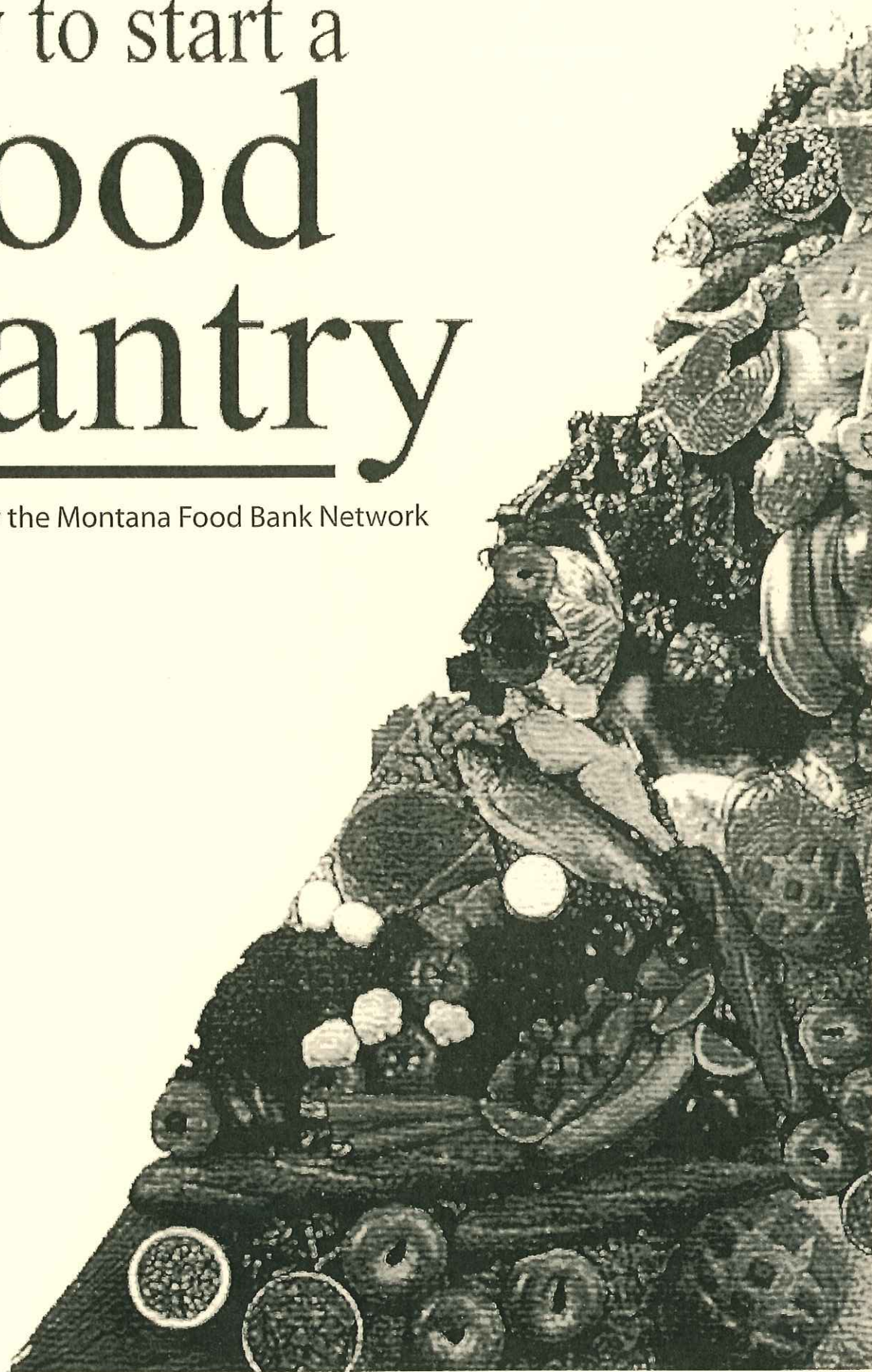

how to start a

Food Pantry

compiled by the Montana Food Bank Network



APPENDIX A

**MFBN'S SANITATION SELF-EVALUATION
CHECKLIST**

APPENDIX B
CLIENT CHOICE MANUAL

APPENDIX C
SUGGESTED FOODS
TO
STOCK IN FOOD PANTRIES

APPENDIX D
SAMPLE CLIENT APPLICATION
AND INTAKE

APPENDIX E
THE BILL EMERSON
FOOD DONATION ACT

APPENDIX F

MFBN'S FOOD DRIVE MANUAL

If you are reading this manual you have probably been approached by individuals seeking food for their families, groups that want to help families in need or simply want to give back to your community. Meeting the needs of the hungry is a noble and wonderful endeavor. If you want to start an emergency food program, here is a manual to help get you started and to help you succeed.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. What is an emergency food pantry?**

- II. Guide to starting a food pantry**
 - A. **Short Version** – A brief overview of starting a food pantry
 - B. **Long Version** – A comprehensive look at starting a food pantry
 - 1. Needs Assessment: Assessing the need in your community
 - 2. Create a Steering Committee and Board of Directors
 - 3. Obtain non-profit status and a 501(c)(3)
 - 4. Create a Basic Business Plan: The foundation for a detailed Service Plan
 - 5. Determine Food Program Hours of Operation
 - 6. Securing a location and Basic Storage Guidelines
 - 7. Develop a Pantry Model
 - 8. Community Outreach
 - 9. Best Practices for Client Intake Procedures
 - 10. Client Resources and Referrals
 - 11. Funds and Fundraising
 - 12. Selecting Food for the Pantry
 - 13. Proper Use of Food
 - 14. Staff/Volunteer Responsibilities
 - 15. Best Practices for Developing a Volunteer Program

- III. Legal Protection for Food Pantries & the Good Samaritan Act**

- IV. How to become a partner with the Montana Food Bank Network**
 - A. Things to Strive For
 - B. Service Plan Outline
 - C. Application Requests and Procedures

- V. Sample Documents (Appendix)**
 - A. MFBN Sanitation Self-Evaluation Checklist
 - B. Client Choice Manual (*Optional*)
 - C. Suggested Foods to Stock in Food Pantries
 - D. Sample Client Application and Intake
 - E. The Bill Emerson Food Donation Act
 - F. MFBN’s Food Drive Manual

I. WHAT IS AN EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY?

A food pantry is a community-based program that collects and stores food to distribute free-of-charge to low-income families and individuals. Food pantries provide a nutritionally balanced supply of food to low-income families and individuals for approximately three to seven days. Food pantries offer communities an effective pre-planned approach of handling emergency food assistance to those in need. Although most food pantries provide temporary food assistance more are choosing to also provide resources for SNAP/food stamps, vocational opportunities, medical assistance, housing and other informational services that address the underlying causes of hunger and offer a comprehensive approach to helping community members in need.

As you read this manual, you will find that there are many challenges to starting an emergency food program. With hard work and dedication, you will begin a successful program. Food banking is a crucial part of providing social services to your community. Emergency food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens have the ability to not only provide food to families and individuals, they also have the capacity to reach out and provide those in need with sustainable and long term solutions to poverty and hunger. Starting your program right is essential to the overall effectiveness you will have in your community. Please use the information in this manual to establish a strong foundation for your organization. We at Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN) are excited that you are interested in furthering our mission to end hunger in Montana and will be here to support you as you begin this charitable endeavor. Good luck!

II. GUIDE TO STARTING A FOOD PANTRY

A. Short Version

Look Into Local Resources

Before investing your organization's resources in starting up a program, investigate the local food resources. The Montana Food Bank Network can tell you of our Partner Agencies that already exist in your area. Call 800-809-4752, ext. 235, for more information. Learning about your neighborhood and what services are available will help you decide when and how you want to become part of the hunger solution.

Mission

Have a mission to feed the hungry. Identify the population you expect to serve and learn the level of need in your area.

501(c)(3)

To be a partner of the MFBN, your agency will need a 501(c)(3) Letter of Determination from the IRS. To get this, you will have to contact the IRS and request Form 1023 (“Application for Recognition of Exemption”) and its instructions. You may call 800-829-1040 for information or 800-829-3676 for the form. The application and process are also available on-line at www.irs.gov. It will take at least six weeks, if not considerably longer, to receive the Letter of Determination once you have filed for it. Note: The 501(c)(3) is different from the Montana Certificate of Tax Exemption.

If your agency cannot afford to file for 501(c)(3) status at this time, it is possible to find a sponsor or parent organization for the food program. Please contact MFBN Agency Relations Department for more information on developing a program under the umbrella of a parent organization’s 501(c)(3).

Storage Site

Feeding America requires its Partner Agencies to be able to store food safely and securely on the premises of the agency. Locate a room with adequate shelving for accepting food by the case quantity. This room must be able to be locked. If you want to distribute frozen or refrigerated food, the storage units for these must be able to be locked as well. Food for your pantry should not be accessible for general agency or church activities. *If you wish to learn more about the specific storage guidelines for the MFBN, **the Basic Food Storage Guidelines** are included in section II.B.6. of the “Long Version” of this manual.*

Budget

You will need a budget to pay for your pantry expenses. Your budget may come from a benevolence fund, donations, grants, or other sources, but you will need a regular source of money. In addition to the costs connected with getting food—whether through shared maintenance or purchase fees—you can count on some, at least, of the following expenses: staffing, transportation, pest control, photocopying of forms, cleaning supplies, thermometers, and storage containers.

Staffing

Your pantry staff may be comprised of volunteers or paid employees. You will need enough people to perform the following chores on a regular basis:

- stock food on the shelves and make up boxes or bags of food
- conduct client intake
- clean and maintain the facility
- attend meetings and training sessions
- do distribution record keeping and write reports
- pick up food

Since most pantries are staffed by volunteers, here are a few pointers about keeping them happy. First, make them feel they are an integral part of your organization and that their work is meaningful. It often helps to have a volunteer job description so that they know where their

responsibilities begin and end. You also might consider having a volunteer handbook with information they can refer to when they have or receive questions. Check on volunteers while they're working to make sure everything is going well. Finally, appreciate them! Recognize the important role volunteers play in your pantry. Of course, paid staff deserve appreciation, too.

Transportation

You will need reliable and consistent transportation for collecting food. The vehicle or vehicles should be large enough for the size of your program.

Client Eligibility

Your emergency pantry should set guidelines—regarding whom you will help, how often, and with how much food. While the IRS rules state that you cannot require your clients to make a donation, attend a church service, or work for food, you still need to decide on client eligibility guidelines. Some pantries limit their service area or post income limitations. *For examples of Client In-Take forms, please see section V.E. of this manual.*

Record Keeping

You should account for all the food that you distribute. It lets food donors know how you use their donation, and it helps in anti-hunger advocacy to be able to document who needs food and where emergency food is going. It is also a good idea to keep records of your clients including date of distribution, the client's name and address, the number of people in the household, and the number of days' food supply going out.

Getting Started

If you feel that starting a pantry is an appropriate response to hunger in your area, and you have all these components of your program worked out, you can get started. Start small, so that you can work out any unresolved details, and be flexible. Be sure that the highest authority in your organization, whether director or pastor, is kept informed of your plans and your pantry operation. You're welcome to apply to become a partner of MFBN once your food program has been in existence for 60 days.

B. LONG VERSION

In order to develop a successful food program, begin by asking yourself the following the questions: Who do we help? (Be specific) How do we notify those in need of our new program? How often can we help those individuals and families? Where do we get the food?

No emergency food program will ever duplicate another exactly. Successful pantries represent a community's unique response to the problem of hunger as it is felt locally. Whether a pantry serves customers who are predominantly senior citizens or young families, or whether it accepts walk-in, self-referrals or sends volunteers out to visit homes, the following components are crucial to success:

1. Needs Assessment : Assessing the need in your community

Evaluate the needs in your community and the population your pantry will serve.

- a. Communicate with existing resources and services within your community and surrounding areas. Please contact MFBN at agencyinfo@mfbn.org or visit www.mfbn.org for a complete list of emergency food programs in your area. You can also contact your local Office of Public Assistance to inquire about other existing social service agencies and programs in your area by visiting <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/contactus/humancommunityservices.shtml>.
- b. When speaking with other local food pantries, food banks and soup kitchens discuss their hours of operation, structure of their program and their clientele to determine which days of the week, month and best times of day fit the needs of low-income and working poor families in your area. If you are going to be a faith-based organization, consider communicating other faith-based emergency food pantries in your community.
- c. Begin developing a pantry model that best serves the unmet needs in your community. There are two dominant pantry models: Client Choice and Food Box Programs. Client Choice Pantries are similar to a grocery store in that, clients can choose the products they take home. Food Box Programs provide pre-determined food boxes for different sized households.
- d. Cultivate community support and a reliable means of advertisement. Be certain to discuss your ideas for gaining support with other local and surrounding food programs to ensure the reduction of negative competition and encourage healthy relationships with other non-profit organizations in your community. Word of mouth, as well as fliers or other creative ideas can help to generate awareness of the new food pantry, as well as encourage donations and volunteers. Keep in mind the variety of opportunities for everyone in the community to take part in the creation of a food pantry. Be sure to vocalize them so everyone knows there is an available role (e.g. working and/or volunteering at the site, financial bookkeeping and maintenance of records, writings letters and grants for funding and food resources.)

2. Create a Steering Committee and Board of Directors

- **The 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 civic clubs, churches, businesses, etc. in sponsoring one pantry has the added advantage of great 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/policy making and resource raising. Sometimes those tasks are best accomplished by dividing into smaller working groups. Among other things, the steering committee will need to:

1. Conduct a **Needs Assessment** to determine who is hungry
2. Determine what other agencies offer food assistance
3. Decide where the pantry should be located
4. Mobilize resources to find a location
5. Recruit volunteers
6. Raise seed monies
7. Stock shelves
8. Spread the word
9. Set policies and operating procedures
10. Determine the hours of operation
11. Draft a budget
12. Decide whether the pantry will operate under sponsorship of a church or existing agency or whether it should incorporate and seek its own 501(c)(3) non-profit status.
13. Establish a Board of Directors

- **The Board of Directors** - Develop a Board of Directors that includes volunteers from public and private agencies who are willing to commit time and ideas to planning, policy-making 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. 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.

1. Composition of the Board:

- a. The Chairman of the Board is responsible for overseeing board meetings and is closely involved with the management of the organization. This person can be someone independent of the CEO or Executive Director.
- b. The Vice-Chair is responsible for the Chairman's duties when the Chairman 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.

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 organizations 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 if you are going to be the Chairperson or find a different Chair.
- c. Determine how much money (if any) you will pay a member of your Board.
- d. Contact potential candidates and interview them to gauge their interest and the value they will bring to your organization.
- e. Set the structure and dates of your meetings.

For more information about creating a Board of Directors, please contact MFBN.

3. Obtain a non-profit status and a 501 (c)3

Having 501(c)(3) status will establish your organization as an official non-profit entity. To be a partner of the MFBN, your agency will need a 501(c)(3) Letter of Determination from the IRS. To get this, you will have to contact the IRS and request Form 1023 ("Application for Recognition of Exemption") and its instructions. You may call 800-829-1040 for information or 800-829-3676 for the form. The application and process are also available on-line at www.irs.gov. It will take at least six weeks, if not considerably longer, to receive the Letter of Determination once you have filed for it. Note: The 501(c)(3) is different from the Montana Certificate of Tax Exemption.

If your agency cannot afford to file for 501(c)(3) status at this time, it is possible to find a sponsor or parent organization for the food program. Please contact MFBN Agency Relations Department for more information on developing a program under the umbrella of a parent organization's 501(c)(3).

Visit <http://www.mtnonprofit.org> for more information on how to obtain non-profit status and your 501(c)(3).

4. Create a Basic Business Plan

Each new food program should have a basic business plan. The basic business plan is a starting point for your program's **Service Plan**, should you wish to apply for partnership with MFBN in the future. This plan should include:

- **A Mission Statement**: 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. Here is an example of a basic mission statement:

“The mission of Country Harvest Pantry is to distribute food to the needy and to refer them to community organizations for social services.”

- **Food Program Budget**: Given that there are food costs, staffing costs, rent etc., food programs must have a current budget for their food program. This initial budget should include expenses such as: facility, utilities, maintenance, storage, food, paid staff (if applicable), outreach efforts, etc.
- **Criteria for Client Eligibility**: Your food program must have written guidelines for food program participation which state your requirements for participation, as well as guidelines for refusing service to clients. An agency must practice a non-discriminatory policy. Agencies that serve specific populations (such as people living with HIV or AIDS, Seniors, Youth, etc.) are exempt from this requirement. If you are interested in serving a specific population at your agency, please be sure to indicate this on your membership application.

Please understand that no matter what type of food program you establish, you are expected to serve individuals regardless of their race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, ancestry, creed, religion, sexual orientation, physical appearance, disability status, age, pregnancy, or any group membership. *For examples of Client In-Take forms, please see section V. Appendix B.*

5. Food Program Hours of Operation

Using information gathered from your needs assessment; determine the days and hours of operation for your food program. It is essential to consider the population you are serving (e.g. young, old, working, all of the above), the time of day most suitable to those individuals and the hours of operation for any other established food programs in your area.

All food program sites are required to be open at least once per month and must follow a weekly schedule throughout the year to be eligible for partnership with MFBN. The program must be open during the days and hours reported to MFBN.

6. Securing a Location and Basic Storage Guidelines

A food pantry facility should be a safe, sanitary and secure place to store food. The pantry should be located in a low traffic area and easily accessible by clients. Try to establish a consistent and

stable place to distribute from. If working in conjunction with a church or temple, perhaps you could use their basement for the food distribution. The pantry should include storage areas for dry, frozen and refrigerated food products. Refrigeration is recommended but not essential. Be sure to comply with all applicable state and local fire safety, food storage/handling requirements and health codes. You will want to contact your local Health Department for this. Regular pest and rodent control is necessary, as is shelving to keep the food at least 6" off the floor.

When searching for a location, consider its accessibility to the customer or referring agencies the pantry will serve. Consider the need for a vehicle to transport food. Aside from office supplies, the materials most frequently used by pantries are grocery bags and small cardboard boxes. Asking stores, businesses, churches and families to save these items can keep a pantry well-supplied.

Please review the following Basic Storage Guidelines:

Space Considerations

- Agencies cannot operate the food program out of a home or garage.
- A pantry should be located in a room with adequate heating and cooling systems.
- Shelving is essential for proper food storage and organization. All food must be stored at least 6 inches above the ground and certain types of food products need to be separate and labeled. You should not store non-food items within 20 feet of food products.
- Any windows in the room need to be properly covered to protect food from direct sunlight.
- All food storage areas must have a working thermometer that monitors the temperature of the room.
- All areas must have fire extinguishers that are inspected and updated yearly.
- The storage space must be secure and accessible only by food program staff or volunteers.
- Check with local grocery stores, hardware stores, etc. and ask if they have any shelving to donate to your new food program.

Equipment Requirements

- A cold storage thermometer must be located in each compartment of refrigeration and freezer storage units. Temperatures must be maintained between 35 and 40 degrees for refrigerators and between -10 and 0 degrees for freezers.
- The program must keep daily temperature logs of all cold units used to store food for the food pantry.
- The agency should have enough containers with tight fitting lids, called pest-proof containers. These containers are used to aid in the prevention of pest infestations for items such as beans, rice, grains, etc. You may use any closed container, such as a large plastic garbage can or a metal cabinet.

Pest Control Requirements

An agency must have a pest control plan. It is recommended that your program have a current contract with a licensed professional exterminator and an extermination log book. The extermination log book will hold your extermination contract and receipts for each visit. MFBN recommends monthly visits from exterminators, although some sites may require more frequent visits.

Please refer to Section V. Appendix A for a Sanitation Self-Evaluation Checklist.

Property Safety

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

Personal Safety

- Have one or two other people at the pantry during indicated hours the pantry gives out food. If alone, arrange the pick-up times during hours when someone else can be at the pantry.
- Never invite referrals or "walk-ins" to accompany you into the pantry. You do not want to be in an isolated place with an unknown person.
- Call the police at the slightest infringement of your rights as a person. Give no indication of your routine arrival and departure times, or information about your home address, phone number, etc.
- Whether you are at work or at home always let someone know where you are going. Even if you live alone, leave a note, so that in case of an emergency, someone will know where to find you.

7. Develop a Pantry Model

There are two primary models for a food pantry: Client Choice and Food Box Program.

- **Client Choice** pantries allow clients to "choose" their own food during their visit. All pantries that use this model establish a system unique to the program's size, square footage, number of staff or volunteer support and the amount of food and storage in the facility. Client Choice pantries require pre-planning. Some programs use a "menu" set-up in which a written menu is given to each client and then the client checks off the products he or she desires. Others use a point system determined by family (household) size. For example, a family of 2 may receive 20 points where as a family of 5 would receive 50. Using the allotted points, individuals can decide which products they can take home. The point system would be determined by the type and amount of products in the pantry. The point system can allow

your clients to move through your pantry (space allowing) and select certain items off the shelf. Each shelf would be stocked with items that are a certain number of points. For example, a can of soup may be 1 point, cereal may be 3 points, and frozen meat could be 4 points. As a result your clients will move through your pantry selecting items that they want in a similar fashion to a grocery store. Client Choice pantries help to reduce the waste of emergency food and empower your clients to make choices for themselves. For more information on the Client Choice model, contact the MFBN Agency Relations Department via email at agencyinfo@mfbn.org or by calling (800) 809-4752 to request the “Client Choice Manual.”

- **Food Box** programs involve developing a nutritional menu for your clients and then pre-packing boxes with a 5 day supply of food for families of different sizes. Pre-packed food boxes or bags are typically weighed out in advanced and distributed to eligible clients on the day of distribution. Food box programs are very common for programs that lack large amounts of space and volunteer help.

8. Community Outreach

Public Relations

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

- Use statistics and anecdotes to bring the problem of hunger to life. Print brochures. Provide supporting civic clubs and churches with brief updates for their newsletters and /or bulletins.
- Cultivate the local media. Send regular public service announcements to the radio stations and local newspapers or when a special activity is planned. Start a mailing list of the names of supporters, volunteers, donors and contacts.
- Publish (type and copy) a monthly newsletter – nothing fancy or lengthy, just interesting and informative. Unless they prefer anonymity, thank everyone publicly for anything they do. This can be done in the newsletter or in some special cases, through the local press.
- Take pictures and put a slide show together, but remember to always obtain releases from clients before using their photographs.

Eligibility Requirements & Community Outreach

It is important to let your community know eligibility requirements for receiving food from the very beginning. You need to tell your community who you are serving and why. Most food banks such as MFBN require that you distribute food to the community “at large”. This means that service be given regardless of race, ethnic origin, religion, sex, age, or any group membership. Programs that serve only specific populations (such as those that serve clients living with HIV or AIDS) are exempt from this requirement. You also need to indicate any

restrictions your program will have in relations to service area, income levels, etc. Also indicate whether or not clients will be able to receive food on an emergency basis if they cannot come during regular hours of operation. Communicating your program's guidelines from the beginning will help substantially in the long run.

The program should visibly publicize its presence and days and hours of operation in the community by distributing flyers or by listing its location, telephone number and days and hours of operation in a local newspaper or library. Agencies do not necessarily have to use these methods, as there may be other ways to publicize. If you need suggestions, MFBN can help.

In addition, the program must post a sign that indicates both the presence of the food program and the days and hours of operation at the facility. The sign must also include any notification of eligibility requirements, and must be clearly visible to the general public. It may be part of a church marquee or the days and hours of operation may be written on a poster board that is at least 8.5 x 11 inches. In addition, a sign must be placed on the outside door that clients use to access the pantry so they know which entrance to use.

9. Best Practices for Client In-Take Procedures

As you begin to design a standard in-take procedure for your pantry, consider the following questions before committing to a format.

1. How often can a family receive assistance? Many pantries agree to help clients once or twice a month depending on their food supply, staffing and storage capacity.
2. How many families can your program help monthly? What is realistic in terms of your resources? How much time do committee/board members, volunteers and staff have to manage the pantry?
3. How will you identify your clients? Social security cards are not an acceptable form of ID. Decide how you want to verify identity but keep in mind that some individuals might want to hide their identity due to a domestic violence situation, pride or embarrassment.
4. What, if any, outreach efforts will your program make to assist clientele? Try to identify why the person is in need so you can better assist them. Not all people are getting the government assistance they are eligible for. Sometimes you may need to refer them to a government agency or provide them with information. Keep a list of other agencies available for referral. *Please refer to Section 10, page 15 for outreach information.*
5. What geographical area will your program serve? Where is the local need? How far away are other pantries?

6. Can you accept referrals from other hunger related groups? How many each month?
7. **REMEMBER: Food Must Not Be Sold!** You may not charge, solicit dues, fees or donations from recipients of food.

Screening - Decide what information you would like to gather from your client as they enter your facility.

Screening potential recipients is an important part of your work. Unfortunately, you may run across a difficult individual occasionally. You should be ready to effectively deal with the problem and not be discouraged in your work. Ask people for the following information:

- Name, address, phone number
- Number of people in the household and their ages
- Income sources and how often received (e.g. wages/salary; tips; self-employment; social security; child support; TANF; disability; pension/retirement; other)
- Enrollment in programs such as: SNAP, TANF, Social Security/SSI, Child Support Enforcement, WIC, Medicaid or CHIP, LIEAP, CSFP
- Unusual circumstances (e.g. homeless, lack of cooking facilities, disability, etc.)
- Special dietary needs (e.g. diabetic, vegetarian, hypoglycemic, etc.)
- The reason they are without food resources (e.g. What is the main reason that you are seeking help today?)
- When their next financial assistance arrives
- The source of their referral to your program (e.g. How did you hear about the food pantry?)

FORMS - Your program will want to have three primary forms on file for all clients:

1. **Application:** Clients will complete this comprehensive application during their first visit to the food pantry and every January after that time.
2. **Permanent Record Card:** Basic permanent information can be recorded on an index card and arranged alphabetically in a file box. Record on the card the assistance provided and the date. Although documenting your program is important, names of people and specific information about their lives and problems is confidential and should be accessible only to the food pantry staff. Client records should not leave the facility at any time for any purpose.

<u>SAMPLE CLIENT PERMANENT RECORD CARD</u>		
NAME	_____	
# IN FAMILY	_____	
ADDRESS	_____	
PHONE	_____	
CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
_____	_____	_____

3. **Intake Form:** Clients will complete and sign this form each time they receive food from the food program.

Please refer to Section V. Appendix D. for a sample Application and Intake Form.

10. Client Resources and Referrals

Meeting the needs of low-income and hungry people is a joint effort. Providing emergency food is an essential first step. There are also many other public and private programs designed to give individuals and families a “hand up” out of poverty. If you’d like to provide more comprehensive help to your clients, please take the opportunity to become an **MFBN outreach partner**.

Outreach partners provide **referrals** to clients about other available programs and services. Some pantries also offer one-on-one **application assistance**, which is the most effective form of outreach.

The more individualized your approach, the better – it’s up to you to determine how much staff or volunteer time you can allocate to outreach.

MFBN provides **brochures, flyers, posters, etc.** that make talking about the programs easy. We also hold **outreach workshops** to familiarize pantry staff and volunteers with eligibility guidelines and application procedures.

The best time to determine which services a client may need is during **intake**. Chat with your clients – find out which costs they are struggling with and which programs they are currently participating in. The sample intake form lists some questions about program participation, and you can add more.

The following lists some of the most important programs that your clients should know about:

- **SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) – formerly the Food Stamp Program**
Provides a monthly stipend for food on a debit or EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) card. SNAP is designed to supplement clients’ food budgets and ensure that they can access the nutrition needed to stay healthy. SNAP covers clients’ fundamental need for food so they can better focus on staying in their homes, getting medical treatment, finding a job, etc.
- **WIC (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants and Children)**
Provides healthy foods, nutrition information and referrals to health and social services to pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and

children up to age five.

- **CSFP (Commodity Supplemental Food Program)**

Provides a monthly food package and assistance to participants 60 years of age and older and children from 5 to 6 years old whose families qualify.

- **School Meals (Breakfast and Lunch)**

Most Montana schools provide nutritious breakfasts and almost all provide lunch for students.

Low income students qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch. SNAP participants automatically qualify for free school meals.

- **Summer Meal Program**

Provides meals for children over the summer vacation. Sites are located across the state, but many areas remain underserved. Food pantries can sponsor a summer meal site in their area or assist in efforts to create awareness of existing programs.

Food is often not the only thing your clients are struggling with. Here are some other programs that can help:

- **LIEAP (Low-Income Energy Assistance Program)**

Pays part of winter energy bills for low-income renters and homeowners.

- **Medicaid**

Pays for medical care for some low-income and medically needy people.

- **CHIP**

Provides a low-cost, private health insurance plan that provides coverage for eligible Montana children up to age 19 that meet income guidelines and are ineligible for Medicaid.

- **TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)**

Provides temporary cash assistance to needy families with minor dependent children.

- **Housing Assistance**

Provides subsidized rents, public housing and homeowner education and assistance.

- **Montana Free File Tax Assistance**

Provides free online and in-person tax preparation services.

- **Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**

A refundable tax credit for low-income, working taxpayers. The amount of the credit is based on income, filing status and number of qualifying children, if any.

- **Domestic Violence**
Several shelters across the state provide emergency housing and counseling to victims of domestic violence.
- **Child Care Assistance**
Offers "Best Beginnings" child-care scholarships to qualified low-income families who send children to licensed child-care centers, registered group or family child-care homes, or legally unregistered child-care providers.

The emergency food box or meal that a client receives from your agency is a critical part of getting them through each day. However, to ensure that all clients are receiving all the public benefits they are eligible for is another way that you can help them meet all of their needs, which will improve the overall status of their lives.

For more information on how to provide outreach, and to request posters and flyers please contact MFBN's Policy Team (800) 809-4752.

11. Funds and Fundraising

The key to both raising money and getting donated services is simple: ASK! Talk up the pantry. Prepare a brief presentation that describes the people involved with the pantry (steering committee members, volunteers and clients). Enthusiasm is infectious; tell people about the pantry and ask for their help. Today's "no" could be tomorrow's "yes", so don't give up.

Special Events can be good money-raisers as long as they don't take more in the planning, staffing and staging than they add to the cash box. Pantries have made money holding bake sales, auctions, pot-luck dinners and much more.

One cannot always depend on donations. Try to visit local business to see if they would be interested in "funding" the food pantry (e.g. monthly monetary donations.) Explain to the business owner how this would not only benefit the community, but would also create positive attention to their business as well. It is a great idea to present these potential donors with a summary of your program's Basic Business Plan.

Monetary grants from donors and foundations are some of the best financial resources a food program can use. Successful grant writing requires an effective grant writer. If your program needs help grant writing, or if you would like to improve your grant writing skills, visit <http://www.mtnonprofit.org> for more information. In addition, many food programs participate in various fundraising events to supplement their food program budgets. The types of fundraisers that a food program may organize include car washes, bake sales, pot luck dinners, arts & crafts fairs, hunger walks, direct mail and food drives.

Here are some helpful hints to keep outside donations of food coming in to your pantry:

1. Local food drives – Hand flyers out in your community asking for donations which will be picked up on a set date. *Please refer to Section V. Appendix F. to view MFBN's Food Drive Manual.*
2. Ask your local food store manager for donations and for permission to set up a donation box in his/her store.
3. Ask other clubs, organizations, churches, or places of employment to sponsor food drives for your center.

12. Selecting Food for the Pantry

Malnutrition and hunger go hand in hand. Encourage the collection of wholesome foods as opposed to highly processed, expensive foods. Also encourage the collection of foods low in sugar or salt and high in nutrients or vitamins.

The following suggestions for stocking a food pantry may be useful as a guide for preparing menus for Client Choice pantries and emergency food boxes. Most pantries post this type of information for the benefit of their volunteers.

Packaging sizes and styles should be specific to client population. Would you need to stock pop-top or tab-top cans? Are most clients single elderly persons, families, or transients with no cooking facilities? Consider, too, that some non-food items are necessary but expensive to your clients.

How to Determine What Groceries to Distribute: The questions you ask the person requesting help will be a good source of information for determining his or her food needs.

- Size and composition of family: How many people are in the household? Teenagers eat more than small children.
- Special dietary needs: Diabetics should not have sugar-laden food. Elderly people may need some soft foods. Infants may need formula or baby food.
- Living situation of person needing help: Is refrigeration available? Are cooking facilities in working order? Is the person capable of independently preparing simple meals?
- Logistics: Will the person be walking, riding the bus or driving a car? How much can he or she carry?

The kinds and amounts of food that you distribute will vary with your food supply. Make an effort to provide for well-balanced meals. Some groups include an information sheet suggesting recipes and menus that could be made from certain food items. For instance, creamed soup, rice and tuna together with a can of green beans could make a nice casserole.

Foods that are good sources of protein are important to have on hand. These include not only meat, eggs and fish (which generally are perishable), but also dried beans, peas and lentils. You can get a protein value equivalent to that of meat by combining grain products with peas, beans and lentils.

The best guideline is your own knowledge of meal planning and grocery shopping. Use your good common sense!

13. Proper Use of Food

Transporting food, storing food, handling food and re-packaging food products are everyday occurrences within a pantry program. It is essential for all emergency food programs that staff and volunteers are well-versed in food safety procedures. MFBN offers a Food Safety certification course called "Food Safety 101" for all Partner Agencies. MFBN requires that all Partner Agencies complete the course by attending training or completing the training via mail or our website www.insidemfbn.org.

If you are receiving left-over food from restaurants, hotels, etc. keep in mind with food of this nature that is "gleaned" or "saved", it would probably be best to work out an agreement so that food is used that day. For example, agree that the food program will pick up food on the same day as the program's distribution.

Also, keep in mind that just because people are generously donating, you should not hesitate to discard an item that may not look safe. Be sure to check expiration dates, as some people donate in good faith, but may forget how old some of their food is.

(Any food obtained from MFBN or the Montana Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS) must only be used for the approved food program. It may not be used for other purposes (back to school event, community block party, or personal grocery shopping.) Also, under no circumstances can the food program require fees for food, nor can the agency require individuals to work or volunteer in order to receive food from the program.)

14. Staff/Volunteer Responsibilities

Committed volunteers hold the key to any pantry's success. Even those programs that can afford to hire a pantry manager or coordinator rely heavily on the regular assistance of dependable volunteers to shop and pick-up food, stock and maintain the pantry, prepare food boxes, assist with food and fund drives, and when applicable, do client intake and referral. A solid staff is vital to operating a good food program.

Onsite volunteers staff the pantry during regular hours. Home-based volunteers are on call during assigned hours and are prepared to go to the pantry, pay a needy family a visit, pick-up food or meet a delivery truck. Youth groups, civic organizations, churches and senior citizen's organizations are good sources of volunteers.

Whether a pantry hires for the position or chooses to remain a totally volunteer effort, having a coordinator is essential. Someone must take responsibility for day-to-day operations, scheduling, training and supervising volunteers, acting as liaison with the community, bookkeeping, compiling monthly reports, and maintaining inventory control. The coordinator/director/CEO should be

comfortable dealing with people directly and with speaking before large groups. Organizing talents are invaluable, as are contacts within local community groups.

The list that follows describes the duties involved with food program administration. While MFBN understands that many programs may not have a different person to fulfill each responsibility, we recommend that each agency have at least two people to manage the food program.

- Food Program Management: The person who manages the food program serves as the liaison between the agency and the rest of the world. This person is the primary contact for the food program.
- Financial Management and Accounting: There are many costs associated with operating a food program. A food program must be financially responsible. All food programs should keep written budgets to account for purchases, donations, services and other expenses. Accurate budget-keeping enables agencies to make more cost effective decisions about food resources and related purchases.
- Record Keeping: Record keeping is a very important part of operating a food program. It will help your program manage clientele, donations and the amount of food that goes out the door. Your program will need to keep records of client intake forms, inventory, donations, volunteer hours and finances. Record keeping is important so that you can document how many people you are serving, who they are, how often they need help, and the reasons for hunger in your area. It is also important that you keep a simple inventory record so that you can keep up with monies spent in supplying your pantry as well as pounds distributed to the needy. Documenting your history will give you a foundation and guideline for future efforts. MFBN requires all Partner Agencies to complete a Monthly Activity Report recording the number of clients, households, employed, poundage and meals. All programs should keep copies of their invoices and packing slips for at least one year, all client intake forms for three years, and records of volunteer hours.
- Fund Raising: Even the smallest food pantry will need to raise money to cover operating expenses and to purchase food for distribution. Decide what portions of the budget will be raised through private donations, fundraising events and grants.
- Food Resource Management: Managing the food that a program distributes or prepares for clients is a big task! The person who manages food resources should always know how much and what kind of food the program needs. This includes securing as many food resources for the program as possible and ensuring that food is picked up and arrives at the food program. It is a great idea to talk with your local supermarkets, restaurants and hotels about reducing waste by giving excess food to the program.
- Order Placement: Food programs may place orders with MFBN in a variety of ways including email, fax or telephone. Food programs must have an individual available to place orders during the second week of every month. Details on retrieving updated shopping lists, placing orders and using www.insidemfbn.org are provided in the Partner Agency Orientation Packet.

- Food Drive Organization: MFBN is one of many resources that a food program may use to secure food. Many agencies have food drives to supplement food inventory. If you need information on how to conduct a food drive please contact MFBN or refer to the Food Drive Manual included in **Section V.F.** of this manual.
- Transportation Management: This person coordinates transportation of food donors to the food program. MFBN delivers monthly to several drop sites across the state. The Transportation Manager will be the main contact for all deliveries and pick-ups for the food program.
- Facility Management: The building or space that a food program occupies needs to be safe, secure and pest free. The person who is in charge of facility management ensures this by conducting thorough and regular maintenance checks.
- Pest Control Management: Pests tend to find food wherever it is stored. The person in charge of pest control management ensures that a licensed Pest Control company inspects the premises where the food program is located.
- Client Services Coordination: In order to be effective and efficient, each program needs to establish policies for operating a food program. The person who coordinates client services works with clients and the community to determine how the pantry should more effectively address client concerns and improve its services. If clients have other needs that are not directly related to food, then the Client Service Coordinator should do his/her best to refer them to the appropriate resource.
- Intake Coordinator: Many clients are intimidated by or uncomfortable with the thought of going to food programs for assistance. The person who coordinates the intake process for the food program greets new clients and explains how the pantry works. The Intake Coordinator also records client information such as name, address and the number of individuals in the household.
- Volunteer Recruitment and Management: Almost every food program is operated by volunteers from the community. The person in charge of volunteer recruitment finds volunteers to assist the food program with tasks such as unloading from food trucks, stocking shelves with food, preparing and distributing bags/boxes to clients. The person who manages the volunteers keeps their contact information on file and schedules them for specific shifts and tasks. The volunteer manager also logs volunteer hours and accomplishments so that the food program remains aware of volunteer contributions. It is also important to plan volunteer appreciation events in order to encourage volunteer commitment for a longer period of time. The following are suggestions on how to maintain a healthy volunteer-based organization.

15. Best Practices for Developing a Volunteer Program

Volunteers are motivated by a belief in a meaningful cause and a desire to help. These volunteers will come to your nonprofit organization to lend a hand, and it is important they you have the tools to properly lay out a work plan for them and manage them. Creating a volunteer program can prove to be challenging, but if the appropriate steps are taken, you can be guaranteed the

program will be a success. To successfully implement a volunteer program, you'll need to start with a good plan, develop policies and procedures, effectively recruit individuals, properly supervise these individuals and finally keep these individuals motivated and feeling appreciated so they come back time after time.

1. Planning. A thorough planning process should be the first step to developing your volunteer program, and should answer the following questions: Why does the volunteer program exist? What does the future of the program look like? What needs will the program address? What will be the impact of the program? Is there a budget? How will you prepare paid staff to work with the volunteers? What will the volunteers do? Once these questions have been answered, you can properly recruit individuals to your volunteer program.

2. Policies & Procedures. It is extremely important to outline policies and procedures for all volunteers. First and foremost, policies and procedures connect the volunteer program to the larger organization and its mission. But policies and procedures also provide structure for management and ensure continuity over time. Types of written policies that should be developed are: statements of belief/position/value of organization, mechanisms for managing risk (e.g., insurance coverage, background checks), rules to specify expectations, regulations and guides to action (e.g., confidentiality, time and training commitments, customer service) and additional materials to program effectiveness (e.g., personnel policies) that are modified for the volunteer program.

3. Recruitment. The process of recruitment means enrolling an individual to become involved with your organization. Depending what type of individual you are seeking you may have multiple recruitment "messages" – but all messages should include the following: the specific need of the clients and/or organization, how the volunteer can alleviate the need, and the benefits to the volunteer. Next, once individuals have been recruited, a brief screening and interview should be conducted to determine a proper match between the individual and the organization. Screening processes may be different depending what type of position you are recruiting for. Last, be sure to provide orientation and training to all volunteers, enabling them to perform the assigned tasks both efficiently and effectively. Volunteers who understand what is expected from them do a better job and feel satisfied by serving your organization.

4. Supervision. The supervisor's role is to ensure the volunteer's success in the work they perform for the organization. Volunteers should always have a supervisor available to answer questions, lend guidance and provide support and feedback. The supervisor is responsible for providing materials, training, and direction to enable the volunteer to perform assigned tasks to the best of their ability. Supervisors will evaluate the effectiveness of the volunteers and their role in meeting the objectives of the volunteer program and the organization as a whole.

5. Retention. Understanding volunteers' motivations and remaining sensitive to their needs are essential to retaining volunteers. Always be consistent and sincere in your expectations. Remember to address a volunteer by his or her first name. Be receptive to new ideas and ways of doing things. Take every opportunity to applaud competence, punctuality and all the other things you value. Be sure and say "thank you" or "good job" – it costs nothing but goes a long way. At least once a year, go out of your way to recognize volunteers by holding some type of luncheon or appreciation event. As much as possible, make things fun! Turn on some background music, let volunteers work together, serve refreshments. Remember that volunteers are helping out your

organization on their own time and that a volunteer deserves as much courtesy and consideration as a regular employee does.

If you are unable to follow all of the aforementioned steps, at the very least always remember to show appreciation. A warm smile and a “thank you” can mean a lot. Volunteers are the individuals who are making a difference one day a time, one community at a time, one person at a time. "What volunteers bring is the human touch, the individual, caring approach that no government program, however well-meaning and well- executed, can deliver." – Anonymous

III. Legal Protection for Food Pantries & the Good Samaritan Act

Good Samaritan laws in the United States are laws or acts protecting from liability those who choose to aid others who are injured or ill. They are intended to reduce bystanders' hesitation to assist, for fear of being sued or prosecuted for unintentional injury or wrongful death. Its purpose is to keep people from being reluctant to help a stranger in need for fear of legal repercussions if they were to make some mistake in treatment. Good Samaritan laws vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, as will their interactions with various other legal principles, such as consent, parental rights and the right to refuse treatment. Such laws extend protection to individuals when they are acting in a volunteer capacity. *Please view a copy of the Good Samaritan Act in Section V. Appendix E of this manual.*

IV. How to Become a Partner of the Montana Food Bank Network

A. Partner Agency Requirements – Things You Should Strive For

Most Food Banks have requirements that must be met in order for your food program to successfully gain access to their programs and products. The following is a list of requirements and helpful “Food Language Tips” for your group to follow:

1. Be an “established” food center. Most food banks require that all Partner Agencies applying for membership be active in food distribution. If you have been distributing food on holidays or on a monthly basis you qualify as “established.” Even if you have only been distributing food during the holidays or as special needs arise you are considered an established pantry. When describing your food outreach program make sure you state what you’ve done in the past and what you plan to do in the future.
2. Be “self-supporting” and able to provide your own food, money and staff.
3. Food – You will probably need other sources of food besides that provided by MFBN. There are several ways to gain food donations: Local food drives – Hand out flyers in your community asking for donations which will be picked up on a set date.
4. Ask your local food store manager for donations and for permission to set up a donation box in his/her store.

5. Ask other clubs, organizations, churches, or places of employment to sponsor food drives for your center.
6. Money – The food from the MFBN is not always free of charge, so those in charge will want to know how you plan to pay for your product. One acceptable way of paying for the food is by including it in the budget and collecting donations.
7. Staffing – MFBN will want to know who is going to run the program. It can easily take a couple of hours to sort and stack product received from MFBN.
8. Distribute food to the community “at large” – Most food banks require that service be given regardless of race, ethnic origin, religion, sex, age, or any group membership.
9. Have “established” day(s) and hour(s) you are open to the community (Example: Monday 10:00 a.m. until noon.) You need to have established hours of operation for your center. You may distribute food at other times of the week from referrals or on an emergency basis.
10. Have “written” guidelines for accepting and refusing recipients. This is the time to determine which of the poor in your community will be helped. Set up a screening that works best for you and your clients. MFBN uses the 150% of poverty guidelines for one of its programs. There is no income verification required outside of the client’s self-certification that the information provided is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge. It is also possible to create restrictions based on service area including: county, town, or zip code.
11. Have a separate, locked storage facility with refrigerator and freezer space, if possible. You need to have a designated room for dry storage that has food stored at least 6 inches above the ground and 3 inches away from the wall. All windows need to be covered and you should have adequate heating, cooling and ventilation. Thermometers should be placed in each room, refrigerator and freezer storage area.
12. Keep accurate records – Most food banks are partially funded by government programs or grants which require them to report records, such as the number of people served. You may also want these figures available to show what you are doing in your community. You need to record how many people you serve and their age groups.

B. Service Plan Outline

This plan should explain: why the program you are applying for partnership with Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN) is important, how it will operate, when it will operate, etc. Your service plan helps us to better understand your operation and its needs, as well as your clients' needs. We will use this information to better service you. We will also use this information to assist you in becoming a sustainable service site, by providing best practices information and technical support based on your plan. This may also help you make decisions/policy on issues you may not have considered yet.

1. Site location and contact information for site. MFBN currently has Partner Agencies across the state. If you are unaware of an existing food program in your area, please contact MFBN to check and see if there is a program in your area. If there is a food program near your site, please consider partnership with existing food program(s) in your area. This may include actually combining your efforts with theirs, or working with staff members and volunteers from that organization and MFBN to make sure that your program can fill in gaps in service in the area. The MFBN Agency Relations Department can help to facilitate partnerships and work with you to develop a plan of services that will truly assist the community. **This Service Plan is primarily a way for your program to get started on the right foot. You will want to draft a Service Plan when you are ready to apply for partnership with MFBN.*
2. Program Information: Who will you serve and how. What food program model will you adhere to? Are there any restrictions for individuals receiving food? How many families do you anticipate serving? What type of area is this (rural, urban, etc.)? In order to help meet the needs of the people you serve, we suggest that you allow people to receive food at least two times per month and provide other community referrals.
3. Days and hours of operation. Please take into consideration days and hours of operation of other food programs in your area and try to avoid duplication. For pantries, we suggest that you be open for distribution a minimum of 4-6 hours per week, preferably on more than one day per week (evening and/or weekend hours are helpful for those people who work).
4. Financial information and plans to sustain your food program: Where does your financial support derive from? What resources (e.g. support from local businesses, churches, radio stations, private donors, schools, etc.) does your program have? How is it used? What are your expenses? Who does accounting/reporting and to whom? How will you maintain the food storage area? How will you sustain a steady food supply to your program?
5. Food Storage Area Description: How will food be stored/sorted and in what type of "structures"?

6. Food Distribution Process: What model will you use? How will clients actually get the food (fill out a form with choices, pick from shelves with or without any limits, be given a pre-selected assortment etc.) ? What record keeping, if any, will be involved? Client choice models are preferable as they are the most cost effective and serve people with the most dignity. Ask Agency Relations staff for more details about this method.
7. Site Staff/Volunteer positions: What are they?
8. Staff/Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities: Describe their duties.
9. Operations Timeline: Who will do what on a daily, weekly, and/or monthly basis etc.?

B. Application Requests and Procedures

1. Contact the Agency Relations Department at Montana Food Bank Network via email at agencyinfo@mfbn.org or by calling (800) 809-4752 to request an application packet.
2. Develop a **Service Plan** for your program that can be reviewed by staff at MFBN. (Please see the example below.)
3. Retain a copy of your 501(c)(3) or a parent organization's **501(c)(3)** to send to MFBN with your **Application**. If you are under the umbrella of another organization's 501(c)(3), please also submit a letter from that organization to MFBN stating agreement to act as your fiscal and legal agent.
4. Complete the **Application**; sign the **Partner Agency Agreement** and **Contract** and mail to MFBN.
5. Agree to allow an MFBN staff member to visit your site to conduct the first of the biennial **monitoring** visits to be conducted throughout the duration of your partnership with MFBN.
6. Wait for confirmation from the MFBN Agency Relations Department.

V. Sample Documents (Appendix)

- A. MFBN Sanitation Self-Evaluation Checklist**
- B. Client Choice Manual**
- C. Suggested Foods to Stock in Food Pantries**
- D. Sample Client Application and Intake Forms**
- E. The Bill Emerson Food Donation Act**
- F. Food Drive Manual**



SANITATION SELF-EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Attached is a copy of the Sanitation Self-Evaluation Inspection Checklist. This tool is intended to facilitate documented self-inspections as part of your sanitation program.

We recommend that you conduct regular management level self-inspections as part of your sanitation program. Although this form is lengthy, compliance with its content assures compliance with Feeding America's, local and federal regulations.

****Please note: this evaluation is written to accommodate all programs. Some of the information contained herein may not be applicable to your program.**

A. <u>OUTSIDE GROUNDS:</u>	YES	NO
1. Are the weeds and grass cut and kept at least two feet away from the edge of the building?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is the area free from any exposed trash, broken pallets, etc.?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are trash containers closed tightly, cleaned regularly, and picked up when full?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Is area free of standing water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do the gutters and drains work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are the building exterior and foundations free of any cracks or crevices that could allow rodent or insect entry?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Is the exterior free of any evidence of rodent burrows, insect nests, or webs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Are the roads, yards, and packing areas of such condition so as to prevent the generation of large quantities of dust that could contaminate exposed foods in the building?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Is the building free of any bird roosts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Are the outside bait stations (if needed)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. Closed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Locked	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Tamper Proof	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Is the dock area clean (look under dock plates and elevators)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Are docks “flushed” around perimeter to protect against rodent entry?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Is the food bank location sufficiently distant from any source of industrial pollution that could potentially contaminate food products?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. <u>MAINTENANCE OF WAREHOUSE</u>		
1. Are the walls, ceilings, window sills, and pipe chases free of any cracks or openings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Are there screens on all windows, doors, or vents used for ventilation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are dock doors closed when not in use OR screened when open?		
4. Are the floor and foundation free of any cracks that could harbor insects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Is the building free of any exposed pipes leaking or dripping condensation on products?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Is the roof free of leaks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	YES	NO
7. Do doors and windows seal tightly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Is there a heating system to prevent warehouse products from freezing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Is there an adequate ventilation system to keep warehoused products cool in the summer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Are warehouse temperatures checked and recorded at noon each day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Are there "No Smoking, Eating, or Drinking" signs in the warehouse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Are there signs in appropriate places (e.g. bathrooms, salvage areas, lunch, locker rooms, and food handling areas) that remind employees to wash hands before returning to work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Is no smoking in the warehouse enforced?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Is lighting in food processing areas safely shielded?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Is lighting in all work areas adequate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Power		
a. Has the local power company done a PCB inspection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Has equipment containing PCB been labeled and inventoried?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. <u>HOUSEKEEPING PRACTICES</u>		
1. Is there a written daily, weekly, and monthly, cleaning schedule?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Are product spills cleaned up when they occur?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are ripped bags taped; leaking, and other contaminated products removed and dumped?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do executive personnel inspect the warehouse regularly? (We recommend weekly)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Are freezer and refrigeration equipment cleaned on a regularly scheduled basis? (Monthly or more frequently if needed)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are coils and condensers checked and cleaned on a scheduled basis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Are compressors outside vented?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Are door seals cleaned regularly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Are there drains for condensation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Are drains cleaned regularly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Are the freezers and coolers free from any rips, tears, holes in the walls that allow for leaks or might lead to contamination of products from insulation materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	YES	NO
D. <u>STORAGE PRACTICES:</u>		
<u>General Storage:</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1. Are all products off the floor on pallets or shelves?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Are aisles wide enough to prevent unintentional contamination or accidental damage?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are pallets spaced to allow visual inspection and taping if damage should occur?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Are all pallets at least 18" away from wall? (We suggest a white strip be painted around inside perimeter)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Are products stacked a way from heaters, fans, vents, leaking pipes, stairways, or leaking skylights?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are non-food items stored away from food items?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Are products stacked to facilitate First In, First Out system?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Are pallets marked by date of receipt and "use by" date?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Are "use by" dates recorded and tracked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Are toxics stored separate from any food or personal use items?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Are all animal products stored on separate pallets away from all edible food?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Is stored product free of any evidence of compression damage or sag in lower stacks caused by overloading?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Are unclean or contaminated pallets stored separately from clean ones?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Are broken pallets disposed of or repaired promptly?		
15. Are all unused pallets stored away from food?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Are unused pallets fogged for insects regularly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Are unused pallets stacked flat?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Is there a procedure for cleaning pallets before reuse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Freezer/Refrigeration:</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Does freezer hold products at zero degrees or less?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Does the cooler hold products at 40 degrees?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Are there thermometers in the freezer and cooler?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

22. Are calibrated thermometers available to check freezer and cooler thermometers for accuracy?		
23. Are temperatures checked and logged at least twice daily?	YES	NO
24. Are freezers and refrigerators free of dripping or leaking ceilings or pipes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Is product stacked to allow adequate circulation around edges or sides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. <u>SAFETY RULES AND PRACTICES:</u>		
1. Are emergency numbers for fire, ambulance, police, poison control center, etc., posted?		
2. Are directions to nearest emergency room and insurance data readily available in case of emergency?		
3. Are lists of poisons, pesticides, etc., available?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Are all fire exits clearly marked?		
5. Are there maps showing fire exits (if needed)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are there an adequate number of fire extinguishers?		
7. Are the fire extinguishers:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. Fully charged?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Checked regularly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Are there semi-annual fire drills?		
9. Is there a fully stocked first aid kit available?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Are at least 2 staff persons trained in first aid?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Are persons operating machinery or equipment adequately trained?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Are there eye wash stations where battery chargers are in use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Are OSHA regulations available and posted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. <u>MAINTENANCE OF SANITARY FACILITIES:</u>		
1. Are the restrooms clean?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Are there paper towels or a working hot air drying system?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Is water at suitable temperature to sanitize hands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Is soap provided in dispensers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Are there “Wash Hands Before Returning to Work” signs in the restrooms?		
6. Do restroom doors close automatically?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Are there covered waste bins in the restrooms?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

YES NO

G. TRAINING IN SANITATION AND SAFETY PROCEDURES:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Are all employees trained in necessary warehouse practices required for maintenance of acceptable sanitary and safe operations? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Is appropriate signage employed to aid employees in maintaining sanitary and safe practices (such as “No Smoking, Eating, or Drinking”, “Wash Hands”, etc.)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Are America’s Second Harvest’s training materials readily available? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

H. PEST CONTROL:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. a. Is a professional pest control service used? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Is it effective? | | |
| 2. Is the warehouse free of evidence of infestation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. a. Are pest infestations promptly isolated? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Is evidence promptly cleaned up? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Is supervisory personnel alerted? | | |
| 4. Are any pesticides or rodenticides: | | |
| a. Approved for use in the warehouse? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Properly stored? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Are lists of pesticides and rodenticides readily available with labels or material safety data sheets (MSDS)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Are personnel who apply pesticides or rodenticides appropriately trained and licensed if required? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Are daily warehouse inspections made by food bank staff? | | |
| 7. Is a pest control log kept? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Are bags of grain and animal food inspected regularly for signs of infestation? | | |

	YES	NO
I. <u>GOOD RECEIVING PRACTICES:</u>		
1. a. Are incoming shipments checked for evidence of spoilage, odors, damaged containers, insects, rodents, excessive heat, freeze damage, water damage, mold or product leakage?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Is incoming freight inspection checklist used?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Is it initialed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. a. Are refrigerated or frozen shipments checked for temperature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Are these temperatures noted on receipt and BOL?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Are thermometer probes cleaned after each test?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are products like produce and bakery goods evaluated and properly stored upon receipt?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Are contaminated, infested, or molded products dumped immediately?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. a. Are damaged products isolated in a designated holding area until they can be evaluated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Are such products labeled "Hold for Evaluation"?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Are those evaluating these products appropriately trained?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Is frozen or refrigerated product moved from the dock to cold storage within 30 minutes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Are pallets inspected upon receipt for evidence of infestation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. <u>GOOD SHIPPING PRACTICES:</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1. Are trucks kept clean?		
2. Are frozen and refrigerated products transported at appropriate temperatures? (maximum of 0 degrees and 40 degrees respectively)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does this food bank have access to refrigerated or freezer trucks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. If not, do they have cold storage boxes for transporting refrigerated or frozen goods?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Is cold storage equipment kept clean?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	YES	NO
c. Are thermometers used during transportation of frozen or refrigerated products?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Are vehicles loaded so as to minimize the possibility of damage due to load shifting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. <u>COMPLIANCE WITH GOVERNMENTAL REGULATIONS:</u>		
1. Have the responsible local or state regulatory agencies reviewed this food bank?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have deficiencies identified in the inspection reports of such agencies been corrected?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Is food bank staff knowledgeable about federal, state, and local regulations which relate to food warehouse operations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. <u>SALVAGE HANDLING:</u>		
1. Are incoming salvage goods isolated by a partition, screens, or other effective means until evaluated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is salvage sorted in a separate room or isolated area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are unsorted salvage goods stored away from salvage sorting area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Is each pallet of unsorted salvage marked "Hold-Unsorted Salvage. Do Not Distribute"?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Are floors and walls in salvage sorting areas surfaced to allow easy cleaning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are all tables, sorting, and food contact surfaces covered with an impervious surface and easily cleaned?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Is there a separate hand-washing sink adjacent to sorting areas? (recommended)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Are there signs prohibiting eating, drinking, or smoking in salvage area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Are salvage sorters adequately trained?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Are guides for evaluating product posted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Are salvage handlers appropriately attired (e.g. no loose jewelry, garments)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Is salvage area adequately vented to prevent contamination from fumes, odors, vapors, or steam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Client Choice Manual

Client Choice Food Pantries: Models For Now And The Future

Most of us take for granted the choices we make when we go to the grocery store. We stroll down the aisles and pick from a wide variety of foods, some very nutritious and some empty calories; but the point is we are in control of what goes into the basket. This same concept can carry over into our pantries with a little bit of planning.

During the 1980's food pantries were springing up around the United States through a network of churches and community organizations. Food supplies were tight, donor networks were not in place, and USDA commodities were in short supply. The focus for pantries was on rules and restrictions and limiting the amount of food distributed. As a result, many pantries fell into the practice of pre-bagging groceries¹ for clients from a posted list.

The old models don't fit the lifestyles of clients today and as a result, new ways of doing business have to be found. Here are a few examples of some problems resulting from running a no choice pantry:

- A young Mom is given a box of powdered milk that she doesn't need or want. No one asked her if she is on WIC.²
- A widowed man is given a sack of flour that he promptly tosses into the alley behind the pantry. Is he ungrateful? No, he simply does not know how to cook or use the flour and he was never given a choice about what went into his food bag.
- A family could have used two bags of flour, but they were never asked and received the standard one bag per family.
- A woman from another country is given flavored gelatin that she has never seen before; her children eat the powder. She would have preferred a bag of rice, but no one asked.
- An illiterate man could not read the word "corn" on a generic label. There was no picture on the label, so he threw the can away.
- An older woman with high blood pressure, diabetes and no dentures is given a bag with canned vegetables, heavy syrup fruit and snacks she cannot chew. Most of her food bag went to a neighbor.

¹ Pre-bagging groceries is also referred to as prepackaging food packages.

² The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) administered by USDA-FNS provides eligible participants milk, as well as other foods.

No matter what the income level, people need to be able to select their own foods and have control over what they eat. For two decades pantry administrators selected food they thought their clients needed in a healthy and balanced diet. Here are some of the main issues associated with the pre-bagging method:

- Often pre-bagged food is not the food most available from the food bank that supplies the pantries.
- Greater numbers of empty calorie foods such as sugared drinks and chips or other snack items are left unused at the food bank, unavailable to pantry clients and eventually as part of a land fill.
- This practice adds to the operational cost of the food bank and is a detriment to the environment.
- Food pantries are spending valuable resources to purchase foods that clients may not want or need, given a choice.
- Pantry bags that are done in advance tend to be very much the same. All the bags usually contain canned tuna fish, peanut butter, powdered milk, a pound of pasta, one can of vegetables, and one can of fruit. No two families have the same food needs or desires, so why should their bags be identical?

Let's take a tour of our local pantries and see what the client sees...

Susan is a single mother with four children. She works a full time job where she earns minimum wage. After rent and child care, there isn't much money left. Susan must visit the local pantry once a month out of necessity, not because of mis-budgeting her money.

The pantry Susan visits is very traditional and only opens one afternoon a week. Since she works during the day, coming to the pantry requires her to leave work a half-hour early once a month to wait in line and receive food. This pantry allows clients to come only once a month and every time Susan visits the pantry, she is required to bring a social security card, proof of income, proof of residence, children's birth certificates and rental expenses.

When Susan arrives at the pantry, she must be cleared at the check-in desk, and then quickly is shuttled into a line where she is handed two bags of groceries for her family. After waiting in a 20-minute line, she is inside the pantry for about 3 minutes and her interaction with the pantry volunteers is nearly non-existent. When she gets home, she finds the traditional items in her bag:

1 box of cereal
1 carton of dry milk

- 1 bag of rice
- 1 box of pasta
- 1 jar of spaghetti sauce
- 3 cans of tuna
- 1 can of peaches
- 1 jar of peanut butter
- 1 box of donuts

Susan is happy to receive some foods, but at the same time she wonders how these two bags of groceries are supposed to feed her family for the month. She also knows her children will not eat the tuna because they don't like the taste of the oil packed brand she receives each month. Perhaps she can trade the cans with her neighbor for something else her family likes.

Barbara is another single mother with several children and a low-paying job. Barbara's story is very much like Susan's except Barbara has the advantage of traveling to a "Client Choice" food pantry. At Barbara's food pantry, she can come as often as she needs food. Some months she comes 2-3 times, other months she won't come at all, and since the pantry is open a variety of days and hours, she never has to worry that she can't get to the pantry. As a TEFAP choice pantry in Indiana, Barbara is only required to sign her name and self-declare her income eligibility. She indicates the number in the household when she visits the pantry so workers know how much food she needs. After a quick check-in, she is then given a couple of empty bags and escorted by a volunteer through the aisles of food. Her options include tomato products, condiments, soups, ice cream, bread, pastries, cake mixes, hair products, and cleaning supplies. While choosing the food items, Barbara shares the children's school pictures, as well as recipes, with the pantry volunteers. When Barbara comes home, she realizes she wasn't expecting to come home with shampoo and salad dressing, but now she knows she will be able to afford milk for the children's cereal. Barbara has come to view her food pantry and the wonderful volunteers almost as an extension of her family.

After reading the two women's stories, you might wonder why all pantries don't switch over to client choice. In Indiana, all pantries that participate in TEFAP are required to offer "Client Choice" pantries. Sadly, some pantries have chosen to discontinue use of TEFAP items rather than make the changes needed to become a choice pantry.

Next, we will examine some of the barriers (real or perceived) to becoming a client choice pantry. After reading some positive stories about making various changes, perhaps your pantry will be able to use some of the ideas for improvement. Or your pantry may consider forming a partnership with smaller pantries to strengthen your community in its fight against hunger.

Overview of the Issues

What are the related issues connected with changing to a client choice pantry?

- Will this change the hours of our pantry operation?
- How will the food pantry volunteer's role change?
- How will choice effect the nutrition quality of our food bags?
- Our pantry only has limited space, how can choice work for us?
- Why should we offer any choice for clients? Shouldn't they be grateful to receive anything?
- How long will it take to process clients using choice?
- How does choice work when you also give away USDA commodities?
- How does choice help the client?
- How does choice help our pantry operation?
- What if we are giving away too much food too fast? We may run out and not have enough food for later clients.
- Is there anything special we can do for seniors using choice?

Issues with Operations and Answers

Learning from other food pantry operations: the issues that have been raised and the solutions that have been found.

Hours Of Operation

In the early 80's when many pantries were just getting started, hours of operations tended to revolve around the availability of volunteers. Many workers volunteering today are retired and want to work very limited hours during the day. There may be limited days of the week and no weekend or evening hours of operation for some food pantries. These hours may not meet the needs of today's clients.

Today, most food pantries are serving more families or single working mothers. The hours of operation become very important to the families using the pantry because

they may have to choose between coming to the pantry or losing income by taking off work to come during traditional hours of operation.

Most pantries don't want to post hours of operation because it is such a struggle to maintain consistent hours. Posting hours on the building is a requirement for pantries using TEFAP items. This posting is usually accomplished, but more could be done to make the surrounding community aware of the hours of operation, such as publishing hours in the newspaper or as a free public announcement on the radio. Even if pantries are only able to be open limited hours or days, perhaps looking at late afternoon or early evening hours can help clients out of the dilemma of losing food or income.

A review of operating times for pantries around Indiana reveals a disappointing disproportion of pantries open only during morning hours during the week. This strategy is fine for pantries working primarily with seniors, but not for working families. This is an area all pantries should strive to improve. Here are three pantries in the spotlight that have adjusted their hours to be "Family Friendly".

FORREST MANOR MULTI-SERVICE CENTER AND FOOD PANTRY

This food pantry located in Indianapolis is only able to open its pantry two days per week, but one day is family friendly 10 am-8 pm and the other day is primarily geared to seniors with morning am hours.

LA CASE DE AMSTED YOUTH COMMUNITY CENTER

This food pantry is located in South Bend and has very good hours to accommodate those who need to come in early afternoon hours or those who need later hours due to their work schedule. They are open two days per week from 1-6:30 pm.



THE BRADY LANE CHURCH OF CHRIST FOOD PANTRY

This food pantry is located in Lafayette and as shown by their clearly printed sign, they are open a morning and an evening each month.

Hours of operation are influenced more by availability of volunteers rather than using client choice. Since implementation of client choice has been shown to improve morale of volunteers, the opportunity for enhanced hours may become feasible.

The Role Of The Volunteer

As a pantry changes to client choice, the role of the volunteer is sure to evolve as well. Many pantries operating under a more traditional system use almost "invisible" volunteers, meaning they have little-to-no-contact with the pantry clients. There may be a special "bagging day" when the pantry is not open, but the volunteers work to make up as many identical bags as possible.

There are the trips for other volunteers to the grocery store to buy needed items for the identical bags and lots of food handling and sore backs at the end of the day. Much of this type of food handling work is unnecessary using "client choice", because the items don't have to be pre-bagged.

Volunteers can take on a much more personal role toward clients and spend their time with such activities as helping someone with a physical disability through the pantry, or helping someone who can't read to choose the foods they want. The main volunteer role changes from packing food bags to host or hostess and the friendly atmosphere of the pantry is more welcoming to the client.

Trips to a food pantry are painful experiences for most people. The feeling that you are shopping rather than receiving a handout is not lost on the client and choice helps ease their embarrassment of coming to a pantry.

The types of training offered to volunteers may change, as their roles become more client centered. One suggestion offered by several pantries is for volunteers to go through some type of sensitivity training or a "real life" exercise looking at living on minimum wage in today's world.

Building a varied volunteer base is important to any successful pantry operation. If volunteers don't come to you, look for them! Here are some ideas for building your volunteer base:

- Many big companies have programs that allow employees to volunteer a day or two a year at company expense. This may give you a year around supply of one-day volunteers, although your training needs would be very different.
- Purdue Cooperative Extension workers may be available to work with their programs within the pantry setting. Workers in EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Program) are often able to come and talk with pantry clients, use pantry foods to prepare sample recipes and be available to answer food related questions and sign up clients for in home nutrition education.
- Student groups often are looking for places to earn "service hours" they need for school credit.

- The court system is another place to enlist people seeking a location to serve community service sentences.
- Another idea is to offer clients a chance to give back to the pantry by volunteering a day every month. This may give you enough additional volunteers to allow the pantry to be open an extra evening or weekend day.

SPOTLIGHT ON AN AGENCY

St. Vincent de Paul Client Choice Pantry of Indianapolis does a good job preparing their volunteers for their client-centered role in the choice pantry.



Meet Jerry McKenan, volunteer St. Vincent de Paul Client Choice Pantry located on Spann Avenue in Indianapolis. Jerry has volunteered for several years and states the main reason he enjoys volunteering is because the operation runs smoothly and there is great volunteer training. Here Mr. McKenan helps a client with a shopping cart.

How Long Will It Take To Serve Clients Using Choice?

Time seems to be one of the big drawbacks on the mind of people thinking about switching to choice. Coordinators picture long lines of slow people taking hours to choose a few items. The amount of people that can be served at one time does depend on space and the way the operation is streamlined. Small pantries may only be able to let 3 people shop at one time. They may be able to help about 25 people in the usual two-hour time frame they are open. In larger areas, 300 people can be helped in two hours.

At the St. Vincent de Paul Client Choice Pantry of Indianapolis the check-in can be done quickly.



At this client choice pantry, clients are issued tickets based on family size for use in the pantry. The tickets are for different food items. Tickets are redeemed at the cashier stand.

The real saving of time is achieved when you consider the time usually spent in preparing 25 identical bags. This process, including shopping, may take volunteers 3-4 hours of behind the scenes time that could be used to open the pantry another day to provide choice. Most pantries find the pantry atmosphere to be much more relaxed when they use their prep or bag time as open door choice time. The bonus is more time for friendly interaction with clients rather than hurrying to just hand out bags and move to the next person.

Nutrition Concerns

“How will client choice affect the nutrient quality of our food bags?”

This particular issue may be the single hardest change for most pantries. Almost since the inception of food pantries, coordinators and volunteers both like the concept of a nutritionally balanced food bag. The idea is if someone's resources are limited, shouldn't they only be receiving the most nutrient dense items available? Shouldn't every bag contain dried beans, and powdered milk? Shouldn't every person learn to make biscuit mix from commodity flour to save money?

In reality, very few families of any income level choose only nutrient dense foods with each meal. Watching the checkout line at any grocery store for only a few minutes will reveal how many highly processed, high fat, high sugar, high sodium items go into the average American cart. It would seem very unlikely that the client coming to a food pantry would select only nutrient dense foods if they were given a choice.



Not all of these items top the list for high nutrition, but families of all income levels should be able to choose them as part of a nutritious diet. The Position Paper of The American Dietetic Association says it best, “It is the position of the American Dietetic Association that all foods can fit into a healthful eating style. The ADA strives to communicate healthful eating messages to the public that emphasize the total diet, or overall pattern of food eaten, rather than any one food or meal.”

Giving a choice means developing a trust that the clients will choose a wide variety of foods that are right for their families from all the food groups including the Fats, Oils, and Sweets group. It may be hard at first to see sugared drinks and fatty snack items go into a food bag, but the paradox is, these foods may actually help the family's overall nutrition by freeing up other resources such as food stamps for more nutrient dense items at the grocery store. Typically, snack and drink items are some of the highest dollar items in retail, so getting these items at little to no cost from the food pantry will boost the family's buying power with the resources available.

Cooking methods have changed dramatically over the past 10-15 years. More convenience items are the norm and should also be included as part of the foods selection whenever they are available.

Picking up discarded items like the cans of waxed beans or sacks of flour from the alley behind the pantry after distribution day should remove any doubt that good nutrition cannot be forced upon a client. Instead, lets look at what several pantries have done to encourage client choice plus some gentle nutrition education.

MOTHER HUBBARD'S CUPBOARD

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard in Bloomington, IN uses food label information right on product shelves to let clients know if a food is a good source of vitamin A or iron for example. They also point out items that are lower in sodium for those clients that have special diet concerns. Mother Hubbard's Cupboard also offers healthy recipes and sometimes samples of new or unusual items to encourage clients to taste and try healthy foods. Mother Hubbard's also has the advantage of nutrition students from the nearby university. These volunteers are eager to assist clients and answer their nutrition concerns.

Space Concerns

"Our pantry only has limited space, how can choice work for us?"

Space can be an issue for many pantries. At first glance, a client choice pantry might appear to need bountiful space, but in reality, the space you currently use to store and pre-bag food can easily be used for client choice. Here is an example of a pantry that made good use of small space.

Meet Judy Dixon, pantry coordinator for the Pike County Outreach Council of Churches, Inc, of Waverly, Ohio. Judy shares her experiences with managing a pantry space just 10 X 15 feet!

"Our space is really small, but we have managed to still make room for everything we need", says Judy. "About one third of the space is reserved for a reception area. Generally, the intake is done in this area."

In the actual pantry area along the back wall, we have floor to ceiling shelving units stocked with fruit and soup, beans, some odds and ends, and the commodities. In the middle of the floor space, we have a refrigerator and two freezers, loaves of bread, canned meat, and any fresh produce items. Along the front wall, we have more shelving units stocked with vegetables, pastas, sauces, drinks, and crackers, peanut butter and breakfast items.

Once the intake is completed, a volunteer escorts the client into the pantry area. Items that will not be counted in the family's monthly allotment are offered to the client first. This saves some last minute switching around. Then, the client can choose which (if any) foods they desire from each food group category. For instance, they are offered any 4 cans of vegetables or they may decide to only take one can this month, because they have plenty at home.

Judy states they have a basic number of items that everyone receives, the number of items increases depending on the number of people in the family.

"We have a small table in the middle of the pantry where chosen food is placed. The client is provided sacks to bag the groceries. Some older people bring in their own two wheeled grocery cart, and a volunteer can help them push it around the pantry to load up with chosen items." continues Judy.

"We do have a small storage area just off our pantry where we keep overflow items. The shelves are stocked from the storage area as needed."

The choice pantry allows families the dignity of choosing their own food. Since families choose what they like, they do not throw away good food. The clients do not take items if they already have them so Judy notes the pantry saves money, and it complements what the clients may have at home.



With just 10 X 15 feet of space, Judy Dixon, pantry coordinator for the Pike County Outreach Council of Churches, Inc., of Waverly, OH, describes their newly organized client choice pantry, "Space is tight, but we manage!"

How Do We Offer Choice To Clients?

Choice does not mean the pantry doors are swung open and anyone can take whatever they want. There is still the same limitation of volunteer time and the amount of food that can be gathered for use in the pantry.

How to set up the pantry and get going with choice is a roadblock to many pantries. It is often thought that choice will be much more work, more expensive, and just too much trouble to make the switch. Once observed in action, however opinions change in a hurry. Here are some nuts and bolts examples of how to switch to choice.

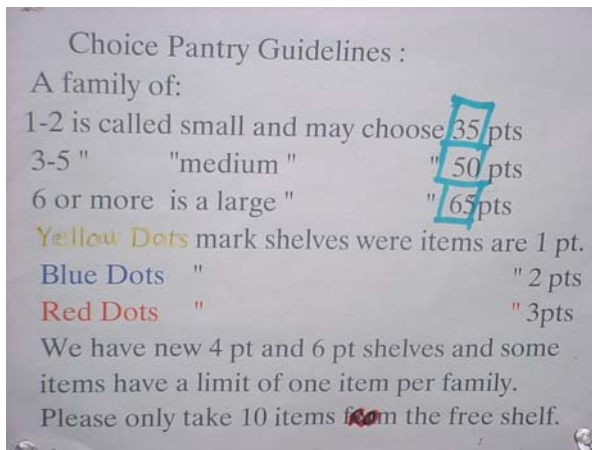
THE POINT SYSTEM

The Point System is based on what the items would cost if you actually had to buy them at the local grocery store. Items are colored coded for the determined point value using inexpensive dot stickers in three different colors. The point values are listed below

- \$.50-\$1.00 1 point Red sticker
- \$1.05- \$2.00 2 points Blue sticker
- \$2.05- \$3.00 3 points Yellow sticker

Then a total dollar amount for each family is determined by pricing a regular pyramid food box in amounts that would have been bagged for that size family. If a regular box of bagged food had a value of \$40.00, then the family would be able to spend 40 points in the pantry.

The point values may vary a little on products such as over-the-counter medicines or personal care products that would be very expensive to buy. Some pantries label these product as 1 point items, but set a limit of three to make sure the bulk of points goes toward food.



Sample posting of a Point System from the Pike County Outreach Council of Churches, Inc, of Waverly, OH.

THE POUND SYSTEM

The pound system is very similar to the point method, but instead of price, food is distributed by calculating the pounds in each food group category. For example, a family of four would be allowed:

- 2 pounds of meat of either fresh or canned, as available.
- 1 pound of meat alternates such as peanut butter or eggs or beans.
- 5 pounds of veggies and fruits (fresh, frozen or canned).
- 4 pounds of bread group items such as cereal, rice, macaroni, or pasta.
- 2 pounds from the fats, oils, and sweets group such as cooking oil, sugar, snack items, sweet drinks, or baking extras such as chocolate chips.
- 2 pounds of dairy products such as powdered milk, canned milk, or yogurt (if available).
- Items that spoil easily such as refrigerated meat, produce, or bread are given away without counting toward total pounds allowed. This helps to reduce spoilage and keep dumpster costs down for the pantry.
- The family is allowed their choice of three non-food items such as personal grooming items, diapers, or over-the-counter medicines. These items do not count toward the total pounds allowed to the family.

This method allows for seasonal changes in food supply. If for example, meats are in short supply, determine what each family receives by dividing what you have on hand by the average number of families you serve. Scale back when necessary. The meat allotment for this example might drop down to 1/2 pound per family instead of two pounds. But, since every family will choose different things, you do not have to worry about having 200 containers of peanut butter because you serve 200 families. It is highly unlikely that every family will want peanut butter.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS METHOD

This is a very easy method for pantries to use when they are first switching over to choice. Each family is given a total number of items to choose. There are no constraints except for the available amount of food. For instance, shelf tags may read "No more than 3 meat items per family" in order to keep enough stock available for the average number of families served by the pantry.

Here are some average item numbers offered by pantries using the total number of items method

35 items to small family
50 items to a medium family
75 items to a large family

This method is uncomplicated for volunteers because they only have to count the total number of items for the client to bag. Although clients have complete freedom to choose the foods they want, this setting is ideal for volunteers to provide nutrition education through gentle suggestions of food selection.

Often foods are not chosen because they are not familiar to the client, or they do not know how to prepare them in a way their family will like. Samples of prepared foods for tasting along with the recipes are great ways to get people to try new foods. Most people really enjoy discussing recipes and food preparation. New volunteers may find this is a great icebreaker or a way to get to know clients better. Some clients may bring in family favorite recipes to copy and share at the pantry. Those recipes can showcase both the volunteer and the product by using samples or taste testing or naming the recipe after the volunteer, i.e., "Jenny's green beans".

Other sources for nutrition education include either FNP (Family Nutrition Program) or EFNEP (the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program). An educator from either program may be able to prepare food for demonstration and also sign clients up for in-home classes on shopping and budgeting.

If a volunteer prepares food for demonstration, be sure to contact your local health department for help with food safety issues and regulations.

CHOICE ON PAPER

The last method (and least preferred) method for moving to choice is to give clients a list of items and let them choose on paper. The volunteer then pulls these items off the shelf and bags them for the client.

There are several disadvantages to this method, especially if the client has trouble reading or has English as a second language. Choice is designed to help with a flow of many different kinds of food. If there is limited selection of items, the list will surely often be out of date. If the client circles green beans and there aren't any, then either the volunteer chooses an alternate for the client or extra time is taken to ask what else they would like. Most people prefer to physically touch and choose the foods they want rather than pick from a list.

SAMPLE LIST

Bread items
(Circle 3)

Crackers
Tortillas
Cereal
Rice
Macaroni and Cheese
Chips or Popcorn

Protein items
(Circle 3)

Spam
Chicken and noodles
Stew
Tuna
Peanut Butter
Eggs

Canned fruits/vegetables/juices
(Circle 4)

Green Beans
Orange juice
Grape juice
Tomato juice
Tomatoes
Beets
Peaches
Pears

Free items
(Circle 3)

Bread
Cold Medicine
Soap
Sweet or pastry
Snack items
(Diapers, if available)



Easy to read signs ensure that families are careful with limited items.

Client Choice and TEFAP

“How does client choice work when you also give away USDA commodities?”

The management of TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) has changed in many ways since these programs were started in Indiana. Most senior citizens of any income level remember the great food give away down at the local fire station during the 1980's. The food used for this type of mass distribution has instead evolved into an important food supply for pantries serving Indiana's poorest families.

Commodity foods previously stood out with a trademark black and white USDA label. Now producers are using regular food labels on USDA products, making commodities identical to any other donated foods. The commodity foods should not be stored separately. The only exception example is listed below:

- The pantry would regularly service people that would not qualify for TEFAP (this would include those that refuse to sign a self -declaration form) but would still be serviced by the pantry.

Client choice will also help USDA foods go further in the pantry setting. Many families will not choose the foods, leaving them for others who do want them. It is also helpful when very limited quantities of a particular item are available, but there is not enough to go around for all the families.

Many pantries assign a point value to foods based on cost of the item. USDA foods are not given a point value, and are given over and above the dollar amount given to a family when they shop in the food pantry. This makes the most of USDA items and helps them become a benefit to the client's choice of foods.

How Does Choice Help The Client?

First and foremost, choice creates an atmosphere of dignity for the client. Whether the trip to the pantry is a once a year or once a week occurrence, there are food supply issues in the family. This most basic of needs causes worry and embarrassment that can either be magnified or minimized depending on the style of pantry operation.

Individuals visiting a food pantry generally have little choice in many areas of their life. Housing, transportation, clothing, and especially donated foods leave little to the imagination. Add to this situation public criticism about using food stamps to buy snack items or a birthday cake or the notion that everyone at a pantry should be happy with a box of powdered milk for their children to drink. How easy it is to create a little joy and self-confidence in the ability to choose one's own foods by using a choice pantry.

Choice pantry shopping has the unique ability to create a practice shopping experience for the client. Many people of all income levels waste precious food dollars by not knowing how to comparison-shop. Even though the client is not using actual dollars, he is using points, pounds, or items, and must budget them in the same way as money. This allows the experience of choosing or putting back selected items on the shelf, because it does not fit in the shopping budget. This experience can translate to better use of money or food stamps in the grocery store.

Allowing free access to food through the food pantry gives the client another type of skill for choosing foods that complement those foods already at home. For example, given choice, the client may think, "I already have a jar of spaghetti sauce at home so I will pick a box of spaghetti to go with it." In a pre-prepared sack, the bread item may have been oatmeal or cereal that the client did not need nor want. The planning process to make the most of what you have at home does not happen when you are not given a choice.

Having a steady food supply may help to control binge eating. This type of behavior may take place when there are food insecurity problems in the household, leading to overweight and obesity. If a family doesn't know where and when their next meal will come, they may overeat when food is available. If families know that the pantry is always available, it may help them curtail this survivor eating pattern.

Using a choice pantry gives the client a chance to try new foods without worry of wasting money. They may not have tasted such foods as asparagus, pumpkin, wheat crackers or soymilk. Shoppers with limited resources are reluctant to try these new foods for fear their family won't like them, and feel they have thrown money away.

Concerns About Keeping the Pantry Shelves Stocked

"What if we are giving away too much food too fast? We may run out and not have enough food for all our clients."

Generally speaking, pantry organizers love well-stocked shelves and constantly worry about having enough food to cover the days when the pantry is open. If you are making the change to a choice pantry, controlling the flow of the food supply is probably uppermost in your mind. Free choice does not mean emptying out your shelves with every food basket day. In fact, most pantry operators have found that choice does not effect their budget or food supply at all. That is because they do not have to worry about running to the grocery store and paying retail to buy those identical items for every person.



The client choice pantry shelf above shows that client choice does not mean emptying out your shelves with every food basket day. Most pantry operators have found that choice does not negatively influence their budget or food supply. Much of this is due to not having to worry about running to the grocery store and paying retail to buy those identical items for every person's pre-bagged sack. As nice as full shelves look, remember that food on the shelves can not feed the hungry.

By tracking both the average number of clients and the average donated amount of a given food (for example, meat products), you can easily determine the amount each family can choose, e.g., a family of four can choose four meat or meat alternates of their choice.

Another decision is whether to open your doors on the days you would have normally had volunteers work to make up food bags. The additional day will help the client flow so there won't be a huge crush of people on any one day. It will also give the pantry a more relaxed atmosphere where there is time for the clients to choose their foods without feeling rushed. More importantly, there will be time for the volunteers to interact with clients on a more personal level, establish relationships, and squeeze in a little nutrition education with casual conversation.

Seniors and Choice

"Is there anything special we can do for seniors using choice?"

If you ask the average person on the street "Who do you think uses food pantries?" the reply will most likely be "Welfare Moms who are not married with lots of children". On the contrary, seniors are now the most likely group to use pantries. Most pantries report over 30% of the users to be seniors (mainly older women who have become widowed) and this follows the most recent population counts that show seniors will soon be the largest demographic group in the nation.

Other seniors using pantries are those assuming the financial responsibility for their grandchildren. States one grandmother from Indianapolis, "***I make \$7.00 an hour, and with all my bills and my car payments and food and clothes and babysitter for my 2 young grandkids, and because I can't get food stamps, I go to the food pantry.***"

Seniors may need some special consideration when planning a choice pantry. A choice pantry can be especially helpful to someone trying to plan a special diet around high blood pressure, cholesterol issues, or diabetes. In addition, extra thought may need to go into the physical space at the pantry to make allowances for physical impairments brought about by aging. Here are some examples of typical problems:

- Items are placed too high on shelves for someone with limited range of arm motion.
- Items are placed too low for someone with back problems or balance issues.
- Baskets or carts may be needed, or at least a table to set items on while choosing grocery selections.
- Special tools such as a grab claw may be useful for items placed high on shelves.
- Frozen items may be preferred over canned items due to high sodium content of canned items, and ease of opening the container. (Joint and hand problems due to arthritis may make using a can opener difficult.)
- Frozen items also allow less food waste for a person living alone as a single serving can be taken out of the package and the rest returned to the freezer.
- Seniors may need assistance to their car or just walking around the pantry.
- Single serving containers are preferred whenever possible to help prevent food waste.

So many older Americans struggle monthly to make ends meet. States a woman over age 65 years from Lafayette, Indiana, "**Because we don't have the money... food prices have gone up and the food pantry food is nice**". Other considerations for seniors struggling with finances include:

- Offering personal care products at no additional points such as denture cleaner or hair-care products.
- Pet foods should be offered if at all possible since many seniors who live alone will sacrifice valuable food dollars at the grocery store to make sure a beloved pet receives the food it needs.
- Offering some over the counter medicines at one or no points to help conserve grocery dollars for food.
- Provide information to seniors at pantry sites about hot meal sites for seniors, home delivered meals, and free or reduced priced prescription drug programs. These are all excellent opportunities for the pantry volunteers to interact with the seniors visiting the food pantry and form lasting relationships with the clients while making a real difference in the quality of their lives.



Offering personal care items and over-the-counter medicines at no points for seniors.

- Volunteers who make deliveries can easily have an extra box or cooler along with alternate foods to quickly trade apple sauce for peaches, green beans for corn, or a different canned meat. These small changes can really boost the nutrition for an older person whose appetite is lagging or certain foods do not taste good to them. It is best to carry along the extra foods rather than try a paper and pencil method. Seniors, like most of us, enjoy the ability to choose among actual foods.

Conclusion

After looking over all the issues connected with choice and reading about how other pantries have solved their problems, perhaps you have gained some insight on how to either make the change to choice or how to refine your existing operation to run more smoothly. With a little effort, your pantry can be part of the solution of how to feed the hungry and at the same time restore dignity to the human condition.

Highlighted Agencies

1. St. Vincent de Paul Client Choice Pantry, Indianapolis, Indiana
2. Brady Lane Church of Christ Food Pantry, Lafayette, Indiana
3. Forrest Manor Multi-Service Center Food Pantry, Indianapolis, Indiana
4. La Casa de Amsted Youth Community Center, South Bend, Indiana
5. Mother Hubbard's Cupboard, Bloomington, Indiana
6. Pike County Outreach Council of Churches, Waverly, Ohio

Suggested Foods to Stock in Food Pantries

The following is a suggested guideline for the types of food to keep on hand in a food pantry:

Baby foods & infant formula
Canned meats or stews
Cereals, oats or grits
Milk (dry or evaporated)
Coffee & tea
Pancake mix
Cooking oils or solid shortening
Pasta (macaroni, spaghetti, etc.)
Cornmeal or cornbread mix
Peanut butter
Crackers Potatoes (fresh or instant)
Diet foods (low in sugar or salt)
Pork & beans
Dried beans, peas or lentils
Rice
Flour Salt & sugar
Fruits (canned or dehydrated)
Soups (canned or dehydrated)
Honey, syrup or jelly
Spaghetti sauce or tomato sauce
Juices (canned or dehydrated)
Tuna or canned chicken
Mayonnaise, mustard or catsup
Canned vegetables

If refrigeration or freezer space is available, you can add:

Bread	Fresh fruits
Cheese	Fresh vegetables
Eggs	Frozen juices
Margarine	Meats, poultry or fish

Suggested Non-foods to Stock in Food Pantries:

Soap & Shampoo
Diapers & sanitary napkins
Toothpaste & denture cleanser
Detergent & cleaning supplies
Toilet paper
Foil or film wrap

Have plenty of grocery bags on hand and some boxes. Bags with handles are better for people who will need to carry them for a distance.

Preparing Emergency Food Boxes

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

ONE PERSON TWO PEOPLE

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

THREE PEOPLE FOUR PEOPLE

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

1 Box pancake mix
 1 Bottle cooking oil
 1 Bottle pancake syrup
 5 Lbs. potatoes
 1 Dozen eggs
 1 Lb. flour
 1 Lb. sugar
 1 Lb. dried beans

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Basic suggested menus using this guideline are as follows:

BREAKFAST

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

LUNCH

1 can vegetable soup	1 Apple, 1 orange
peanut butter sandwich	milk
tuna salad sandwich	crackers
2 slices cheese	

DINNER

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

Menu for Christmas and Thanksgiving Baskets

Food Item	Quantity
Turkey	1 10-12 lb.
Green vegetables	2 cans
Yellow/Red vegetables	2 cans
Soup	2 cans
Fruit	2 cans
Cranberry sauce	1 can
Pork and beans	2 cans
Bread	1 pkg.
Dessert	1 pkg.
Crackers	1 box
Cereal	1 box
Instant Potatoes	1 pkg.
Dressing	1 pkg.
Pasta/Rice	1 pkg. 6-C

PROGRAM NAME FAMILY/INDIVIDUAL INTAKE FORM

YOUR LOGO
HERE

X

Please take a moment to answer all questions so that we may serve you better. We are required to obtain the following information from our clients for funding and reporting purposes; however, we will serve anyone in need regardless of ethnicity, race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability or political beliefs. This information is confidential and will not have a negative effect on services provided to you.

SECTION A

CLIENT DOCUMENTATION *(Please print clearly)*

New Client: YES NO Existing Client: YES NO Household ID # _____
(Office Use Only)

Today's Date _____

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Type of ID:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's License | <input type="checkbox"/> Valid passport | <input type="checkbox"/> State identification card |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth Certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> Military ID | <input type="checkbox"/> Employee identification card |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Valid fishing license | <input type="checkbox"/> Valid hunting license | <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage license |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Permanent resident card | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration Services (USCIS) documents | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship or Naturalization certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> Official school record or transcript | |

*Social Security Cards are not an acceptable form of identification.

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Type of address verification:

- A current piece of postmarked mail Fishing license Hunting license

*Addresses on Driver's Licenses are not always a reliable source for current address information.

SECTION B

HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION *(Please answer all questions)*

Total # of individuals living in your household: _____

Total # of adults ages 18 to 55 in your household: _____

Total # of seniors over age 55 in your household: _____

Total # of children under age 18 in your household: _____

**I certify all statements are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and that, as of today children under age 18 are living in my household and will benefit from services provided by this organization.*

APPLICANT SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

How would you best describe your employment status? *(Please check all that apply)*

- Employed Unemployed Retired Disabled Student

Is this your first time receiving food this year? YES NO

What is your estimated total monthly income? \$ _____

(Office Use Only – If client is eligible for TEFAP, please complete pages 3 and 4 of this application.)

SECTION C

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Which best describes your household? (Please check one)

- Single parent, HOH (female) Single parent, HOH (male)
- 2+Adults w/children 2 parent family
- Single Adult(s) Married (no children)

Optional – How would you best describe yourself? (This section is optional and used solely for funding purposes, it will not affect services you receive today.)

- African American Asian American Bi-Racial Caucasian/White
- Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander Hispanic Multi-Racial Native American
- Other

SECTION D

GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE (Please check all that apply)

Are you homeless? YES NO

Are you disabled? YES NO

Please check all public benefit programs you are currently participating in:

- SNAP (former food stamp program) WIC
- LIEAP (energy assistance) TANF
- Section 8 (housing assistance) Medicaid/Medicare
- CHIP (Children’s Health Insurance) School Meals (Free & Reduced Priced Lunches)
- Child Care Assistance (Subsidized Daycare)
- Senior Commodities Job Service
- Unemployment Insurance Farmer’s Market Coupons
- Social Security Earned Income Credit

Would you like more information about any of the public benefit programs listed above?

- YES NO

SECTION E

DIETARY NEEDS (Please check all that apply)

Does anyone in your household have special dietary needs such as:

- Low salt Low sugar Diabetic Lactose intolerant Vegetarian
- Pregnant Taking certain medications
- Food allergies (please specify) _____
- Other (please specify) _____

_____ (Food Bank Name)
TEFAP FOOD BANK APPLICATION

Client Number: _____ Recertification required by: _____

NAME _____ PHONE _____
 ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

ID VERIFIED TYPE OF ID: Drivers License Birth Certificate Other

FOOD BANK APPLICANTS MUST CERTIFY THEIR TOTAL HOUSEHOLD GROSS INCOME; TOTAL INCOME MUST BE UNDER 150% OF FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL GUIDELINES TO RECEIVE THE EMERGENCY FOOD ALLOCATION PROGRAM (TEFAP) COMMODITIES.

TOTAL NUMBER OF MEMBERS IN HOUSEHOLD			
MEMBER NAME	INCOME	SOURCE	UNDER 18
			Y / N
			Y / N
			Y / N
			Y / N
			Y / N
			Y / N
			Y / N
			Y / N
			Y / N
			Y / N
			Y / N
			Y / N
Total Income of Members listed on back of form			
TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME			(Check current TEFAP income table)

CERTIFICATION: I certify I have included all household members and all sources of income. I certify all statements are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and that, as of today my household lives in the area served by this MONTANA Food Bank Program. I understand making a false certification may result in having to pay the State for the value of the food improperly issued to me and may subject me to criminal prosecution under State and Federal Law.

APPLICANT SIGNATURE _____ **DATE** _____

IN ACCORDANCE WITH FEDERAL LAW AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE POLICY, THIS INSTITUTION IS PROHIBITED FROM DISCRIMINATING ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX, AGE OR DISABILITY. (NOT ALL PROHIBITED BASIS APPLY TO ALL PROGRAMS.)

TO FILE A COMPLAINT OF DISCRIMINATION, WRITE USDA, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS, ROOM 326-W, WHITTEN BUILDING, 1400 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE, SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20250-9410 OR CALL (202) 7250-5964 (VOICE AND TDD). USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

(For Office Use Only)
WITNESSED BY: _____ / _____ **DATE:** _____
(FOOD BANK OFFICIAL'S SIGNATURE) (PRINT LAST NAME)

HOUSEHOLD ELIGIBLE FROM _____ **TO** _____
(May be certified up to 12 months) DATE DATE

This form must be completed by every TEFAP client in January. Please use the attached form for monthly income self-certification signatures each time clients receive TEFAP commodities after the month of January. These applications and signature sheets are subject to review by the Montana Food Bank Network and the MT Department of Health and Human Services.

The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act

On October 1, 1996, President Clinton signed the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act to encourage the donation of food and grocery products to non-profit organizations for distribution to needy individuals. This law makes it easier to donate. Here's how:

- It protects donors from liability when donating to a non-profit organization.
- It protects donors from civil and criminal liability should the product donated in good faith later cause harm to the needy recipient.
- It standardizes donor liability exposure. Donors and their legal counsel no longer have to investigate liability laws in 50 states.
- It sets a liability floor of "gross negligence" or intentional misconduct for persons who donate grocery products. (See Act text for further definitions.)
- Congress recognized that the provision of food close to recommended date of sale is, in and of itself, not grounds for finding gross negligence. For example, cereal can be donated if it is marked close to code date for retail sale.

The bill was named for Rep. Bill Emerson (R-Missouri) who fought for the proposal but died of cancer before it was passed. The text of this Act follows:

The Bill Emerson Food Donation Act

One Hundred Fourth Congress of the United States of America

At the Second Session

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Wednesday, the third day of January, one thousand nine hundred and ninety-six.

An Act

To encourage the donation of food and grocery products to nonprofit organizations for distribution to needy individuals by giving the Model Good Samaritan Food Donation Act the full force and effect of law.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Section 1. CONVERSION TO PERMANENT LAW OF MODEL GOOD SAMARITAN FOOD DONATION ACT AND TRANSFER OF THAT ACT TO CHILD NUTRITION ACT OF 1966.

(a) Conversion to Permanent Law. -- Title IV of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 is amended --

by striking the title heading and sections 401 and 403 (42 U.S.C. 12671 and 12673); and

in section 402 (42 U.S.C. 12672) --

(A) in the section heading, by striking "model" and inserting "bill emerson"

(B) in subsection (a), by striking "Good Samaritan" and inserting "Bill Emerson Good Samaritan:"

(C) in subsection (b)(7), to read as follows:

"(7) GROSS NEGLIGENCE. -- The term 'gross negligence' means voluntary and conscious conduct (including a failure to act) by a person who, at the time of the conduct, knew that the conduct was likely to be harmful to the health or well-being of another person.";

(D) by striking subsection (c) and inserting the following:

"(c) LIABILITY FOR DAMAGES FROM DONATED FOOD AND GROCERY PRODUCTS.

"(1) LIABILITY OF PERSON OR GLEANER. -- A person or gleaner shall not be subject to civil or criminal liability arising from the nature, age, packaging, or condition of apparently wholesome food or an apparently fit grocery product that the person or gleaner donates in good faith to a nonprofit organization for ultimate distribution to needy individuals.

"(2) LIABILITY OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION. -- A nonprofit organization shall not be subject to civil or criminal liability arising from the nature, age, packaging, or condition of apparently wholesome food or an apparently fit grocery product that the nonprofit organization received as a donation in good faith from a person or gleaner for ultimate distribution to needy individuals.

"(3) EXCEPTION. -- Paragraphs (1) and (2) shall not apply to an injury to or death of an ultimate user or recipient of the food or grocery product that results from an act or omission of the person, gleaner or nonprofit organization, as applicable, constituting gross negligence or intentional misconduct."; and

(E) in subsection (f), by adding at the end the following: "Nothing in this section shall be construed to supersede State or local health regulations.".

(b) TRANSFER TO CHILD NUTRITION ACT OF 1966. -- Section 402 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12762) (as amended by subsection (a)) --

is transferred from the National and Community Service Act of 1990 to the Child Nutrition Act of 1966;

is redesignated as section 22 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966; and

is added at the end of such Act.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT. -- The table of contents for the National and Community Service Act of 1990 is amended by striking the items relating to title IV.

Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives

Strom Thurmond, President of the Senate Pro Tempore

Approved 10/01/96

William J. Clinton

President of the United States



Food Drive Manual

UPDATED AUG 2008

THIS MANUAL INCLUDES:

- A Simple Guide to Organizing a Food Drive
- Creative Ideas for your Food Drive
- Most Needed Foods
- Where Do Your Donations Go?
- Sample Food Drive Flyer

PREVIEW:

Getting Started	1
Publicity is Key	2
Drive	2
Creative Ideas	2
End of Drive	3
Needed Foods	3
Food Pyramid	3
Donations	4
Sample Flyer	5

Help Fight Hunger TODAY!

Thank you for joining the fight against hunger! Your efforts are essential to the Montana Food Bank Network's mission to end hunger across the state. Without volunteers like you, the Montana Food Bank Network wouldn't be able to feed the tens of thousands of Montanans who rely on food relief programs each year.

This manual has been prepared to guide you through the steps of planning a food

drive. Use this manual to organize and promote your drive within your workplace, school or congregation, with friends, family and employers.



This manual includes tips & tricks from the experts on how to creatively build awareness and participation into your food drive. If you need more information than what is provided here, the staff at the Montana Food Bank Network is happy to assist you further.

We appreciate your support! By your gracious efforts, you are helping feed thousands of fellow Montana's across the state. Thank you!

Getting Started with the Basics

To get your food drive started on the right track, be sure to carefully consider these initial 10 steps:

1. Decide if your group will partner with any other groups or businesses.
2. Identify a person in the group who is in charge, as well as coordinators under this individual. Be sure coordinators have clearly defined tasks.
3. Pick a date and determine the duration of the drive. Drives can be as short as one day or as long as one month. Be sure and check community

calendars for potential scheduling conflicts.

4. Decide if the drive will be held at one place or at several locations.
5. Decide on the type of drive. Identify a target population of potential food donors. Decide if you will raise food AND money, or just food.
6. Secure a collection method. Medium sized boxes are ideal as they can be easily transported. Consider contacting a local grocery store and ask them to donate extra produce boxes.

7. Determine how the collected food will get from the collection site(s) to the MT Food Bank Network. Either volunteers can drive the food to the MFBN or a MFBN representative can pick up from the collection site(s).

8. Decide on a theme. Create a slogan and/or tag line for the drive.

9. Set a goal. This could be pounds of food collected or dollars collected.

10. Have fun!! The food drive will be a product of what you put into it.



Publicity is Key...Start Talking!

So, you've nailed down all the nitty-gritty details, and it's time to start talking about your food drive.

Announce the upcoming drive to the community, friends, co-workers, neighbors and all potential participants. Consider writing a press release, advertising on the radio, TV, and newspaper, or even attending chamber of commerce meetings. Send out emails, create flyers, distribute handouts,

create payroll inserts and display posters talking about the drive. The more people who know, the more people who are likely to join in. People like to be informed about ways they can help. When they find out how easy it is to donate and what an impact it will make, they jump at the chance to participate.

Remember to locate a collection site within the building for participants to drop

off their food donations. Be sure the site is conveniently located and visible. Include plenty of boxes to collect food donations, general information on the food drive, information on where the donations are going, hunger stats, signage showing the goal of the drive and the progress made, lists of suggested food items and additional collection containers for individuals who want to give a monetary donation. And remember...Have Fun!

Be sure and keep participants informed of the goal and the progress that has been made. This will keep everyone motivated to continue donating.

Drive, Drive, Drive

So...you picked a date for your drive, selected a theme, made a goal, you have a group of volunteers ready to help and everyone knows that you are running a food drive. It's time to start driving!

Be sure and keep all participants informed of the goal and the progress that has been made. This can be done through signage in high-traffic areas, announcements in meet-

ings and newsletters, or email blasts. This will keep participants motivated to continue donating.

Consider running an event in conjunction with your food drive. You could offer reduced admission, or substitute canned goods for cost of admission. For other creative ideas to build participation in your food drive, see below.

Creative Ideas for Your Food Drive

Kick off the event with a Hunger Awareness Day or other opening day festivity. Ask your organization to match donations. Hold a simultaneous event and ask people to bring cans of food for admission. Give out empty grocery bags to drive participants to fill them with food. Foster competition among departments/classes/groups. Consider food theme days. Offer rewards and prizes to top donors. Hold a raffle, auction, book sale, bake sale or car wash. Provide perks to all participants regardless of how much they donate. Distribute a hunger fact each day of the drive. Offer a casual dress day for donating food. Encourage cash donations. Challenge participants to give more.

I've Collected all this Food; Now What?



1. Get the food to the MT Food Bank Network, based on the method that was previously decided upon.
2. Clean up the collection site.
3. Recognize the coordinators

and the participants of the drive. Send out thank you notes, give out awards and/or consider planning a special thank-you event.

4. Create a final press release outlining the success of the food drive and share that with food drive participants and the community.
5. Take notes for the next food drive. Be sure to pay attention to what worked and what did

not work.

6. Consider bringing your group to the MFBN to repackage and sort the collected food.
7. Set a date with the MFBN for next year's food drive.
8. Congratulate yourself on a job well done! It's through your gracious efforts that the MFBN can feed thousands of hungry Montana's every year. Thank you for your support!

REMEMBER, ONLY DONATE ITEMS YOU WOULD EAT.

THINK PROTEIN & THINK NUTRITION!!

Most Needed Food Items

The MT Food Bank Network needs the following nutritious foods:

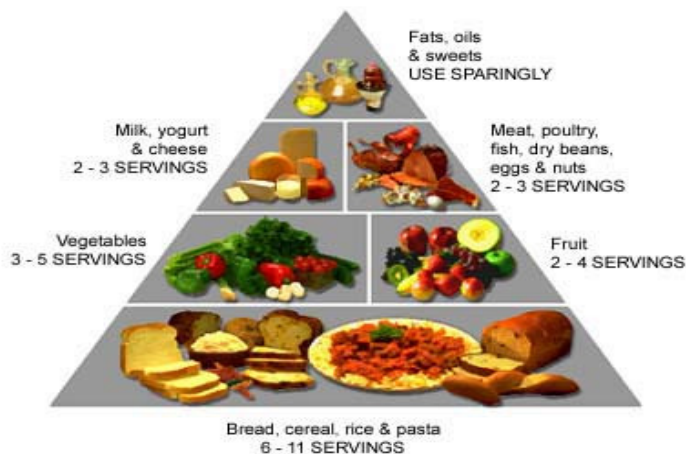
- Canned Meats (tuna, chicken, salmon)
- Canned Fruits & Vegetables
- Peanut Butter
- Canned & Boxed Meals (soup, chili, stew, macaroni & cheese)
- Canned or Dried Beans (black, pinto, kidney, lentils)
- Pasta & Rice
- Cereal (low sugar, high fiber)

To ensure food safety, we cannot use:

- Rusty or Unlabeled Cans
- Perishable Items
- Homemade Items
- Noncommercial Canned Items
- Noncommercial Packaged Items
- Alcoholic Beverages & Mixes
- Open or Used Items

Food Guide Pyramid

Please donate wholesome, healthy and nutritious food items that have been recently purchased. A good rule of thumb to follow: what would you give your best friend or family member if he or she was in need? It's all about nutrition, so think about gathering healthy foods rather than snack foods or desserts.





Montana Food Bank Network

5625 Expressway

Missoula, MT 59808

Phone: 406-721-3825

Toll Free: 800-809-4752

Fax: 406-542-3770

info@mfbn.org

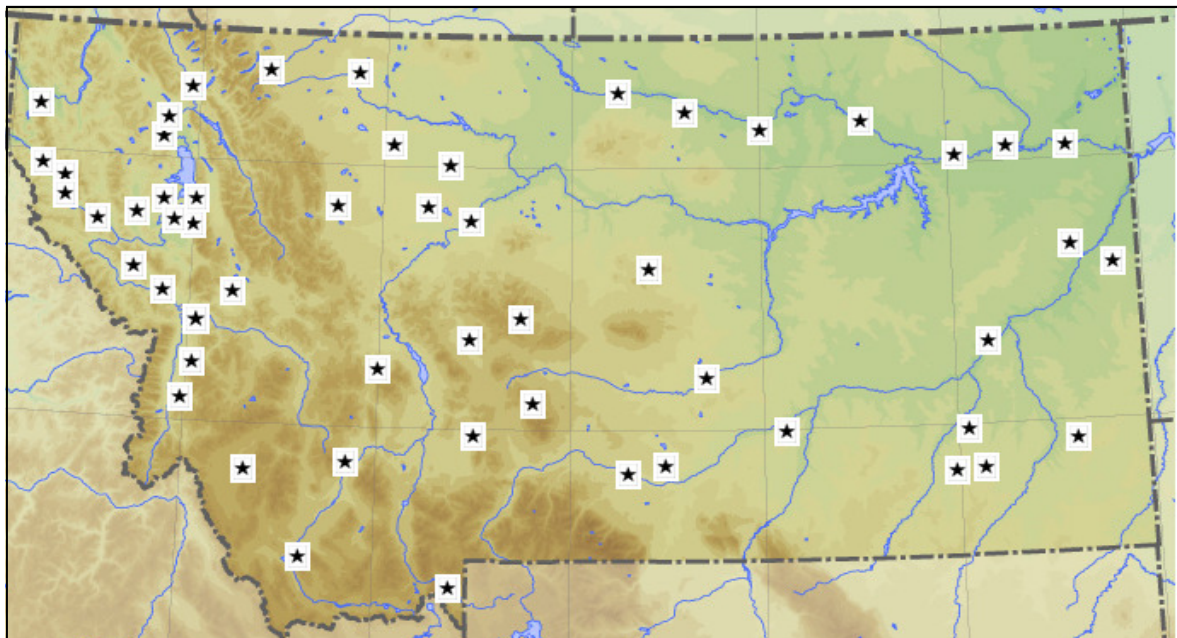
www.mfbn.org/volunteer

Fighting Hunger, Feeding Hope!

The Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN) is a state-wide nonprofit organization that was begun in 1983 to address the hunger problems of low-income Montanans. It's mission is to eliminate hunger in Montana through food acquisition and distribution, education and advocacy. The MFBN meets the needs of hungry people in nearly every community throughout the state by providing much-needed resources to food banks, pantries, rescue missions, soup kitchens, runaway youth homes, senior citizen centers, low-income day-care centers, and food assistance programs on Montana's Indian Reservations. The MFBN distributes food to 189 agencies across the state.

Where do your donations go?

From Libby to Dillon, Glendive to Havre, The Montana Food Bank Network distributes food to 189 hunger-relief agencies across the state of Montana.



★ Denotes areas where the Montana Food Bank Network distributes food.

NAME OF FOOD DRIVE

GROUP
LOGO

Tag line/slogan of food drive

Your Group, in conjunction with the Montana Food Bank Network, is running a food drive, and we need your help! Join in our efforts to raise XXX lbs of food to be donated to hungry Montanans across the state.

Dates: The food drive will begin on XXX and conclude on XXX.

Goal: We are looking to collect XXX lbs of food. Please join in our efforts to meet our goal. We will also be accepting monetary donations that will go directly to the Montana Food Bank Network.

Collection Site(s): XXX, XXX and XXX. Please drop off your food donations between the hours of XXX and XXX.

Questions: XXX name, Food Drive Coordinator, phone number & email

Remember: You have the ability to make a change in Montana and help fight hunger. Bring your extra canned goods and non-perishable food items to us today!

**Consider
Donating the
Following Items**

Canned Meats
Canned Fruits
Canned Veggies
Peanut Butter
Canned Meals
Boxed Meals
Canned Beans
Pasta
Rice
Cereal



The Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN) is a statewide nonprofit organization that was begun in 1983 to address the hunger problems of low-income Montanans. It's mission is to eliminate hunger in Montana through food acquisition and distribution, education and advocacy. The MFBN meets the needs of hungry people in nearly every community throughout the state by providing much-needed resources to food banks, pantries, rescue missions, soup kitchens, runaway youth homes, senior citizen centers, low-income day-care centers, and food assistance programs on Montana's Indian Reservations. The MFBN distributes food to approximately 189 agencies across the state. For further information: info@mfbn.org or call 800-809-4752.

**“HOW TO START A FOOD PANTRY”
WAS COMPILED BY THE
MONTANA FOOD BANK NETWORK**



(800) 809-4752

WWW.MFBN.ORG

AGENCYINFO@MFBN.ORG

The Montana Food Bank Network is a private, non-profit organization based out of Missoula, MT that secures and distributes nearly 4.5 million pounds of donated and low cost food and grocery products annually to almost 200 hunger relief agencies throughout Montana. The MFBN works to meet the immediate need for food while advocating at the local, state, and national level for policy changes to help eliminate hunger and food insecurity in Montana. The Montana Food Bank Network is a member of Feeding America. For more on the Montana Food Bank Network, please visit www.mfbn.org.

Fighting Hunger, Feeding Hope

MONTANA FOOD BANK NETWORK

5625 Expressway
Missoula, MT 59808

Phone: (800) 809-4752

Fax: 406-542-3770

Website: www.mfbn.org

email: agencyinfo@mfbn.org

