at 40° F or lower at all times. Frozen storage must be maintained at zero degrees or below.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Food Bank of West Central Texas operates in compliance with the policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, disability, or national origin. This commitment ensures that all individuals have equal access to services and assistance provided by the Food Bank.

Non-discrimination Statement

The CE and site must provide the following nondiscrimination statement and complaint-filing procedures in all applications and on all TEFAP materials that are produced for public information, public education, or public distribution:

In accordance with federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the state or local agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, [AD-3027](#), found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. **Mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. **Fax:** (202) 690-7442; or
3. **Email:** program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Complaint and Grievance Procedures

Agency Complaints

The Food Bank of West Central Texas (FBWCT) requires all partner agencies to have an internal written procedure for client complaints. These procedures must be shared with agency volunteers, employees, and the governing body.

The written complaint procedures must be displayed in the food distribution area and should include, at a minimum:

- The name and contact information of those to whom complaints should be made
- A description of the process by which complaints should be made
- The expected time frame for the client to be contacted with a resolution

Please notify FBWCT should a complaint be filed against your agency. USDA requires that the Food Bank be notified of all civil rights complaints within three days.

Complaints Received by FBWCT

If a citizen in your service area has a grievance with your agency, they may, on occasion, contact FBWCT to register the complaint. The Agency Relations representative will record the complaint and contact your agency to gather further information. Our goal is to ensure that proper procedures are followed, civil rights are upheld, and equitable treatment is provided to all clients. If the complainant chooses to remain anonymous, FBWCT will make every effort to keep their identity confidential, unless disclosure is required for investigative purposes or by law.

FBWCT must respond to any complaints from the public regarding a partner agency. The following steps will be taken in the event of any grievance against a partner agency:

1. The Director of Programs will notify the partner agency involved about the complaint received. The agency will be notified by telephone and/or in writing, depending on the nature of the complaint.
2. If necessary, the Director of Programs will make a site visit to the partner agency.
3. The conclusions of the investigation and any recommendations will be presented to FBWCT's CEO and documented in the agency's file. The partner agency will be notified within ten (10) working days of FBWCT's decision.

Grievance Procedures

If your agency has a complaint or issue with the Food Bank of West Central Texas, please contact the Agency Relations department at 325-695-6311. We will review the grievance, gather necessary information, and work to resolve the issue promptly. Once the issue is addressed, FBWCT will notify the agency of the outcome. All actions and decisions will be documented and communicated to ensure transparency and fairness.

Appendix

Authorized Agency Reaffirmation

Agency Name: _____

Agency: _____

Current shoppers authorized to utilize the Food Bank:
(MARK THROUGH THOSE NAMES TO BE REMOVED)

Shoppers to be authorized: (PLEASE PRINT and SIGNATURE LEGIBLY)

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____

Person Reviewing Form _____
(Please Sign)

Position _____ Date _____

Return to:

Agency Relations Department
Food Bank of West Central Texas
5505 N. 1st St, Abilene, TX 79603
Office Fax: 325.695.6827

Civil Rights Training

*All Food Bank of West Central Texas Member Agency's **key staff and volunteers** must conduct Civil Rights training at least annually. All other staff and volunteer trainings may be conducted in a class setting provided by a trained key staff member/volunteer. New staff and volunteers associated with food distribution must undergo training prior to contact with clients. Member Agencies must keep a log of all training attendees.*

***Key Staff Definition - Any person who has regular direct contact with clients and/or determines client eligibility.**

Agency Name:

I have received **Civil Rights for Special Nutrition Programs** training.

[illegible]

Member Agency Change of Information

Please inform the Food Bank of all significant changes to your program so that our records accurately represent your program. It is imperative the Food Bank stay abreast of all major changes. Facility remodeling or a new location require a monitor visit of your site to maintain your program's certification as a member agency.

Agency Name _____ Agency # _____

Please **PRINT**, filling in changes only:

Physical Address _____

Mailing Address _____

E-mail address _____

Web address _____

Hours of Operation _____

Telephone _____ Facsimile _____

Personnel _____ Position _____

Personnel _____ Position _____

Authorized Shopper Additions _____

Authorized Shopper Deletions _____

Facility _____

Program Description _____

Additional Information _____

Person Authorizing Change _____

Position _____ Date _____

Return to:

Agency Relations Department
Food Bank of West Central Texas
5505 N. 1st St, Abilene, TX 79603
Office Facsimile: 325.695.6827

**The Emergency Food Assistance Program
and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program
Beneficiary Referral Request**

Name of Organization: _____

Contact information for program staff (name, phone number, and email address, if appropriate):

If you object to receiving services from us based on the religious character of our organization, please complete this form and return it to the program contact identified above. Your use of this form is voluntary.

If you object to the religious character of our organization, we must make reasonable efforts to identify and refer you to an alternate provider to which you have no objection. We cannot guarantee, however, that in every instance, an alternate provider will be available.

Participant name: _____

Best way to reach you (phone/address/email): _____

FOR STAFF USE ONLY

1. Date of objection: ____/____/____

2. Referral (check one):

_____ Individual was referred to (name of alternate provider and contact information):

_____ Individual was given TDA-provided referral information (such as a website, hotline, or list of other service providers funded by TDA)

_____ Individual left without a referral

_____ No alternate service provider is available. On the lines below, summarize below the efforts you made to identify an alternate provider (for example: contacted another food pantry, soup kitchen, or distribution site; contacted TDA; contacted the food bank; etc.)

**Programa de Asistencia Alimentaria de Emergencia y
Programa de Productos Alimenticios Complementarios
Solicitud de remisiones para beneficiarios**

Nombre de la organización: _____

Información de contacto para el personal de los programas (nombre, número telefónico y dirección de correo electrónico, si corresponde):

Si objeta recibir nuestros servicios debido al carácter religioso de nuestra organización, por favor complete este formulario y devuélvalo a la persona de contacto de los programas identificados anteriormente. Su uso de este formulario es voluntario.

Si objeta el carácter religioso de nuestra organización, debemos hacer esfuerzos razonables para identificarle y remitirle a un proveedor alternativo para el que no tenga objeciones. Sin embargo, no podemos garantizar que en todos los casos habrá un proveedor alternativo disponible.

Nombre del participante: _____

Mejor manera de localizarle (teléfono/dirección/correo electrónico): _____

PARA USO EXCLUSIVO DEL PERSONAL

1. Fecha de la objeción: __/__/__

2. Remisión (marque una opción):

_____ La persona se remitió a (nombre del proveedor alternativo e información de contacto):

_____ La persona recibió información de remisión facilitada por el TDA (tal como un sitio web, una línea directa o una lista de otros proveedores de servicios financiados por el TDA).

_____ La persona se fue sin una remisión.

_____ No hay ningún proveedor de servicios alternativo disponible. En las líneas a continuación, resume los esfuerzos que hizo para identificar un proveedor alternativo (por ejemplo, comunicación con otra despensa de alimentos, comedor de beneficencia o sitio de distribución; comunicación con el TDA; comunicación con el banco de alimentos, etc.).

Esta institución es un proveedor con igualdad de oportunidades.

Julio de 2016