



Fighting Hunger 101

January 1, 2023

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HUNGER IN THE UNITED STATES

Hunger in the United States affects millions of Americans, including some who are middle class or who are in households where adults work. According to the USDA, food insecurity is a “household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food.” Hunger, on the other hand, is defined as “an individual-level physiological condition that may result for in food insecurity.” According to the USDA, more than 38 million people, including 12 million children, in the United States are food insecure. The pandemic has increased food insecurity among families with children and communities of color, who already faced hunger at a much higher rate before the pandemic. Every community in the country is home to families that face hunger. Rural communities are especially hard hit by hunger. Many households that experience food insecurity do not qualify for federal nutrition programs and visit their local food pantries and other programs for extra support. Hunger in African American, Latinos and Native Americans communities is higher because of systemic racial injustice.

Hunger can affect people from all walks of life. Millions of people in America are just one job loss, missed paycheck, or medical emergency away from hunger. Hunger doesn’t affect everyone equally -

some groups like children, seniors, Black, Indigenous, and other people of color face hunger at much higher rates. Hunger also most often affects neighbors that live in poverty.

INTRODUCTION

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.

What is an Onsite Feeding or Snack program?

A non-profit organization that prepares food to be consumed onsite by neighbors that meet the established eligibility requirements.

GUIDELINES FOR PARTNERSHIPS

Most food banks have requirements that must be met for your agency to successfully gain access to their product. The following is a list of guidelines to follow and where more information can be located within the handbook.

1. Must be a non-profit organization incorporated for the purpose of serving the ill, needy or children/infants. Must have written documentation from the Internal Revenue Service as a charitable organization with a current 501(c)(3) tax status and provide link to primary account holder if necessary. The 501(c)(3) agency must be programmatically, fiscally, and legally responsible for the donated product handling/distribution activities. If cannot provide and a part of a church, must pass 10 of the 14-point checklist or be a private entity such as a city or government site. See Church requirements in appendix.
2. Be financially self-supporting (NTFB service fees, finances and budget, food sourcing, staffing)
3. Be an established food center. NTFB requires that all agencies applying for Partnership are active in food distribution.
4. Have rules of acceptance/participation in the program, which are applied equally regardless of basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, familial/ parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity to receive service.
5. Your organization will need to establish written guidelines: assessing needs, established service area, service guidelines.
6. All food should be provided free of charge and cannot require neighbors to attend religious/political meetings, to make statements of faith, or to pledge partnership in exchange for service.
7. Must keep accurate records (assessing needs, feeding records, accounting records)
8. Comply with adequate storage requirements (facility & equipment, food safety, pest controls in place)
9. Maintain accurate feeding records. You may also want these figures available to show what you are doing in your community.
 - a. Pantries: must record unduplicated families and individuals served.

- b. Onsite & Snack Feeding programs: record number of breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks served including unduplicated individuals served.
- 10. Must complete and submit an online monthly report to the Community Partner Relations Team by the 5th of every month for the preceding month via Agency Express.
- 11. Agree to scheduled and unscheduled visits to your site by NTFB Representatives.
- 12. Must comply with the following requirements: (see below for additional storage requirements)
 - a. Adequate refrigeration and storage area for the storage of the Food Bank product
 - b. Have someone on staff that has completed the food safety (Pantry/Snack program) or food manager's training (Onsite feeding programs)
- 13. Complete the Core 4 Training:
 - a. Civil Rights training
 - b. Food safety
 - c. Orientation
 - d. Poverty and Food Insecurity 101
- 14. Emerging Coursework: a series of courses that must be completed within 6 months of signing agreement.
- 15. Expect all partners to be invested, consistent and engaged with NTFB and its community.

501(c)(3)

To obtain a 501(c)(3) status, a non-profit corporation must apply to the Internal Revenue Service for recognition of tax exemption by filing IRS form 1023.

Learn more about the application, process and how to apply for an employer identification number even if you don't have any employees:

<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/application-for-recognition-of-exemption>

For churches unable to obtain 501(c)(3) View 14-point check <https://ntfb.org/agency-zone/>

ASSESSING NEEDS

DOES YOUR COMMUNITY NEED A FOOD PANTRY?

Does your organization or will you serve anyone? Or do you have a distinct zip code or county that you serve or will serve? Remember upon the first visit, regardless of stipulations, neighbors must be served. They can then be referred to a different pantry if necessary.

Do your research:

- Are there other food pantries in your area?
 - What zip codes do they serve?
 - Is there a need based on organizations that are currently providing services?
 - Do they have specific geographic boundaries?
 - What services do they offer?
 - Could your organization offer additional services that are not being offered? Ex: SNAP, Hope for Tomorrow services, rental assistance, workforce development, etc.?

- Most neighbors of emergency food programs usually need much more than food. What other services does your program offer? Do you use other providers to expand your services, or do you provide referrals?
 - What are their hours of operation?
 - Could you possibly fill a community need by opening for extended hours?
- Who will you be serving?
 - Children, families, senior adults on limited fixed incomes, single parents, unemployed, working poor, people experiencing a crisis, Veterans and homeless.
- Frequency of visits?
 - How often will a neighbor be able to receive food? Is it weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly?
 - The pantry should be open:
 - Urban Areas-no less than once per week, for a total of at least 3 hours per week
 - Rural Areas-once per month for a total of at least 3 hours per month
- What is the public benefit? Below are some of the most important programs that your neighbors should know about, both food related and beyond. Some of the services can even be accessed through NTFB.
 - **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** Formally known as the food stamp program, SNAP provides a monthly stipend for food on an EBT card. SNAP is intended to supplement users' food budgets. Neighbors can come to the pantry before using their SNAP benefits to stretch their SNAP dollars as most SNAP awards are not enough to fully support a household.
 - **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP):** Provides monthly food and assistance to participants 60 years of age and older.
- What kind of relationships will you build?
 - What is your intended outcome for neighbors?
 - What kind of engagement do you hope to achieve? Write it out and add to your pantry plan.
 - Connect with existing relationships and explore they can be more involved.
 - What is your plan for sustainability? In thinking about your community need, once you understand how your organization will fit. How will you make sure that support is available for neighbors for the long run?

*IMPORTANT NOTE: If you have identified an unmet need, move forward! However, you may be able to impact hunger in your community by joining forces with an existing pantry and helping them with volunteer workers, food drives and consistent financial support. Consider your options and what it is you really want to do as well as what is most needed within your community.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION OPTIONS

Do you offer a neighbor choice or a traditional model of food distribution? Each style has its benefits and shortcomings.

- We are a neighbor choice pantry because it gives our neighbors dignity to shop for the items they need, and it reduces waste.
- We are a traditional pantry due to limited space. This arrangement allows for greater efficiency when serving neighbors.

Explore the different options in neighbor choice models and consider one of the options that might fit best. Get the buy in from your team and volunteers.

Neighbor Choice Toolkit - see appendix

GENERAL MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

MISSION & VISION OF YOUR ORGANIZATION

- If your organization does not have a “mission” formally stated, take the time to define your purpose. Summarize information and convert it into a statement. This is your mission.
- Need a vision statement? The vision should exhibit the desired future state of the organization and/or ideal picture of what the organization wants to accomplish.

<p>Our Mission:</p>	<p><i>Example:</i></p> <p>Mission</p> <p>To end hunger one nourishing meal at a time and co-create a sustainable community where everyone thrives.</p> <p>Vision</p> <p>A hunger-free, healthier community</p>
<p>Our Vision:</p>	

SET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal setting should be done in concert with your leadership team and Board of Directors. To be effective, goal setting should not happen in a vacuum. The process should be collaborative.

Set goals and objectives for the organization and review them every six months. Create a list of short-term goals. For example, the goals could include increasing employees, increasing fundraising efforts, or moving into a larger building. Short-term goals are those that can be accomplished within 1-2 years.

Next, create long-term goals. These goals are to be met within a five-year period and can include implementation of new operational standards or purchasing a box truck. Long-term goals can be implemented in phases. Set measurable goals.

Goals should be SMART:

S - Specific - Real numbers/ Real deadlines

M - Measurable - Trackable

A - Attainable - Goals should be challenging but attainable

R - Realistic - Be honest with what you SHOULD and CAN achieve

T - Time-bound - Give yourself a deadline. Do not leave any goals without a target completion date.

It is always best to start with your top line organizational goals, and then break down from there into the more specific task-type goals that build to the greater goal.

LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZATION

The leadership in a pantry is critical to ensure the mission of meeting emergency food assistance needs, and the sustainability and viability of the pantry are preserved. Leadership is a shared responsibility between those who manage and work in the pantry to the governing body that oversees the operations, and the volunteers who regularly support the organization.

In a typical pantry, some tasks and responsibilities might be managing the operation, acquiring the food for distribution, raising funds to support the operation, transporting the food from the source to the pantry, assisting neighbors, and maintaining the facilities and vehicles.

Depending on the size of the operation, some team members will have multiple responsibilities, but care needs to be taken to ensure a few are not overburdened, which may cause fatigue and loss of interest. Operating a successful food assistance program is hard work and not a one-person job. People are needed to order the product, pickup, transport, unload, stock the shelves, screen neighbors and maintain records of service, pack boxes, raise funds, file reports, and many other requirements. There should be a Governing Body who oversees the entire operation, a director for day-to-day operations, and a dedicated group of staff or volunteers to assist.

People and procedures must be in place to ensure continuity of service. It is also important for pantry and board personnel to know who is responsible for what in the event of an absence of key personnel (ordering, pickup, transportation, etc.). Leadership must be active and involved in what is occurring now and have plans for future events and operations. See succession planning in additional considerations.

IDENTIFY COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Starting and maintaining a dependable source of emergency food in your community takes work and partnerships with churches, service organizations, businesses, schools, community foundations and even your local United Way, in addition to utilizing the North Texas Food Bank. Our Partner Agencies tell us that the Food Bank provides an average of 40% to 80% of the food they distribute, so 20% to 60% comes from other resources.

1. First, develop a simple presentation about what you want to do and why you want to do it. Show the research you've done with existing pantries to identify an unmet need.
2. When you speak to groups or send letters/emails, be sure it is from the heart and ties to your mission and vision statements. Share stories about who is hungry and what each group you are talking to can do to help.
 - a. If there is a ministerial alliance in your community, ask to speak at their next meeting to explain what you want to do to meet the needs you've identified. Be clear about

what you are asking for (i.e., can each church in the alliance adopt a month to collect food and/or money to help you?)

- b. Locate your local Jaycees, Kiwanis, or other types of services clubs and ask to speak at a meeting, request help with volunteers or financial support.
- c. Talk with your local schools; get the students involved by holding food drives or collecting change from the cafeteria for you.
- d. Identify the Human Resources Directors with local businesses and talk with them about what their company can do to help - volunteers, food drives, fund drives.
- e. If you have a community foundation, ask if they can help you with startup costs, like shelving, refrigerators, freezers, hand carts, etc.
- f. Talk with NTFB; they may be able to help you identify other resources or provide ongoing resources.

CREATE A BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Develop a diverse Board of Directors that includes volunteers from public and private agencies who are willing to commit time and ideas to planning, policymaking and fundraising for the new food pantry. Creating a Board of Directors is an important task for a new non-profit organization. You will no doubt be tempted to place friends and family on your board. Though there is nothing wrong with that in a private organization, you will want to consider branching out past your inner circle to bring people with expertise who are willing to challenge you and extend your sphere of influence. By achieving the right mix of individuals on your board, your organization can grow exponentially. Active boards engage in oversight of the organization to ensure it is operating ethically and performing tasks for the right reasons. The Board of Directors is also responsible for maintaining the integrity of agency leadership.

1. Composition of the Board:

- a. The Chair of the Board is responsible for overseeing board meetings and is closely involved with the management of the organization. This person should be someone independent of the CEO or Executive Director and uses a non-gender title.
- b. The Vice-Chair is responsible for the Chair's duties when the Chair is not present.
- c. The Treasurer is responsible for board finances and overseeing the organization's finances.
- d. The Secretary keeps minutes of board meetings and the board calendar.
- e. Board Members attend meetings and perform tasks assigned by the board.
- f. Larger boards may have other positions of leadership as necessary.

2. Purpose of the Board of Directors

- a. To select and appoint an Executive Director of the emergency food program.
- b. To account to the public for the organization's finances, products, and services.
- c. To protect donor values.
- d. To assist in creating a mission, vision, and long-term goals for the organization.

3. Setting up your Board of Directors

- a. Decide how many members you want on your Board of Directors.
- b. Decide who will be the chair. It is not recommended that if you are an ED or CEO that you act as a chair of the BOD.
- c. Determine how much money (if any) you will pay a member of your Board.
- d. Many non-profits require board members to commit to a donor level as part of their responsibilities to the organization. Consider if your organization will require this and if you will, does the donation need to be monetary only or will you allow that to be fulfilled via In-Kind donation of services?

- e. Contact potential candidates and interview them to gauge their interest and the value they will bring to your organization.
 - f. Set the structure and dates of your meetings as well as term limits.
4. Access Board Governance educational opportunities

STEERING COMMITTEE

Though one person's energy and commitment usually gets the ball rolling, community efforts require broad-based community involvement and support. Not only is there a great deal of work to be done, but there are also a great number of decisions to be made. Involving several churches and/or civic clubs in sponsoring one pantry has the added advantage of greater cost effectiveness.

Including representatives from various public and private social service agencies will link your pantry with other members of the assistance network. Think, too, of the kinds of expertise the pantry may need to draw on and try to include people who will bring that knowledge or experience.

The basic functions of a steering committee are planning/policymaking and identifying/securing resources. Sometimes those tasks are best accomplished by dividing into smaller working groups. Among other things, the steering committee will need to:

1. Conduct a community needs assessment.
2. Recruit volunteers
3. Raise seed monies.
4. Spread the word.
5. Set policies and operating procedures.
6. Determine the hours of operation.
7. Draft a budget.
8. Decide whether the pantry will operate under the sponsorship of a church or existing agency or whether it should incorporate and seek its own 501(c) (3) non-profit status.
9. Establish a Board of Directors
10. Create a mission statement and update regularly to meet the current needs. An agency must have a written, clearly defined mission statement. The statement should explain your intentions and it should support the need for a food program in your community.

DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

Deciding on what days your organization should be available should include these considerations:

- What are the hours of operation of other organizations that serve my community?
- Are there days or hours that aren't being served? Ex: No other organizations serve on a Saturday; how will your organization make an impact if you serve when neighbors are off work and more likely need to access your services, so they don't have to take time off from their job to receive food.
- What hours will we be able to get volunteers?
 - Weekdays - regular set of volunteer pool and corporate volunteer groups
 - Weekends - access to volunteer pool that are available in groups and more than likely able to commit on Saturdays.

Post these hours where they are visible to neighbors and include it on websites and media outlets. Keep these hours consistent, your neighbors will depend on you to be available when you say you are.

Consider any holidays you will observe and always post and make announcements notifying neighbors ahead of time along with your organization distribution plan.

NTFB observed holidays:

- New Year's Day - January
- Spring Holiday - April
- Memorial Day - May
- Independence Day - July
- Labor Day - September
- Thanksgiving Break - November
- Christmas Break - December

KEEPING RECORDS

Keeping an accurate account of the people served by your organization will lend easy access to valuable statistics.

This can be particularly useful when writing grants, contacting elected officials to advocate for your program or funding, or even the occasional unexpected media article about your organization.

Knowing how many people you serve on a regular basis will also help with placing orders.

There are various types of records that should be tracked, including neighbor eligibility forms, donations, volunteer hours, invoices, and finances.

If you do not already have a service insights software, NTFB recommends considering onboarding to NTFB's endorsed system Service Insights on MealConect that is created by and endorsed by Feeding America.

DONATIONS

The Good Samaritan Law is in place to "protect citizens, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that proceed in good faith to donate, recover, and distribute excess food. It limits liability to acts of gross negligence or intentional misconduct and, absent these, donors and others shall not be subject to civil and criminal liability arising from the nature, age, packaging, or condition of the apparently wholesome food of the apparently fit grocery products received as donation."

Describe the process for documenting donations that come into your organization. Include instructions for monetary, food, and in-kind contributions. Document all processes and share with your team.

<i>Name and Address of Donor</i>	<i>Date of donation</i>	<i>Donation type</i>	<i>Amount of donation</i>
<i>John Doe, 108 E. Main Street, Dallas, TX 75136</i>	1/2/2023	Food; dry goods	126 lbs.

Things to consider:

- Is there a certain area where large food donations should arrive?
- Do you weigh all food donations prior to stocking?
- What is the salvage process?
- Do you have a donation receipt form or book?
- What information should be captured from the donor?
- Use a good quality food criteria guide to ensure that all food meets those requirements, you can find guides but NTFB has a [great resource here.](#)

NEIGHBOR INTAKE PROCESS

What is the check-in process for neighbors at your pantry? What documentation do you request for neighbors to take food home? What is your proxy policy?

- Whom can pick up on behalf of neighbor and what documentation is needed for verification of proxy: Photo ID, birth certificates, passports, school ID's, library cards, etc.

Distribution policy

Pantries usually agree to serve neighbors depending on food supply, storage capacity, and staffing. Write out a description of your policies in place. Below are some thought starters.

- How often can a family receive food from your pantry?
- How many times a week can they receive bread and produce only, or emergency boxes?

Family size will determine the amount of food given to each family. To reach the goal of providing 3 days' worth of food per family, you will need to know the total weight of the items given. This can be done by simply placing the box of items on a scale.

According to Feeding America, the average weight of a meal weighs 1.2 pounds. In order to provide 3 days' worth of food, you would use the following equation:



How many people in the family?	Good (3 days of food/person)	Better (5 days of food/person)	Best (7 days of food/person)
1	10.8	18	25.2
2	21.6	36	50.4
3	32.4	54	75.6
4	43.2	72	100.8
5	54	90	126
6	64.8	108	151.2
7	75.6	126	176.4
8	86.4	144	201.6

The food you give should provide a breakfast, lunch, and dinner meal for each person in the family in addition to snacks and non-food items if available. People who don't have enough food to feed themselves and their families, probably also need non-food items like hand soap, shampoo, toothpaste, laundry supplies, and paper products. Give these items in a separate bag whenever you have them available.

IDENTIFYING NEIGHBOR NEEDS

Dignity and Respect

Serving each neighbor with dignity and respect is a right that every neighbor should experience. All neighbors should be treated fairly and equally when entering your establishment to receive services. Neighbors should be assured that their information is always kept confidential. If you have many neighbors that speak little to no English, try offering information in their native language. Think about having someone on staff or a volunteer that can communicate with neighbors with limited English skills. If you serve a largely ethnic population, consider ordering food that is appealing to those neighbors. Be sensitive and treat every neighbor as a valuable individual. Some neighbors may have special diets due to health or religion; some may have limited literacy or limited mobility. Other neighbors may have vision or hearing disabilities. Consider training volunteers or having materials to accommodate these specific needs. If you do not have volunteers available who can cater to these specific needs, ask the neighbor how you can best help them.

During the interview process, ask how large the family is and how long they will need the food you give them to last. In a Neighbor Choice method, bring the person with you to select their groceries. They can tell you what their family likes and what they probably won't eat. You may be surprised at their

selections. Remember, you are giving groceries according to their needs and food preferences, not yours.

What policies do you have in place that protect a neighbor's rights and privacy?

Special dietary needs

Diabetics should not have sugar-laden food. Elderly people may need soft foods. Infants may need formula or baby food. You may have a percentage of neighbors with kosher food needs. Mention vegetarian protein options or dairy-alternatives for lactose intolerant clients.

Living situation of person needing help

Is refrigeration available? Are cooking facilities working? Is the person only capable of preparing very simple meals? Do they have a can opener? If the person or family you are serving is living in their car, are homeless, or are living in a shelter, they may only be able to consume ready to eat products.

Logistics

Will the person be walking, traveling by bus or by car? How much can he or she carry? If you serve a community where most visitors are on foot, you may consider sturdy bags to help your neighbors transport the food home.

NEIGHBORS AND REFERRALS

The pantry needs only to obtain basic information about the neighbors and their food needs for record keeping and statistical purposes. Referral agencies, like clinics and local DHS offices, should be kept up to date on the pantry's procedures and hours of operations. The best way to do this is to contact the local community help line (2-1-1). Keeping a current list of the referral agencies in your area is a good practice to provide those resources to your neighbors.

SCREENING RECIPIENT NEIGHBORS

As a best practice, the pantry should 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. The issue of personal safety should also be addressed in volunteer training sessions. 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 neighbors 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.

Every pantry should keep records of whom, 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.

Ask people for the following basic information:

- Name, address, phone number
- Number and ages of people in household
- Household monthly income

- Unusual circumstances (i.e., broken stove or refrigerator)
- Household disability status
- Other Government or public assistance programs from which they receive help.
- If any household dietary factors or concerns by any family member
- Living situation
- If they have been helped previously

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Most nonprofits rely on the help of volunteers to keep their organization running efficiently. Many pantries could not operate without the wonderful group of volunteers that dedicate their time and energy to support the mission of the organization. To maintain a group of dedicated volunteers and positive continuous relationships, ensure that volunteers are well managed, expertly trained, respected, and always appreciated.

If you don't already have one, consider putting together a volunteer manual and training packet.

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer relationships are mutually beneficial. Although most organizations appreciate a stable group of experienced core volunteers, single instances of service can also be valuable to the organization. Anyone can be a volunteer, and all skillsets should be respected. You may never know how allowing someone to be a part of the work you do will affect them in the future. Also, creating group opportunities can be a great way to get larger projects done, while incorporating team building activities and strengthening relationships.

Places to find volunteers:

- Neighbors of the food pantry
- Local intramural sports teams
- Churches & other religious institutions
- Youth groups
- High School & college students, including staff & faculty.
- Volunteer fairs, or even job fairs
- Young professionals' associations
- Corporate groups
- Civic organizations

Additional considerations:

Does your organization have a formalized way of communicating with volunteers? Have you considered utilizing online volunteer mobilization resources such as Volunteer Match or other sites that connect volunteers to nonprofits? What about social media like Twitter or Facebook? There are many benefits to using social media to find volunteers for your program. Being a part of a social network not only connects you to volunteers and funders, but also makes you a visible part of the community.

TRAINING VOLUNTEERS

Hosting an orientation is the best way to familiarize volunteers with the work of your organization; it acts as an overview of your vision of volunteer engagement. This is also a great way to talk about what you do, introduce everyone, and give a tour of the facility. In addition, regular meetings for volunteers can be helpful for explaining updates and exploring new projects or ideas that may arise.

Outline your process for training new volunteers and continued training for current volunteers.

Remember different people enjoy different tasks.

It is important to match the right volunteer to the right job whenever possible.

Model good customer service: ensure all families are treated with respect.

Make sure volunteers understand the check-in and check-out process. Clearly communicate all processes.

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

All pantries want to provide a quality experience for volunteers to be a part of a results-driven service opportunity, especially one designed to meet the food access and hunger relief needs of the residents they serve. In doing this, volunteers can see how their work supports food distribution to families facing hunger through their work at the pantry. Remember to include civil rights training as part of your overall education process.

Sample volunteer positions:

Volunteer Positions	Description of Responsibilities
Front Desk	Greet families and check neighbors in, fill out eligibility forms, inspect identification, file forms, assign numbers to waiting families, schedule appointments
Shelf Stocker	Help unload truck or pallets, moving product from stock area to shelves and coolers, organizing the storage area, keeping storage area and pantry clean
Shopping Assistant	Escort families through the pantry while helping them make selections of various food items, monitor the amount of food received for household size, may need to load carts and help elderly/disabled neighbors to vehicle
Box Packer	Fill emergency boxes with non-perishable items in specified quantities, assist shelf stocking team when needed, help keep stock area and pantry area clean

ESTABLISH A CODE OF CONDUCT

With all the wonderful work volunteers do, you may not think that a volunteer code of conduct is entirely essential. Implementing standards for responsibly carrying out assigned duties and outlining expectations may be beneficial.

- Is there a dress code? (Must wear closed toe shoes)
- When are rest breaks?
- Can volunteers be terminated? If so, what is the dismissal procedure?

TRACKING VOLUNTEER HOURS

There are a variety of reasons to keep an account of all the hours volunteers contribute to the success of your organization. Some may be students who need to satisfy an educational obligation, others may need to fulfill community service requirements, whether court ordered, or through an employer. No matter the circumstances, the hours should be tracked so that you have an accurate account for both the volunteer and your organization. You may want to have them sign in and out of each shift.

You may need to make your chart more specific. Larger organizations with a lot of volunteers may need a more sophisticated database to track hours; some online resources such as Volunteer Hub have a service to help you do just that.

Total volunteer hours are also a great talking point to share with prospective donors. Showing the number of hours local community members are willing to spend to support your organization demonstrates to the donor that they should want to support you as well.

FINANCES AND BUDGET

Effective management of finances is crucial to organizational success. It can outline the major costs and give an overview of available resources. Donors also find it useful when tracking their contributions to see how their funds are being utilized. Having a comprehensive budget can establish credibility with your donors and provide a clear view of goals that can be set for the following year.

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 non-profit organizations. Many other businesses will donate their services, however, and many pantries never need 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 your program. Prepare a brief presentation that describes the people involved with the program (steering committee members, volunteers, and neighbors).

Many organizations will require the budget to be approved by the Board of Directors before the beginning of the fiscal year. Who approves and maintains your budget?

ANNUAL BUDGET

Why is having an annual budget important?

- Determines the cost of ongoing operational and staffing costs to be covered.
- How much money will it cost to market your program?
- It outlines costs like computers, equipment, internet access, supplies, etc.
- It shows realistically what you can afford and where gaps lie in funding, which might help with making tough decisions about what programs to cut or expand.
- It affords you the opportunity to plan to meet needs, and to decide what you're able to accomplish in a fiscal year concerning current and future endeavors.
- A budget can motivate you to be creative in seeking out other sources of funding.
- It facilitates discussion of the financial status of the organization.
- It helps you avoid surprises and maintain financial control, which can help you gauge current annual income and set goals for annual fundraising efforts.

- Most grant requests, including the grant program offered by NTFB, will require you to provide a copy of your budget as part of the application process.

ASSESSING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

If you are new to budgeting or need help in working through setting up your budget, your Community Partner Relation Specialist can support and connect you to other agencies throughout the network who have experience and can assist. It is recommended to have a three-month reserve in the bank.

To get started determining the amount of money that your organization has spent in the last year. Calculate your expenses for the past year for each category like diesel fuel, food, utilities or rent and add to these totals to any new initiatives and or any increased services that you might be considering. This number will be used to represent potential total expenses that your organization may have in the coming year. This initial number will represent your first target for fundraising efforts into the next year.

You will want to make sure that your budget is reflective of the bold new initiatives you have in mind for the new year, as well as the costs associated to maintain your facility.

NTFB's Network Engagement Services can assist you if you need help with fundraising or diversification of your fundraising portfolio. Ask your Community Partner Relations Specialist to make a connection for you.

FOOD SOURCING

As a partner of NTFB, you will have ability to acquire food and grocery items directly through Agency Express (online ordering platform). It is a simple and convenient way to stock your shelves. Inventory items change frequently, so it is best to check inventory listing very early either daily or weekly. Keeping track of your own inventory will be beneficial when you re-order product.

NTFB does not charge partners for food ordered in bulk. There are some service fees for certain high-touch products like pre-bagged or pre-boxed items. NTFB also commits to having certain foods in stock for our partner network. Look at Agency Zone on ntfb.org for a current list of staple items.

There may be times, however, when NTFB does not have certain items in stock that your neighbors request.

Where do I get food?

1. A local food drive: hand out flyers in your community asking for donations.
2. Ask churches, clubs, organization, or places of employment to sponsor food drives for your center.
3. Purchase food from your local grocery stores and food distribution centers.
4. Retail Partners: work with NTFB Retail team to establish a relationship with a local grocery store to collect product that the store no longer deems marketable. Retail partnerships are great ways to get quality perishables and nutritious product like frozen protein, vegetables, and breads.

INVENTORY

Knowing what products, you have in stock makes it convenient to order food when you see exactly what items you may be out of, or to keep track of when stock is running low. Having access to that information before ordering will give you a scope of what to shop for, and how much space you have for new items. Making a spreadsheet to keep track of your inventory is easy. You can group the categories and have a list for dry goods, refrigerated/frozen items, and household products.

Shelf-Product Inventory List	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
Beverages					
Canned Meat/Soup					
Cereal					
Canned Fruit					
Grains: rice, pasta, etc.					
Protein non-meat					
Canned Vegetables					
Produce					

ALTERNATE SOURCES OF FOOD

All partner agencies do not receive food solely from NTFB. If your organization receives food through other sources, document the details of the relations to ensure that the staff at your organization will be able to anticipate deliveries or pick-ups that need maintained. You may also want to create a standard list of main contacts, and even local gardeners that bring food regularly. Include names, address, whether food is picked up or delivered and phone numbers.

STORAGE

Proper storage of food is an integral part of food safety. It ensures that the food you serve to neighbors will be healthy and safe to eat.

- Store food and other products 6" off the floor (or on a pallet) and 4" away from the wall, and 4" from the ceiling.
- Non-food items such as cleaning and maintenance supplies must be stored separately from food.
- Maintain proper temperatures in all storage areas; keep thermometers in all cold storage units; maintain temperature logs.
- Store non-perishable foods at safe temperatures. Non-perishable food should be kept in a cool, dry area with proper ventilation. A small air conditioner may be necessary to maintain a moderate temperature (NTFB guided temp: 75 to 78 degrees) to protect food from extreme heat and humidity.
- Below is ideal for prime storage according to USDA.

Storage Method	Proper Storage Temperature
Refrigerator	41 degrees or below
Freezer	0 degrees or below
Dry Storage	50-70 Degrees



LOCATION

Remember, some people who need services will not be able to climb steps. Also remember that you and your volunteers will have to carry food from your trucks into the pantry. Below are our storage guidelines and requirements. Take these into consideration when deciding on the location of your food pantry.

FACILITY AND EQUIPMENT

Structure

- Choose a secure storage facility or space with locking doors. The location should be large enough to meet your needs with room allowed for growth. The storage space must have climate control (heat/air-conditioning). Check the walls, ceiling, shelf connections, and the area around windows and doors. Seal all gaps, holes, and cracks; install a strip on the bottom of the pantry door to seal out bugs and rodents.

Dry Storage

- Food should never be stored on the floor. It is okay to store on pallets.
- Protect product from moisture by selecting a dry, well-ventilated area.
- Non-food items must be stored separately from food items.
- Store all food on non-porous, easily sanitized surfaces. Food may not be stored on bare wood, rusty metal, or shelf liner. Paint shelves with light colored, oil-based enamel paint. Re-painting may be needed once a year, depending on how much your pantry is used. The paint seals the wood or metal and makes it easier to wipe down during weekly cleaning.
- Freestanding shelves can be used to gain separation spacing or leave space between items and walls.
- Do not re-package any products except for rice and beans. Only use plastic zip-lock bags, not paper bags. Rice and beans may be kept in a tightly lidded container on the platform.
- Check incoming food to see that it is in good condition. Discard bloated, heavily dented, or rusty cans. Also discard containers that leak or do not have labels. Expired or out-of-date baby food and formula must be discarded immediately. Leave enough room on the shelves so that

you can move product around for cleaning purposes. Use oldest product first. You will need refrigerators, freezers, and coolers to store these items.

- Store non-food items separately from food. Never store non-food items or cleaning products above or mingled with food products. Some common non-food items are hazardous.
- Store perishables at safe temperatures.
- All grain products must be refrigerated from May through September to deter contamination by pest invasion. Grain products such as flour or corn meal should be kept refrigerated during warmer months to deter the invasion of pests.

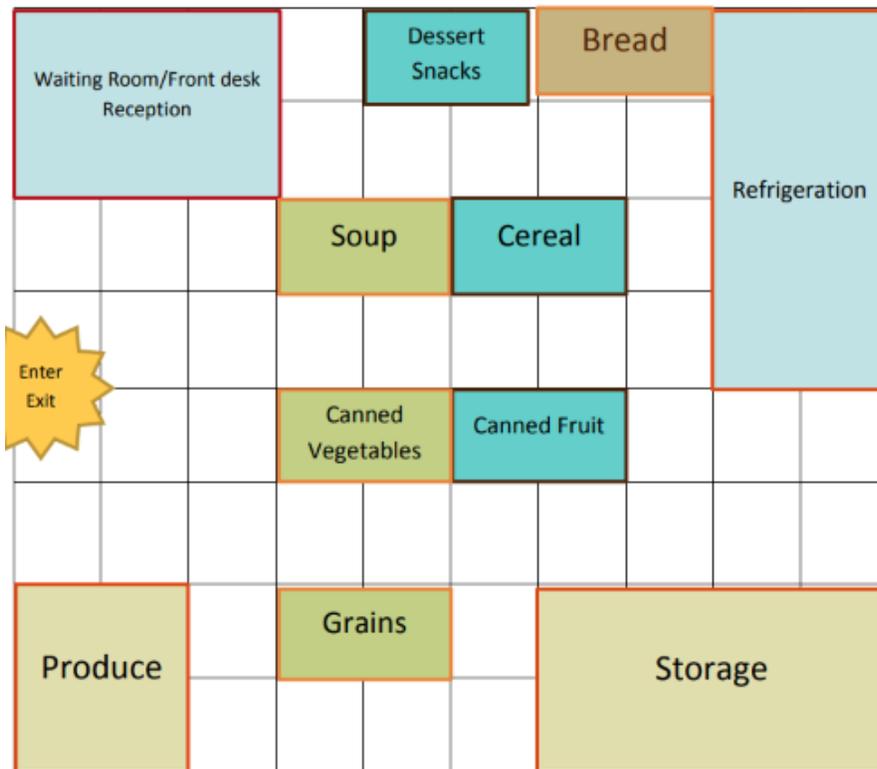
Refrigerated & Frozen Storage

- Keep temperature gauges in all refrigeration equipment. Using TDHS temperature chart, record the date and temperature of each unit once every other day, late Friday, and early Monday, if there are no operations on the weekend. Safe temperatures in a refrigerator range from 34° to 40° Fahrenheit, in a freezer 0° Fahrenheit or less.

For more information on food safety, be sure to complete the coursework in Agency University and receive your certificate.

FLOOR PLAN

Having a designated area for all the items in your pantry is helpful to both volunteers and neighbors. A smart layout can be great for traffic flow, as well as mapping the areas that house particular items, and inventory management. It may even help you to organize or rearrange your space. Use the grid below or create your own grid. Rearrange the boxes to correspond with your current layout. Arrows can be used to draw traffic flow patterns. It is also a great way to identify emergency exits!



Things to consider:

- Consider the need for a vehicle to transport food.
- Computer, information technology, and internet connectivity - NTFB uses a live, online ordering system (Agency Express 3).
- You will need access to a computer with high-speed internet. Many agencies use a computer to screen and track neighbor service.
- Aside from office supplies, the materials most frequently used by pantries are grocery bags and small cardboard boxes.
- Visit other successful food pantries; ask someone to mentor your program in the start-up phase. Why reinvent the wheel? By asking another agency to mentor you, they can give you ideas, tips of the trade, and other wisdom.

FOOD SAFETY

It is vitally important for agencies to implement proper food handling measures to ensure that any product being distributed to neighbors is safe for consumption. All NTFB partners will need a representative of their organization to undergo a food safety certification course every 2 years. If the representative with the food safety certification leaves the organization, a new representative will need to attend a course ASAP.

Keep track of what staff or volunteers have been certified. It may be good to have more than one person certified at a time.

FOOD SAFETY FOR NEIGHBORS

The following food storage guidelines highlights some of the practices partner agencies should follow and should be shared with staff and volunteers and documented as a part of your process.

- Baby food and formula should NOT be distributed after the expiration date. All baby food and formula products stored that are beyond date of expiration should be discarded and not distributed to neighbors.
- A best by date is not an expiration date! Other food may still be eligible for distribution past the best by or use by date. See the food quality expiration guidelines in the appendix for more information.
- Clean floors, pallets, and shelving regularly.
- Food must be stored and distributed so that cases with the oldest receiving date are used first. Utilize the “first in, first out” method.
- Keep doors, windows, and roofs well-sealed to prevent pest entry and water damage.
- There should be no smoking or eating in food preparation areas.
- Maintain pest control systems.
- Maintain equipment regularly, check freezer and refrigeration units for temperature, leaks and malfunctions.

View Food Criteria toolkit on <https://ntfb.org/partner-resources/>

PANTRY TASKS

Each pantry operates differently. Please take time to catalog daily tasks and responsibilities performed by staff and volunteers. A checklist may be the easiest way to guarantee all tasks are completed each day. Make lists specifically for certain days of the week. You can make many more lists to identify important tasks to be completed throughout the day.

- How do you get your day started in the pantry?
- What is the first thing you do when you come in?
- What tasks need to be accomplished immediately?
- Are there different tasks for different days?
- What is the last thing you do before you leave?
- How do you end your day in the pantry?
- Do you have specific things that need cleaned, turned off or locked?
- What is your cleaning schedule?

HOLIDAY & INCLEMENT WEATHER PLANS

What actions are taken to effectively shut down the facility for an extended holiday? What is the plan for closing for emergencies?

Questions for consideration:

- How do you notify the public that you will not be operational?
- What needs turned off or stored?
- Does your agency have a disaster preparedness plan? Consider developing a safety procedure and include a comprehensive approach for dealing with various emergency situations.
- Once a disaster response plan is established, consider running a test with your volunteers and staff to determine flaws in your plan.

SAMPLE MONTHLY CLEANING CHECKLIST:

Cleaning duties	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Wipe down shelves												
Wash all windows												
Clean refrigerators												
Defrost freezers												
Clean floors												

NUTRITION EDUCATION

There are many health concerns associated with food insecurity. Without proper education some food insecure people may find it more convenient to purchase high-calorie, low-nutrient foods. Healthy food choices are not always obvious. Choosing high-calorie, low-nutrient foods can contribute to various conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and some cancers.

STOCKING SHELVES AND OFFERING HEALTHY CHOICES

Highlighting “Healthy Options” by accenting your shelves can help people see better food choices. What steps can you take to offer more healthy options to your neighbors?

Food Group	Healthy Options	How we offer more healthy choices:
Fruit	Fresh fruit is great, but if you only have access to canned, try to find options with light syrup.	
Vegetables	Look for fresh vegetables or low-sodium canned vegetables.	
Grains	Whole grains are the best option. Try offering more whole grain pasta and bread.	
Protein	Whether it is a canned protein option or meat, find low-fat, low-sodium options.	
Dairy	Shelf stable 1% milk or non-fat dry milk is always a great choice; try to find more low-fat dairy products to offer.	

If many of your neighbors have diabetes, add more whole grain and high fiber foods to your inventory and decrease the number of refined grains and sugars. To accommodate special religious dietary restrictions, survey neighbors to see if you need to offer more food that encompasses their needs.

- Are most of your neighbor’s elderly, or mainly children?
- How do you choose items that will serve that population?

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

SUCCESSION PLANNING

A succession plan is a tool designed to help organizations assess their short-term and long-term needs in key areas of expertise and describes the key responsibilities that a replacement person needs to know to function for the missing key staff person. A succession plan supports the training, career development and leadership capacity of existing employees while planning for current and future staff shortages. Focus on positions that directly support your organizational, strategic, or operational plan, such as the executive director position.

HUNGER ADVOCACY - IMPORTANCE, STAY INFORMED

Why is advocacy important? Advocacy refers to speaking up on behalf of hungry people and communicating their needs to policymakers, the media, and the public.

Advocacy works to change the conditions that cause hunger. It could include an effort to shape public perception or to effect change that may or may not require changes in the law.

Why Advocacy:

- To strengthen public safety net programs.
- To share expertise with policymakers.
- To provide a voice for our neighbors.
- To enhance our mission.

Who should be an Advocate:

- Everyone
- 501(c)(3) nonprofits are allowed to advocate and lobby

How to be an Advocate:

- Find out who has the influence, what their interests are, and how they would align with your food pantry.
- Build relationships, use statistics and facts.
- Listen, they might have better ideas on how to accomplish your goals.
- Visit ntfb.org/advocacy.org for more information on other opportunities. NTFB is always interested in using neighbor voices especially for any legislation.

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 must 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/religious organizations and civic clubs with brief updates for their Sunday bulletins and/or newsletters.
- Cultivate the local media relationships. Send regular public service announcements to the radio stations and local newspapers or when a special activity is planned.
- Start a contact 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, social media, or in some special cases, through the local press. Take pictures and put a slide show together.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (SAMPLE):

The Executive Director should be a well-organized, dynamic, highly motivated individual with outstanding leadership and communication skills willing to serve and meet the needs of the needy in the community and to have the vision to advance the mission of the organization.

The Executive Director reports directly to the Board of Directors and is responsible for:

1. Managing all aspects of the organization.
2. Creating partnerships in the community and serving as an advocate of the organization.
3. Creating a five-year strategic plan supported by a vision statement.
4. Maintain an annual budget for the organization.
5. Define a workable service area by coordinating with other food pantries in the county.
6. Determine staffing needs and appropriate pay in order to eliminate staff turnover in the organization and build stability. Create job descriptions for all staff.
8. Implement staff evaluations. This encourages staff to adhere to the mission of the organization and help move the organization forward.
9. Create a succession plan for the organization so that there is no interruption during a transition of staff or volunteers.

PANTRY COORDINATOR

Responsibilities:

- Strategically plan for the organization's future, including setting goals and strategies, reviewing existing programs and creating new programs to fulfill the organization's mission.
- Open and operate the Food Pantry during business hours.
- Work with other volunteers to distribute food to Food Pantry neighbors.
- Place & pick up orders weekly at the Food Bank to stock the Food Pantry either by using the organization's transportation, renting a vehicle, or driving a loaner vehicle.
- Conduct shopping at local stores to stock Food Pantry on an as needed basis.
- Coordinate and help with food drives to collect and distribute food items donated by the community to the Food Pantry neighbors.
- Keep records of Food Pantry neighbors
- Complete paperwork as required including but not limited to report generation and submission to Food Bank
- Gather and supervise volunteers' performance of a variety of duties.
- Maintain expense logs, donation logs, budgets, and volunteer logs.
- Project food needs and maintain monthly list of critical needed items for contributors.
- Process neighbor intakes, assessments, and referrals according to pantry guidelines
- Continually seek new funding sources and other methods of gathering donation or resources

- Serve as a spokesperson for assigned programs through personal contacts, educational materials, web sites, media, and the community.

Requirements, Skills, and Abilities:

- Work with a team at the Food Pantry, be a team player and exhibit flexibility; ability to deal with a wide range of volunteers with little or no experience, and challenging neighbors at times.
- A strong sense of commitment and fulfilling responsibilities in a timely fashion is a must.
- Ability to lift to 35 pounds using proper technique.
- Computer skills are necessary for maintaining records: Excel, Microsoft Word and basic Internet.

APPENDIX

RESOURCE PAGE

North Texas Food Bank - 3677 Mapleshade Lane, Plano, TX www.ntfb.org

Internal Revenue Service - 1100 Commerce, Dallas, TX www.irs.gov/eo

Volunteer Center of Dallas - 2800 Live Oak Street, Dallas, TX www.volunteernorthtexas.org

Ample Harvest - www.ampleharvest.org

NTFB Agency Zone - <https://ntfb.org/partner-resources/>

- Food Quality Criteria 101
- Partner Agency Guidebook
- Church Requirements for New Partnership
- Neighbor choice toolkit
- Network Engagement Services? ntfb.org/nes

