



# **BackPack Program**

## **Program Guidelines for Partners**

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## Program Overview, Mission, and Objectives

The Central Texas Food Bank offers the Backpack Program to organizations, programs, and schools who serve low-income children. These partners may operate the Backpack Program in conjunction with Kids Cafe: Afterschool Meals or independently of other Food Bank children's programs. Through the Backpack Program, the Food Bank will work with partners to (1) meet community need for weekend nutrition assistance and (2) encourage participation and attendance at the Food Bank Kids Cafe sites, as applicable.

Feeding America, the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity and the leadership organization for food banks across the country, supports the Backpack Program. The mission of the Backpack Program is to **help alleviate child hunger in America by providing hungry children with nutritious and easy-to-prepare food at times when other resources are not available, such as weekends, school vacations and summer break.** The program provides Backpacks filled with food that is nutritious, child-friendly, non-perishable, and easily consumed. Backpacks are discreetly distributed to children on the last day before the weekend or holiday vacation. **The objectives of the Backpack Program are to:**

1. Serve nutritious meals and snacks to children who are at risk of hunger;
2. Provide program at easily accessible, safe meal service or childcare sites;
3. Encourage participation in Kids Cafe: Afterschool Meals (as applicable) or partner programming; and
4. Assist in strengthening the programmatic capacity of partner sites.

## Program Standards

The Central Texas Food Bank enforces Feeding America guidelines, as well as those approved by the Food Bank leadership. The Backpack Program must meet the following standards:

- Participating organizations must be approved partners in good standing with the Central Texas Food Bank that comply with all applicable Federal and local statutes, ordinances, and regulations.
- Healthy, nutritious food must be distributed to children free of charge.
- Backpacks must be provided a minimum of once a month for the duration of the program.
- Staff and volunteers with direct repetitive contact with children must pass a National Background Check. Documentation of completed background checks must be kept on-site (see Attachment 1).

A fully executed **Letter of Agreement** must be on file with the Food Bank prior to program implementation. The partner may request to add or remove participating sites from the Letter of Agreement with a minimum two-week notice. The Letter of Agreement will specify:

- Program roles and responsibilities of both the Food Bank and the partner
- Key partner-level contact for Backpack Program communication and management
- Backpack receiving, storage, distribution, and reporting requirements
- Operational information for each participating site, including:
  - Key site-level contact who is responsible for operating the Backpack Program
  - Start and end dates of program operation
  - Backpack delivery frequency and day; distribution day
  - Anticipated average weekly participation in the program

## Program Training

The Food Bank will train all partner staff responsible for operating the Backpack Program prior to program implementation. Training will prepare site staff for all aspects of the program including but not limited to delivery and receiving, safe food storage, and Backpack reporting. It is the responsibility of the partner organization to ensure staff members attend the scheduled Food Bank training. The Food Bank will not order or deliver Backpacks to a site until the site staff complete training.

The partner must also submit documentation to the Food Bank of **Food Handler Certification** for the identified partner lead at each participating site. This documentation should be a current and valid certificate of completion. This staff member or volunteer must be directly involved with administering the program or supervise these activities.

## Menu and Allergies

Each Backpack contains approximately four (4) shelf-stable meals. The table below provides sample menus; however, these menus are subject to change. At this time, the Food Bank cannot guarantee all food items provided in the Backpacks will be pork-free, however all food items will be free of peanuts and tree nuts. Site staff must ensure participating children with food allergies do not receive those items.

	<b>Sample Menu 1</b>	<b>Sample Menu 2</b>
<b>Entrée</b>	Pasta Select Mini Beef Ravioli	Pasta Select Macaroni in Tomato & Meat Sauce
<b>Entrée</b>	Southgate Chili with Beans	Southgate Red Beans & Rice
<b>Cereal</b>	Whole Grain Honey Nut Cheerios	Whole Grain Honey Nut Cheerios
<b>Cereal</b>	Appleways Soft Oatmeal Bar	Appleways Soft Oatmeal Bar
<b>Fruit/Veg</b>	GoGo Squeez Applesauce	GoGo Squeez Applesauce
<b>Fruit/Veg</b>	Raisins	Raisins
<b>Juice</b>	Apple Juice	Apple Juice
<b>Juice</b>	Orange Tangerine Juice	Tropical Punch Juice
<b>Dairy</b>	1% Shelf Stable White Milk	1% Shelf Stable White Milk
<b>Dairy</b>	1% Shelf Stable White Milk	1% Shelf Stable White Milk

## Ordering and Delivery

Partners play a critical role in Backpack ordering by providing the Food Bank with an estimate of weekly Backpack needs based on ongoing program participation. The Food Bank will order Backpacks for partners based on historical Backpack distribution trends and current Backpack distribution reporting. Partners are responsible for notifying the Food Bank with one-week notice to cancel a Backpack order or to request an increase in regular weekly delivery volume.

Delivery schedules vary according to the storage capacity and program schedule of each partner. The Food Bank works with each partner to determine delivery day and frequency prior to program implementation. Each partner site's delivery day and frequency will be listed in the current year Letter of Agreement.

The site staff responsible for administration of the Backpack Program must receive each Backpack delivery. At the time of delivery, site staff must meet the Food Bank delivery driver, ensure the correct number of Backpacks are received, and sign two copies of the Delivery Ticket. Site staff must maintain one Delivery Ticket in their records for the duration of the program agreement and return one Delivery Ticket to the Food Bank delivery driver. The Food Bank will maintain one Delivery Ticket for the duration of the program agreement.

## Eligibility and Distribution

All children participating in the partner's programming are eligible to receive a Backpack. For school partners, all children identified through a counselor-referral system are eligible to receive a Backpack. Additionally, partners may provide Backpacks to children who seek the weekend meal support but do not attend the partner's program. Children must be physically present to receive a Backpack. A child or adult may not receive a Backpack on behalf of a child who is not present to receive the Backpack themselves.

Site staff will distribute Backpacks to children weekly on Fridays or the last day of programming before the weekend or a holiday/break. Start and end dates, distribution day, and estimated weekly Backpack volume will be listed in the current year Letter of Agreement.

Partners are responsible for conducting Backpack distributions in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Each partner site must distribute Backpacks on Fridays or the last day of programming before the weekend or a holiday/break.
- **Partners are responsible for notifying the Food Bank with one-week notice to make adjustments to the distribution schedule.** Partners may not adjust Backpack distribution schedule without prior approval from the Food Bank.
- **Children must be physically present to receive a Backpack.**
- Children cannot be required to accept a Backpack through the program. If a child or parent of a child does not want the child to participate in the Backpack program, site staff should respect this decision.
- Children should not open Backpacks on-site; bartering of items is not allowed.
- Backpacks must be distributed after Kids Cafe meal service has been completed, as applicable.
- **One (1) Backpack may be distributed to each child per week.**

## Storage and Inventory Control

Careful Backpack inventory management is critical to the success of this program. **In the event of Backpack loss, damage, and/or theft, the partner must inform the Food Bank immediately** so that we can work together to resolve potential issues as quickly as possible and avoid a lapse in programming. If site staff cannot maintain inventory control, the Food Bank may pursue formal corrective action, up to and including termination from the program. The Central Texas Food Bank is committed to supporting partners' successful

implementation of the Backpack Program; partners and site staff must communicate proactively about any potential issues.

All partner sites must adhere to the following **Food Storage Guidelines**:

- The food storage area must be clean with no holes in the walls, ceilings, or floors. There should be no gaps around the windows or floorboards that could allow entry of rodents or insects.
- The food storage area should be locked when not supervised to prevent possible theft.
- Non-food articles such as cleaning products, detergents, soaps, pesticides, and other toxic materials must be stored lower than Backpacks or in a separate storage area.
- Backpacks must be stored at least six inches above the floor. Backpacks should not be stored on pallets near open containers or food preparation. Pallets provide a dark, warm habitat for pests. In rare cases, pallets may be used in a staging area, but must not be the long-term method of storage.
- Shelves must not be lined with contact paper as the glue attracts insects. Butcher may be used.
- Food must not be stored in a commercially operated storage facility (i.e. Public Storage, etc.).
- Site staff should rotate, label, or take periodic inventory of the Backpacks to ensure freshness. Remember, FIFO (First In First Out).

## Reporting and Monitoring

After each Backpack distribution, Partners must account for all Backpacks delivered (if applicable), distributed, and maintained in on-site inventory. Timely reporting is necessary for the Food Bank to maintain inventory control and to ensure adequate supply of Backpacks to each site. **Site staff must submit the online Backpack Distribution Report within one (1) business day of the Backpack distribution.** For example, if a site distributes Backpacks on Friday, the site staff must submit the Backpack Distribution Report by 5pm on the following Monday. If the Food Bank does not receive the Backpack Distribution Report within one (1) business day of the Backpack distribution, the Food Bank cannot order Backpacks for the site until the following week, resulting in a lapse in Backpack distribution. **Two (2) consecutive late Backpack Distribution Reports will necessitate pausing the Backpack Program at the site until site staff complete retraining.**

In addition to accounting for Backpack quantities, partners must report any changes in staffing, scheduling, or programming to the Food Bank as soon as possible. The Food Bank highly values participant feedback and asks partners to assist in conducting a voluntary program survey with children and parents toward the end of the program to gather feedback and input to drive program improvements. The Food Bank will provide the survey instrument.

The Food Bank will monitor partner sites periodically throughout the school year. The purpose of monitoring is to ensure that sites maintain compliance with all local health and sanitation regulations and all Backpack Program Guidelines. Monitoring also provides a way for the Food Bank to gauge partner satisfaction with the program and identify opportunities to assist partners in improving the program. Partners must implement any changes recommended by the Food Bank staff during monitoring visits to ensure compliance with national and local Backpack standards.

**What is the Food Bank looking for during a monitoring visit? For example:**

- Backpacks are stored at least six (6) inches off the ground and separate from chemicals, open containers, and food preparation
- And Justice For All poster is displayed in a prominent location visible during the distribution
- Staff maintain accurate records of Backpack delivery
- Backpack Distribution Reports are submitted within one (1) business day of the distribution
- Sufficient site staff and/or volunteers are supervising children and the Backpack distribution
- Staff distribute one (1) Backpack directly to each child requesting the food items as the child leaves the partner's programming before the weekend or holiday/break