

# **PARTNER AGENCY POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL**

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**Updated: February 7, 2019**

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## Mission & Impact

### Mission Statement:

*“To nourish hungry people and lead the community in ending hunger.”*

The Central Texas Food Bank has been at the front line of hunger relief with the help of nearly 300 Partner Agencies in 21 counties across Central Texas.

The Food Bank is an affiliate of the Feeding America nationwide network of Food Banks. Feeding America secures donations from national food and grocery manufacturers, retailers, shippers, packers, growers and from government agencies and other organizations. Feeding America then moves donated food and grocery product to member Food Banks. The Food Banks distribute food and grocery items through food pantries and meal programs that serve families, children, seniors and others at risk of hunger.

Through our Feeding America affiliation, the Central Texas Food Bank is also accountable for providing the highest standards of food storage and handling, record keeping, and accurate donation tracking.

The Food Bank appreciates that our partner agencies demonstrate a commitment to serving those who are at risk of food insecurity and are additionally dedicated to adhering to all Food Bank policies and procedures explained in this policy manual.

## Contact Information

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[www.centraltexasfoodbank.org](http://www.centraltexasfoodbank.org)

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## General Partner Agency Requirements

Partner agencies must be good stewards of the donated commodities entrusted to them from the Food Bank. Please read this section carefully to fully understand the Food Bank's expectations of partner agencies.

### General Partner Agency Requirements

- The safe and proper handling of food product, which conforms to all local, state and Federal regulations
- Willingness to abide by Central Texas Food Bank & USDA policies, procedures, and record keeping requirements
- Staff and volunteers of the program will not engage in discrimination against any person because of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability
- Staff and volunteers of the program must show respect to all clients. Inferior, degrading or otherwise disrespectful communication to clients will not be tolerated (Grievances, P.35)
- Partner agencies must allow the Food Bank to monitor their food distributions

### Annual Monitor (Inspection)

The purpose of the annual monitor is to ensure partner agencies are adhering to all Food Bank requirements. Feeding America requires Food Bank partner agencies to be monitored at a minimum of every two years. The Food Bank chooses to conduct these monitors annually and reserves the right to monitor any partner agency unannounced.

## Food Bank Food Sourcing

### Feeding Texas/Feeding America

The Food Bank works with the Feeding Texas and Feeding America networks to receive donated or low cost loads of food, which typically have a cost associated to them for freight and value-added processing (VAP). These loads are typically the result of a large surplus that one Food Bank could not distribute alone. A large amount of produce is sourced through these

networks. Items received through this channel are distributed to partner agencies and programs at either no cost or up to \$.19/pound handling fee.

### USDA TEFAP Commodities

The Food Bank receives staple food items, such as shelf-stable milk, rice, beans, cereal, and canned goods through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which is a federal emergency food program administered through USDA. Agencies wishing to receive TEFAP must complete the Eligibility Determination Form and submit it to the Food Bank. Agencies operating as pantries must document client eligibility and make those documents available when monitored (See Intake Forms & Client Eligibility, P.17).

### Purchased Foods - Subsidized and Co-Op

The Food Bank budgets funding for shelf-stable staple food items for partner agencies and programs. This money is typically used to fill the gaps on the staple items we receive through USDA-TEFAP. For example, if we know we will not be receiving any canned vegetables in a given month through TEFAP, we may choose to purchase a truckload of canned vegetables. We work with vendors to ensure the lowest prices, and then these items are “subsidized” to partner agencies and programs – meaning they go onto our shopping list at only a percentage of the food bank’s costs (typically 50%) or “Co-Op’d” to partner agencies and programs at the food bank’s full cost.

### Purchased Foods – Produce

The Food Bank purchases loads of fresh produce at discounted rates, which are then distributed to partner agencies and programs at no cost. Often times, these loads are offered at a lower cost to us because they are imperfect, but still good to eat, such as “seconds” or loads with a small percentage of decay.

### Food Rescue

The Food Bank receives donations from local grocery stores, distributors, manufacturers, farms, and other food industry companies. These donations are no longer valuable to the donor due to short dates, surplus, cosmetic damage, or other reasons, but are still good and safe for people to eat. Agency Retail Pickup (ARP) food rescue is the same concept, but with authorized partner agencies picking up directly from the donor and reporting pounds to the Food Bank.

## Food Drives & Events

The Food Bank receives many shelf-stable, dry grocery donations through a variety of community food drives and events (EX: Souper Bowl of Caring and Stuff the Bus).

### Partner Agency Food Sourcing

Food donations should only be accepted from donors that adhere to all local and state food safety guidelines.

#### Prepared Food Guidelines

Examples of prepared foods are items made at the donor site, such as fresh bagels, whole pizzas, and trays of catered food.

#### Acceptable Donations:

- Completely wrapped in approved food grade packaging.
- Proper labeling.
- Cooled quickly if previously held hot.
- At 41F or below. Fully frozen is preferred.

#### Unacceptable Donations:

- Previously served or put on a buffet table.
- Previously reheated items.
- Kept in the danger temperature zone for more than 2 hours.
- Not completely wrapped.
- Not in approved food grade packaging.
- Unlabeled / no ingredient statement or allergen disclaimer as required.
- Over 41F.
- Not cooled down to 41F if previously held hot.

Labels must contain the following components:

- The name and location of the Food Bank (6500 Metropolis Dr. Austin, TX 78744)
- The name and location of the donor.
- The food description.
- The date of donation.
- Allergen disclaimer statement or a list of ingredients. (Example of disclaimer: *Warning! This container holds rescued food. This food may contain, have come in contact with, or have been produced in a facility which also produces milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, wheat, soybeans, and/or sesame seeds.*)

### Donated Meat

Partner agencies may not accept donated meat unless it has been processed at a state or federal certified meat processor (Ex: Hunters for the Hungry).

## Handling Fees & Payments

### Handling Fees

Partner agencies pay a handling fee to help defray miscellaneous operational costs (warehouse, freight, administrative expenses). This is not a charge for food. The fee is assessed on the gross weight of products received. The Food Bank has a maximum of 0.14 cents/pound on food and 0.19 cents/pound on non-food. The Food Bank may reduce or eliminate this fee on certain products at its discretion. The Food Bank may pass on “value-added processing” (VAP) costs related to packaging or processing certain highly desirable products.

### Invoices

Partner agencies will receive an electronic invoice each month if there is a balance due. All payments are due within 30 days of the invoice date or it will be considered past due. After 60 days, the unpaid invoice is considered delinquent and all partner agency privileges are suspended until paid. Partner agencies may contact the Food Bank Accounts Receivable Coordinator at (512)684-2103 to arrange for payments of past due invoices.



## Payment methods

Agencies are encouraged to pay invoices online. Feeding America requires partner agencies to make product payments through an agency check or credit card. Payments are NOT accepted through personal checking accounts, personal credit cards, cash, or money orders. Agencies may use agency credit cards from Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover. The partner agency account number and invoice number(s) must be included with payment, either by writing these numbers on the check or by enclosing a copy of the invoice. There is a \$25 charge for returned checks, which will not be re-deposited. Payments must be received before an agency can place another order. The partner agency must maintain good credit with the Food Bank by keeping its handling fee payments current.

## Payment on Receipt (POR)

- New partner agencies will be placed on POR status for a 3 month period. During this time, partner agencies will not have an established credit line but will be able to pay contributions towards their account. After 3 months, a credit line will be created for the account. The credit limit will be based on evaluation of the account by both the Finance Department and Agency Relations Director.
- Agencies that are delinquent in paying their invoices twice in a 12 month period will be placed on POR status, whereby payment by company check or credit card must be made at the time the order is picked up. Agencies will return to credit status after 3 months if it indicates to be credit worthy.

## Free product / Shop-For

Partner agencies may take advantage of the many free items available in Agency Express and the Shop-For area in the Food Bank warehouse. These free items include fresh produce, dairy, and bread. Partner agencies are able to take advantage of Shop-For at the Food Bank without an appointment Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. However, Partner Agencies must accrue a minimum of \$30 Handling Fee per month. Otherwise, a \$30/month administrative fee will be charged.

## Monthly Reporting

### Monthly Reports

Partner agencies are required to submit monthly reports stating the number of clients served. In turn, the Food Bank provides cumulative information to the Texas Department of

Agriculture, which reports consolidated statewide numbers to the United States Department of Agriculture and Feeding America. Partner agencies may not anticipate the number of clients that will be served. Reports submitted ahead of schedule will not be accepted. Partner agencies that did not serve food must still report zero totals in the monthly report. Depending on the type of program, either the total number of meals or the number of households and individuals served must be provided, as follows:

- **Onsite Kitchens (OS):** On-site feeding programs (soup kitchens, residential programs, shelters, snack-only programs, etc.) must report the total number of individual meals and snacks that are served each month. If accurate numbers of meals served are recorded each day, the total of the month's numbers should be reported. Otherwise, the number of meals served may be calculated as follows:
  - Count the number of times meal service was offered during the month.
  - Multiply that by the average number of clients participating in each meal. For example, a residential home may serve breakfast and dinner on weekdays, and breakfast, lunch and dinner on Saturdays and Sundays. In a sample month, there are 22 weekdays and 4 full weekends, or 44 weekday meals (22 days x 2 meals) and 24 weekend meals (4 Saturdays and 4 Sundays x 3 meals each day), totaling 68 times during the month that meals were served.
  - Finally, multiply that number by the average number of clients served at each meal. If an average of 11 clients is served at the partner agency, a total of 748 individual meals were served (68 x 11) and should be reported. Note: Snack service is considered a meal.
- **Food Pantries (PA):** Food pantries must report the total number of households that receive food each month. If a single person is served, he or she is considered to be a household. If a family is provided groceries more than once during the month, each visit may be counted separately. You should also include the number of individuals in the household served.
  - **Minimum Requirement of 25 families per month:** If a partner agency reports less than the required minimum of 25 families per month, the partner agency is subject to a 3 month probation period. During this time, the partner agency will work with Food Bank staff to meet the minimum requirement. If the partner agency cannot meet the minimum after the probation period, the Food Bank reserves the right to take action in form of suspension or termination of partnership.

- **Onsite Kitchens/Food Pantries (OP):** Partner agencies that are both an onsite feeding program and a food pantry are required to report both the number of meals and the number of households and individuals served.
  - Partner agencies that participate in feeding programs such as HOPE or Fresh Food for Families will have separate program numbers and therefore should report meals or clients served by each program separately.

### Monthly Report Due Dates

Monthly reports must be submitted through the online reporting system on the 1st of the following month that is being reporting (Example: November’s report due on December 1<sup>st</sup>). There is a 15-day grace period to file the report before a report hold is placed on the agency account. See page 31 for more information about “Holds, Suspension, Termination, and Appeal Processes.”

## Civil Rights

Partner agency staff and volunteers must not engage in discrimination against any person because of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

### Sites Located at Religious Organizations

Federal civil rights laws address explicitly religious activities at religious organization TEFAP sites:

1. Organizations must not engage in explicitly religious activities as part of TEFAP, including overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization.
2. An explicitly religious activity at a site must be separated in time or location from TEFAP services.
3. Organizations must not require participants or applicants to participate in explicitly religious activities to receive TEFAP.

### TEFAP and Explicitly Religious Activities

The following table provides examples to guide explicitly religious activities at TEFAP sites.

<i>It is acceptable to . . .</i>	<i>It is unacceptable to . . .</i>
Hang a cross on a wall at the TEFAP site.	Require participants to stand by a cross and recite a prayer prior to TEFAP distribution.
Place a menorah on a table at the site during the holiday season.	Refuse USDA Foods to participants who do not practice the Jewish faith.
Display faith-based pamphlets at the front or back of the site for interested people.	Insert faith-based pamphlets into TEFAP bags or boxes that will be distributed to participants.
Have a religious official, such as a pastor, assist with TEFAP distribution.	Require or encourage participants to have a religious conversation prior to TEFAP distribution.
Hold a prayer service on the second level of a church building while TEFAP distribution occurs on the lower level.	Hold a prayer service in the same room and at the same time as TEFAP distribution.
Invite participants or applicants to participate in a voluntary — and clearly separate — prayer before TEFAP distribution.	Lead participants in a prayer at the beginning of TEFAP distribution.

### Written Notice of Beneficiary Rights

Sites located at faith-based or religious organizations must protect applicants’ and participants’ rights regarding participation in religious activities. (Applicants and participants are referred to here as “participants.”)

Sites must display the TEFAP Written Notice of Beneficiary Rights near the “And Justice for All” poster to inform participants of the following information:

- The site must not discriminate against participants on the basis of religion or religious belief; a refusal to hold a religious belief; or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice.
- The site must not require participants to attend or participate in any explicitly religious activities. Participants’ participation in these activities must be purely voluntary.
- The site must separate, in time or in location, any privately funded, explicitly religious activities from activities supported with USDA direct assistance.
- If the participant objects to the religious character of the site, then the site must make reasonable efforts to make a referral to an alternative provider to which the participant has no objection, with the understanding that the site cannot guarantee that an alternate provider will be available in every instance.
- Applicants and participants may report violations of these protections (including denials of services or benefits) to TDA at [www.Squaremeals.org](http://www.Squaremeals.org).

Upon the request of a participant, Partner Agencies must provide a copy of the written notice.

## Beneficiary Referral Request

When an applicant or participant objects to the religious character of a site, the site must make reasonable efforts to refer them to an alternative site. “Reasonable efforts” depend on the situation. At a minimum, the Partner Agency must 1) attempt to identify an alternative provider and 2) determine the service that the provider offers. A referral may be made to non-USDA funded providers if necessary and if the provider has the capacity to accept the beneficiary.

The TEFAP and CSFP Beneficiary Referral Request form documents the referral efforts. Copies of the form must be easily available at each site. The Partner Agency must keep the Referral Request onsite for 3 years. Upon request, referral records must be made available to TDA, CEs, and subdistributing agencies (as applicable).

## Disability Accommodations

The Food Bank requires all partner agencies to provide reasonable accommodations to clients with disabilities during food distributions. If distribution locations are inaccessible for individuals with disabilities, all services must still be provided (deliver to car, etc.)

## Civil Rights Complaint Log

The Food Bank requires all partner agencies to maintain a Civil Rights complaint log. Staff and volunteers should be instructed to document any civil rights issues during a distribution. Maintaining a complaint log will enable your agency to recall issues or incidents should there be a complaint filed with the Food Bank.

## Civil Rights Poster

The Food Bank requires all partner agencies to post the provided “Justice for All” poster in an unobstructed location visible to clients. All older versions of this poster must be removed. The current poster is green.

## TEFAP Participant Rights and Responsibilities Form

TEFAP applicants and participants have rights and responsibilities that are listed in the TEFAP Participant Rights and Responsibilities form. Partner Agencies must make the form available during the application and recertification process. Partner Agencies may read the form to applicants if necessary, or applicants may read it themselves.

For example: Some sites present a laminated copy of the TEFAP Participant Rights and Responsibilities form to each applicant as part of the application process.

### USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

This statement must be placed in a prominent location for clients to see and further explained to the client. The Food Bank intake form includes this statement, however if your agency uses a unique intake form, this statement must be printed on the form or placed where the client can see it. The nondiscrimination statement does not need to be read in its entirety; “This institution is an equal opportunity provider” is sufficient to meet the nondiscrimination requirement.

“In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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

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

## Agency Operations

All products (food or otherwise) donated to the Food Bank must be considered as having been donated under the provisions of Section 170(e)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. The

Food Bank requires partner agencies to follow IRS Code 170(e)(3) requirements at all times and mandates donated product is intended for the ill, needy or infants.

Partner agencies may only distribute donated products to clients, regardless of how they receive the donation (i.e. directly from Food Bank or retail pick-up program, etc.). Agencies may not distribute donated products to non-Food Bank partner agencies. In addition, Food Bank partners must follow these guidelines:

### Distribution Requirements

- All partner agencies with an emergency food pantry must be open twice a month for a minimum of two hours each distribution. New partner agencies (as of 2016) must be open once a week with a minimum of two hours each distribution.
- Partner agency hours of operation must be made public (Sign on building, website, or 211, etc.)
- “Justice for All” poster must be posted in an unobstructed location that is visible to clients. The Emergency Food Assistance Written Notice of Beneficiary Rights document must also be posted if your organization is affiliated with a religious organization.
- Food pantries are required to determine the income eligibility of any client who wishes to receive USDA TEFAP foods (See Intake Forms & Client Eligibility, P.17)
- External transfer or distribution of Food Bank product must meet policy guidelines
- Partner agencies may not accept donations from clients during a food distribution
- Partner agencies may not sell or use donated product in exchange for money, other property, or services
- Partner agency distributions that are open to the public may not exclude the participation of any protected class.
  - Example: One day serves women but discriminates against men – sex is a protected class. One day serves seniors but discriminates against everyone under a certain age – age is a protected class
  - Suggestion: Provide additional assistance on certain days for elderly, or make accommodations for clients if there are long lines that make it difficult for the elderly to stand in

### Public Notice

Partner Agencies must give notice to the public of distributions of USDA Foods. Public notices must meet the following requirements:

- Target eligible households whose members are unemployed or have low incomes and households that include elderly or disabled people
- Include the locations of sites
- Provide the days and hours of distributions
- If applicable, CEs or subagencies should post a public notice to explain why a distribution is canceled.

TDA encourages Partner Agencies to inform the public of all USDA Foods distributions through their own established and customary communication methods. Suggested methods to advertise the availability of USDA Foods include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The media (TV, radio, and newspaper)
- Civic and religious organizations
- City and county governments
- Social service organizations, upon request

### Alternative Distributions

Partner agencies may offer alternative distributions in addition to their primary distribution. All alternative distributions must adhere to the general partner agency requirements to ensure compliance.

- Partner agencies may distribute food bank product free of charge for the use of helping the ill, needy, or infants through alternative distribution models. An alternative distribution model could be a mobile delivery distribution that is conducted in an area other than the approved facility.
- Must adhere to safe and proper handling of product, which conforms to all local, state and Federal regulations (this includes adhering to approved means to ensure temperature control is being practiced and monitored)
- Partner agencies must allow the food bank to monitor the alternative distribution
- Alternative distribution service totals must be added to the monthly report
- Partner agencies participating in off-site backpack programs (not through Food Bank or Feeding America) may not use USDA TEFAP product in backpacks if adhering to regulations set forth by USDA as found in section 4000 of the [TEFAP Handbook](#):

### Sharing Food

The Food Bank may permit partner agencies to distribute donated product obtained from or enabled by the Food Bank to other approved agencies if the following conditions are met:



- The product being sub-distributed is in excess to the normal distribution, needs to be distributed to maintain quality, or be distributed while it is safe for human consumption
- Product can only be sub-distributed to other Food Bank approved partner agencies
- Product may only be re-distributed one time
- All sub-distributions must be tracked accurately by partner agencies to facilitate trace and recall procedures
- No fees can be charged in relation to sub-distributions (e.g. VAP, handling fees, delivery, transfer, referral or any other fees paid to the sub-distributing organization)
- USDA TEFAP product can never be shared

### Bartering or Selling

Bartering or selling of donated products is strictly prohibited under Section 170(e)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

### Operational In-House Use of Non-Food Products

The partner agency may use non-food items (such as toilet paper, soap, or cleaning supplies) in moderation for its operations, as long as those operations relate to the charitable mission of the partner agency (not entire organization or church). Orders are screened by the Food Bank for signs of abuse. Specific in-house regulations:

- Snack or beverage items obtained from the Food Bank may be served to volunteers in moderation during meetings or trainings at the partner's facility. Donated product may not be ordered specifically for staff and volunteer usage
- Donated product may not be used during a meeting when fundraising is being conducted
- Donated product may not be used for the purpose of fundraising either as prepared food (ex: spaghetti dinners, bake sale) or as "prizes"
- Volunteers may not be rewarded with donated product
- Partner agencies may permit staff/volunteers to consume donated product (in moderation) for the following reasons:
  - To become more familiar with the product (to be in a better position to advise clients about uses, nutrition education)

- To test the product for safe consumption (ex: Product nearing or passed code date)

### Primary VS Incidental Use

Partner agencies that serve both needy and some non-needy individuals must establish a priority system to ensure that the primary benefit of the program is to assist the needy. It is up to the partner agency to monitor that the majority of individuals served are eligible persons (“ill, needy, or infants” IRS Code 170(e)(3)) and that there is no reasonable way to serve the non-needy except through the meal program. Examples of these types of programs can include youth programs, camps, daycare centers, etc.

### Volunteer Use of Donated Products

Partner agencies must use extreme caution to not give the perception that volunteerism is rewarded or compensated with donated product. This would appear that you are paying for volunteers with donated product which is a direct IRS violation. The Food Bank understands that some clients volunteer and some volunteers may find themselves as clients, so partners should implement internal volunteer procedures that address these situations. Best practice: If a volunteer is food insecure, receiving food assistance should be priority over volunteering. If the only available volunteers are clients, partner agencies must ensure the following:

- The client/volunteer receives the same items and amount as all other clients
- The client/volunteer may not receive any preferential treatment
- The client/volunteer may not “cherry pick” product
- The client/volunteer is recorded as receiving assistance
- The client/volunteer receives food assistance after all other clients

### Meals for Volunteers and Staff

Site volunteers and staff (referred to here as volunteers) may eat at the site if doing so still allows distribution to all participants. For example, closing a site for volunteers to eat a meal limits distribution to participants. Volunteers may eat under both of the following conditions: Volunteers’ meals may be claimed as an allowable cost as long as the costs meet the following criteria.

- Reasonable: Reflecting the cost of an average lunch
- Adequately documented: The site must maintain records with the following information:
  1. Each volunteer’s name
  2. Hours each volunteer worked

3. Receipts, invoices, or other documents showing the cost of feeding volunteers
4. Each volunteer's signature for each meal

## Partner Agency Record Keeping

Partner agencies are required to keep the following records onsite and make them available to the Food Bank, Feeding America, USDA, and TDA staff when requested:

### Order Invoices

All partner agency invoices must be kept onsite for 3 years. These records should be made available during monitor visits and audits. All invoices are required to be reviewed for accuracy and signed by the partner agency at the time of order pick-up.

### Pest Control Records

Food storage areas are particularly susceptible to rodent and insect infestation. A visual inspection of the partner agency's facilities should be done at least monthly, with prevention and treatment recommended quarterly or as needed.

- If the partner agency uses a professional pest control company, copies of service reports, including chemicals used, should be made available to the Food Bank representative during monitoring and records must be kept on-site for one year
- If the partner agency performs self-pest control, copies of product and chemicals used should be made available to the Food Bank representative during monitoring and records must be kept on-site for one year
- The exterior perimeter of the storage location must be kept free of tall grass, untended shrubbery, or debris to reduce the possibility of harboring pests
- The Food Bank reserves the right to require an agency to use a professional pest control service if deemed necessary during a monitoring visit

### Temperature Logs

All cold storage units are required to have a thermometer that is readily accessible (Cold storage units with exterior digital thermometers must also have a physical internal thermometer present). Refrigerator temperatures should be held at 40 degrees F or below, and freezer temperatures should be held at 0 degrees F or below. Three years of temperature logs should be made available to the Food Bank representative during monitoring visits. Cooler

and freezer temperatures must be checked and recorded during regular business hours, and during shut-down or vacation periods

- a minimum of every other day
- immediately after a power loss is known or suspected
- late each Friday afternoon and early each Monday morning (if operations are suspended during weekends)

## Food Safety & Civil Rights Training

Feeding America and USDA require all partner agencies to be trained in Food Safety and Civil Rights. A member of your agency staff must either be a certified food manager (onsite partners) or have received food-handling training (pantries) from an accredited school or the local health department while adhering to all local and state food safety guidelines. In addition, all agency staff and volunteers who interact with program participants and handle personal information must receive Civil Rights training, which is offered online through the Texas Department of Agriculture. All temporary/short-term volunteers must review the limited civil rights training document located in the Agencies Resource Center on the website. Partner agencies are responsible for documenting their training records, which will be requested by the Food Bank during annual inspections. Failure to comply with this training requirement may result in a suspension of privileges with the Food Bank.

*\*Please note that these trainings are separate and not taught by the Food Bank staff.*

## Health Department Inspection & Food Manager Certificate (Onsite Kitchens)

If the partner agency is a meal provider or repackages food, a member of the agency must hold a certified Food Manager certificate and either a city, county, or state Health Department inspection. A current copy must be provided to Food Bank for the agency's files.

- A health inspection is required regardless if the agency's staff or clients prepare the meals. The Food Bank requires a health inspection at all onsite feeding programs regardless of particular county regulations

## Intake Forms & Sign-In Sheets

Intake forms and sign-in sheets must be kept on-site for 3 years. Electronic data tracking systems (ex: Oasis Insight) may be used to maintain client records, however the hard copy of intake forms and sign-in sheets must be kept if client electronic signatures/initials are not being collected. Pantries are required to serve a consistent minimum of twenty five families per month.

## Eligibility & Application

### Identity

At the time of the initial application and when reapplying for USDA TEFAP foods annually, clients must agree to provide the following federally required information to determine eligibility: (a) name (b) address (c) number of persons in household (d) household income if distributing USDA TEFAP (e) signature

Partner agencies receiving USDA TEFAP through the Food Bank may request but **must not require** proof of application information, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Identification
- Address
- Income

Partner Agencies must clarify the following points to applicants and participants:

1. The inability or unwillingness to provide proof of ID, Residency, or Income is not a barrier to participation.
2. Participants will receive USDA Foods without proof of ID, Residency, or Income

Clients (households) must agree to cooperate (to the extent the household is capable) to clarify or provide information needed to establish eligibility. Clients must repay the value of USDA TEFAP foods received if an error in eligibility is found because of erroneous information provided by the household. Clients must not sell or exchange USDA TEFAP food and must report changes in circumstances, such as income or household size.

Partner agencies may collect additional data (such as social security numbers) for other services – for example, clothing aid or assistance with bills. The federally required information to determine USDA TEFAP eligibility must be collected **before** the partner agency requests additional data. The collection of additional data must not be a real or perceived barrier to participation in USDA TEFAP

### Citizenship

There are no citizenship requirements. Partner Agencies must not request nor require any applicant or participant to prove citizenship through any means whatsoever.

### Residency

If a client does not live in your agency's service area, the client must be referred to a different site in their service area. The Food Bank suggests providing emergency food assistance to individuals before referring them elsewhere.

### Income Guidelines / Eligibility

In order for a recipient to receive USDA TEFAP foods, they must have an annual household income at or below 185% of federal poverty guidelines. This chart is indicated in the annual TEFAP Income Eligibility Guidelines. Partner Agencies may not impose their own eligibility criteria.

Clients who earn more than 185% of the federal poverty guidelines are asked to indicate that they are in an emergency need for food on the intake form. If the client indicates that they are in emergency need, they are able to receive USDA TEFAP food for a period from 1 to 6 months. This time frame can be decided by the intake counselor but cannot exceed 6 months per emergency case without TDA approval. If the client does not wish to indicate that they are in an emergency, the client cannot receive USDA TEFAP food. Partner agencies should use recent invoices to decipher what food product is USDA TEFAP product. In general, ALL clients should receive USDA TEFAP food unless they do not wish to declare they are in emergency need for food.

#### Characteristics of a Household Crisis

1. Unexpected
2. Temporary
3. Beyond the household's control

#### Unexpected Costs of a Household Crisis

1. Necessary medical treatment of a household member
2. Burial expenses of a household member
3. Uncontrolled loss of employment
4. The repair or replacement, because of a household disaster<sup>1</sup>, of the household's
  - home,
  - home contents, or
  - vehicle

USDA annually publishes the TEFAP Income Eligibility Guidelines, which contains household qualifying income cut-offs for annual, monthly, and weekly income levels per number of household members. The eligibility guidelines cover the period from July 1 of one year through June 30 of the following year.

- Current income guidelines must be utilized by partner agencies as soon as the food bank makes them available
- All staff/volunteers must indicate the client's certification period on all intake forms and sign the certifier section during this time.

To continue receiving USDA Foods after a certification period has ended, the household must be recertified by reapplying and meeting eligibility requirements again. A certification period begins the first month the household receives the USDA Foods, and may not exceed 12 months.

### Categorical Eligibility

A household is automatically (or categorically) eligible for USDA Foods if it currently receives assistance from one of the following programs:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly Food Stamps
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- National School Lunch Program (NSLP) free or reduced-price meals
- Non-institutional Medicaid

### The Proxy

A proxy is a person designated by a participant to act for the participant as necessary throughout every process of TEFAP. For example, proxies can provide a signature on forms. Proxies may also act for the participant at application, certification, food package distribution, and recertification. A proxy must provide proof of identification prior to picking up a food package. Requirements. CEs must collect at least the following information:

1. Participant's name
2. Name of distribution site
3. Authorization including proxy name
4. Participant's signature
5. Duration of proxy

The Partner Agency must maintain each written proxy designation and their address on file. Proxy identification must be reviewed at each application, certification, food package distribution, and recertification.

There are two ways to change a proxy:

1. In a written, signed statement
2. In person at the CE or site, where proxy changes are noted and maintained in the participant file.

### Written Procedure

The Partner Agency must maintain a written procedure for the application process. The written procedure must include providing the Written Notice of Beneficiary Rights to applicants. The procedures must be available for monitor and compliance reviews at all levels of distribution (the Central Texas Food Bank has provided this procedure for all partners).

## Food Bank Record Keeping

The Food Bank is required to keep the following partner agency records and make them available to Feeding America, USDA, and TDA staff when requested:

### Non-Profit 501(c)(3) Status

All agencies receiving donated products from the Food Bank must be federally exempt 501(c)(3) organizations, be affiliated with a 501(c)(3), or be a 501(c)(3) equivalent (churches). See IRS Publication 557 for an explanation of the different 501(c) statuses. The agency must adhere to all requirements under IRS Code 170(e)(3). All Partner agencies must show clear, complete, and current documentation of their agency's exemption under Section 501(c)(3) exemption of the Code or Church status. The following are examples of complete information:

- Current IRS determination letter where the address matches the address of the organization listed on the Agency agreement, or
- Current group exemption letter with a listing of the local agency in the group exemption directory, a list of active local sites from the national/regional headquarters website, or a letter from the group exemption's headquarters or regional office attesting that the local organization is covered under their group exemption, or



- Current listing of the organization on IRS website section under Exempt Organizations Selection Check (Publication 78 data) indicating they are a Public Charity (“PC”); or
- Faith Based Organization Eligibility Form that includes documentation of the organization’s ability to meet at least nine (9) of the fourteen (14) possible criteria established by the IRS to be considered a Church (i.e. “14-point criteria”), along with a letter from the faith based organization stating they have never been denied or revoked 501(c)(3) status and their program will serve the “ill, needy, infants”; or
- A letter from the CEO or Board Chair of a qualified agency indicating that it is the Agency sponsoring such program and assuming all responsibilities (fiscal and legal) for the sponsored organization. The Member will need both the sponsorship letter as well as clear, complete and current evidence of the sponsoring organization’s exemption or Church status following criteria listed above

### Single Audit Act

Proof of federal compliance audits must be submitted if the partner agency receives an excess of 275,000 pounds from the Food Bank each fiscal year. Because USDA TEFAP and FEMA programs are federally funded, the Food Bank is required to comply with the Single Audit Act of 1984, 31 U.S.C., Section 7501 et seq., and OMB Circular No. 133 “Audits of Institutions of Higher Education and other Nonprofit Institutions.”

### Board of Directors

All partner agencies must have a current list of directors, board members, or the equivalent that contains contact information for those listed.

### TEFAP Agreement

The Emergency Food Assistance Program created this agreement to bound both contracting entity (Food Bank) and site (partner agency) to its terms and conditions.

### Agency Agreement

This agreement serves as an annual confirmation that the partner agency adheres to all guidelines set in the Partner Agency Policies & Procedures manual and follows the basic qualifications for being a partner agency.

## Food Storage & Handling

All Food Bank food storage and handling regulations must be followed to ensure client safety. It is imperative that partner agencies take the appropriate steps to ensure product quality and know the procedures for accepting donations from sources other than the Food Bank.

### Facility Evaluation

- Outside is free of debris/contaminants
- There should be no holes or gaps in the pipe conduits, screens, floor, ceiling, or doors to allow insects or rodents access to the food
- Food must be prepared, stored, and distributed in a Food Bank approved facility. Food Bank food may never be stored or distributed at an alternate location temporarily without prior notice and approval

### Dry Storage Area

- The food storage area should be locked when not supervised to prevent possible theft
- Food items must be stored at least four inches from the floor and walls and two feet from the ceiling
- Maintain a clean and dry storage area (climate controlled). The shelves should remain clean with no debris on the floor
- Garbage cans must be covered and emptied frequently to prevent unwanted pests
- Cleaning or toxic supplies must be stored lower than food items or in a separate storage area. Paper goods, diapers and feminine hygiene products should also be isolated from chemicals
- Any agency that repackages food must comply with applicable rules regarding prepared food within the county and city of the pantry. This includes the requirement for a current health department inspection and Food Manager's Certificate. *Please note: under no circumstances will USDA TEFAP commodities be permitted to be repackaged.* The repackaging of flour and sugar is strongly discouraged due to the possibility of cross contamination

- The partner agency must take adequate steps to ensure that food items obtained from sources other than the Food Bank have adequate labeling and are free of serious defects that may pose a health hazard to the partner agency's clients
- No severely dented/rusted cans
- Personal or volunteer food should be kept in a separate area to avoid confusion
- Baby food must be discarded after the expiration date
- The partner agency should rotate, label or take periodic inventory of the food items to ensure freshness. Remember, FEFO (First In First Out)
- Food items meet local & federal health standards

### Refrigerator/Freezer Areas

- Refrigerators and freezers should either be in a locked area, or they must be lockable
- Units clean and odor free
- Items stored in walk-in unit 4 inches off floor
- There must be a thermometer in all cold storage units. Refrigerators must be kept at 40 degrees F or below, while freezers at 0 degrees F or below (Exception: Temperatures may vary for designated produce-specific cold storage)
- No sources of contamination
- Each year, USDA TEFAP flour, grain, and pasta products must be refrigerated during the months of May through September
- Personal or volunteer food should be kept in a separate area to avoid confusion
- Food must be clearly labeled with the item name, ingredients, date, and/or a food allergen statement
- The partner agency must take adequate steps to ensure that food items obtained from sources other than the Food Bank have adequate labeling and are free of serious defects that may pose a health hazard to the Partner Agency's clients. All protein products must be frozen before the sell by date. Only properly refrigerated or frozen items may be accepted

- The partner agency should rotate, label or take periodic inventory of the food items to ensure freshness. Remember, FEFO (First In First Out)
- Food items meet local & federal health standards
- Food items obtained from another source must maintain the same health standards as product obtained from the Food Bank

### Perishable Foods

Perishable foods are defined as any food that requires refrigeration or that is frozen. If a partner agency wishes to receive perishable foods from the Food Bank, the partner agency must meet the following criteria:

- The partner agency must have an adequate number of appropriately insulated containers to transport refrigerated or frozen products from the Food Bank or regional distribution site
- Refrigerated products must be stored at 40°F or below and 0°F or below for frozen products
- Thawed perishables must be cooked or eaten immediately after thawing and never refrozen unless cooked first
- Eggs should be stored on the bottom shelf in the refrigerator to avoid cross contamination in case of breakage

### Prepared Foods

Partner agencies must meet the following criteria when preparing and distributing food products:

- Onsite kitchens must meet all state and local health department regulations and hold all applicable licenses. The partner agency must provide an up-to-date copy of the most recent health inspection report to the Food Bank. The partner agency must immediately notify the Food Bank of any changes in its status
- There must be a designated hand washing sink for all staff and volunteers handling food. This sink cannot be a food preparation sink and must be clearly labeled with a sign instructing staff and volunteers to wash their hands
- Prepared foods must be cooked, reheated and held for serving at safe temperatures: 160° F or higher for cooking, 140° F for holding, and 165° F when re-heating. A

probing thermometer should be used to accurately monitor the temperature of the food

- All frozen foods must be thawed in the refrigerator at temperatures between 35 and 40° F and cannot be re-frozen unless cooked at the appropriate temperatures. Food should be placed in a pan to catch drips while thawing
- Repackaged or opened food must be stored in rodent and insect proof containers. All non-produce food must be labeled with the name of the item and the date the package was opened or prepared
- Any agency that repackages food must comply with applicable rules regarding prepared food within the county and city of the pantry. This includes the requirement for a current health department inspection and Food Manager Certificate. *Please note: under no circumstances will USDA TEFAP be permitted to be repackaged.* The repackaging of flour and sugar is strongly discouraged due to the possibility of cross contamination.

## Ordering & Pick-Up Procedures

### Ordering Procedures

All partner agencies are assigned a specific day and time for food pick-ups. Appointment times remain the same until your agency requests a change in advance. If a partner agency is unable to pick up at its appointed time, an agency representative should call the Food Bank (512-282-2111) to reserve another pick up time.

Partner agencies are required to routinely order food from the Food Bank. Partners with a 6 month ordering absence will forfeit partnership with the Food Bank. To regain access to food and other Food Bank resources, the organization will need to reapply as a new partner agency. The Food Bank will not notify agencies with a pre-warning; it is up to each agency to ensure compliance with this policy (Refer to P.36 for termination policies).

### Agency Express

Agency Express is a web-based tool sponsored by Feeding America and AidMatrix that allows agencies to process and manages Food Bank food orders online. Agencies can search for food items, view item details, submit orders and review the status of orders through this system.

- Ordering limits are applied on some items. Limits are determined by both the quantity available in inventory and the number of families and individuals served by the partner agency.
- Once an order is placed, no additional items may be added to that order with the exception of items listed on the “Add-On Board.”

### Deadlines for placing orders

The below chart refers to all agencies, whether the pickup location is at the Food Bank or regional delivery sites.

Pick-up day	Ordering Window
Monday	Wednesday 10:00 a.m. to Thursday 9:00 a.m. (the previous week)
Tuesday	Thursday 10:00 a.m. to Friday 9:00 a.m. (the previous week)
Wednesday	Friday 10:00 a.m. (the previous week) to Monday 9:00 a.m.
Thursday	Monday 10:00 a.m. to Tuesday 9:00 a.m.
Friday	Tuesday 10:00 a.m. to Wednesday 9:00 a.m.

### CHOP (Choose Healthy Options Program)

CHOP is a tool that Partner Agencies can use to make healthier food choices when ordering products from the Food Bank’s inventory. CHOP is a scientifically-based food analysis tool that assigns a ranking to foods based on its nutrient content provided by the Nutrition Facts Label. The Food Bank inventory is analyzed using a point system that ranks similar foods on a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the highest ranking a food can receive. The program identifies different nutrient levels within foods and encourages nutrients to increase, like fiber, vitamins, minerals and protein and advises nutrients to reduce like saturated fat, sodium and sugar. When shopping on Agency Express, the CHOP ranking can be viewed by clicking on the item number. Choose the food with the lowest ranking for the healthiest option.

- A MC ranking (minimal contribution) means the food does not provide significant nutrients per serving. Examples include condiments, coffee, teas, butter, margarine, oils, etc.
- A NR ranking (non-ranking) means the food is not able to be ranked due to labeling or packaging.

### Pick-Up Procedures

- Partner agencies must sign in prior to all order and shop-for pickups. All agency representatives will need to be knowledgeable of the account name and account number. Food bank staff reserves the right to contact any agency director or pastor to solicit permission on suspect representatives. Agencies are required to sign out before leaving.
- Shop-For can only be accessed during a Partner Agency's scheduled pick-up time.
- Partner agencies may back up their vehicle to an empty dock. Only one (2) vehicles may be backed up to the dock at a time
- Partner agencies must adhere to all instructions given by Food Bank warehouse staff and regional drivers and treat them with respect
- Partner agencies that are more than 20 minutes late may not be allowed to add Shop-For items to their order. Agencies more than 20 minutes late without prior notification may be asked to reschedule the pick-up day and time at the discretion of Food Bank warehouse staff
- Partner agencies have a maximum of 30 minutes to load and Shop-For.
- Partner agencies that do not arrive at the designated pick-up time and do not call the Food Bank may be subject to a \$35 restocking fee
- Regional agencies are permitted to order for pick up at the warehouse during the weeks not scheduled for delivery
- After all food is loaded, the partner agency representative should bring the signed copy of the invoice to the warehouse staff
- Shortages on orders need to be reported to dock staff prior to leaving or no more than 24 hours after picking up order

- Partner Agencies are required to return all banana boxes that have the food bank's logo either to regional delivery sites or to the receiving docks at the food bank.
- Partner agencies are responsible for loading orders. Only individuals loading the vehicle should be on the dock; all others should wait in the reception area
- The partner agency should provide a vehicle(s) large enough to transport orders. The agency may be charged a \$35 re-stocking fee if it cannot pick up the entire order
- Food Bank personnel reserve the right to limit the amount of product leaving the Food Bank dock if the product load appears to exceed the safety limitations of the vehicles capacity
- Partner agencies are responsible for ensuring orders are correct. It is recommended that each case or box be checked by an agency representative as it is loaded into the vehicle. When an agency representative signs the order invoice, he/she accepts it as correct and will pay the handling fee for all items
- Partner Agencies receiving dairy and/or frozen items must bring coolers to transport the items if travel time exceeds 20 minutes. The agency may not receive these items without the appropriate insulated containers or freezer blankets
- The Food Bank schedules two pick-up appointments every 30 minutes, so it is important that each partner agency loads its vehicle(s) in a timely manner

### Regional Delivery

The Food Bank provides free delivery of food orders to partner agencies outside the greater Austin area through regional food delivery. Although Feeding America allows Food Banks to charge up to 10¢/lb. for delivery, the Central Texas Food Bank provides this service at no charge. The procedure for RFD is as follows:

- Each agency must arrive at the designated RFD drop site on or before the scheduled time and must be knowledgeable of their account name and number. The Food Bank driver is not obligated to wait for a late arrival. Late arrivals will be served last. If the driver has to bring the order back to the Food Bank, that agency will be charged a \$35 re-stocking fee
- Children under the age of 12 are prohibited at a RFD site
- Agency representatives should never enter the Food Bank truck. Only Food Bank staff are authorized to operate Food Bank equipment



- It is the agency's responsibility to provide a vehicle large enough to accommodate the order. The agency should provide enough help to load its order in a quick and timely manner. Agencies are encouraged to help each other
- Trash should be put in containers and boxes and pallets neatly stacked
- Partner agencies receiving dairy and/or frozen items must bring coolers to transport these items. Agencies will not receive these items without the appropriate insulated containers or freezer blankets
- Partner agencies must check orders against the ordering invoice as the order is loaded into the vehicle. Any discrepancy must be brought to the attention of the Food Bank driver at the time of delivery. Credit will not be issued for any shortage reported after the agency has departed the RFD drop site
- Pick up procedures are subject to change by the Food Bank driver. Agencies will be notified in writing before new policies take effect
- RFD partner agencies are permitted to schedule an order for pick up at the Food Bank warehouse on the weeks where no delivery service is available
  - Example: If an agency receives an order in Marble Falls on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month, the agency is able to schedule a pick up at the Food Bank on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> week of the month by calling 512-684-2150

Food Bank delivery drivers bring pallets of the product and unload them at a pre-determined location. Partner agencies are responsible for breaking down the pallets and moving the product to the distribution area. The recipient agency agrees to provide necessary training to their staff and volunteers for distribution and delivery of product.

## Warehouse Procedures

### Warehouse Regulations

- Sign in and out!
- Arrive no earlier than 20 minutes before your scheduled pick-up
- Only 3 people per partner agency are allowed on the dock at one time
- Do not smoke or chew tobacco while in the building or on the dock

- No food or drink in the warehouse
- Electronic devices are prohibited
- Only individuals 18 or older are allowed in the warehouse
- Children under the age of twelve must remain in the reception area under adult supervision at all times. The Food Bank staff is not responsible for supervising children
- Use side ramp or stairs to get on dock (no jumping on/off)
- Do not operate warehouse equipment
- Be aware of special notices posted in and around the warehouse
- Notify the warehouse staff of any irregularities or potentially hazardous conditions (spills, etc.)
- Cased items in the cooler are to be handled only by Food Bank personnel. Partner agencies should not remove cased items from the cooler, even if they are listed on the work ticket
- Warehouse hours are subject to change at the discretion of the Food Bank
- Closed-toe shoes (no sandals or flip flops allowed)

### Shop-For

- After loading orders, partner agency personnel may take advantage of the “shop for” bread, pastries, produce and dairy. “Shop for” includes available produce from the shopping list as well as donated produce
- Breads, tortillas and pastries fall under one category and do not have to be separated. The “shop for” items must be boxed separately and weighed by Food Bank warehouse staff, including those items for which there is no charge
- In the cooler, Partner Agencies may select items only from the wire shelves in the front of the cooler or from the pallets on the floor in front of the shelves. Agencies are not allowed to shop outside of the agency shop-for cooler. Again, each type of product should be weighed separately (e.g. dairy, produce, breads, pastries, etc.). Sandwiches should be weighed with dairy products and tortillas should be weighed with bread
  - Only agencies with the proper storage may receive perishable items

- Agency personnel should stack any trays they may have emptied in both the cooler and the bread room
- When loading uncased product, care should be taken that heavy products (meat, cheese) are not loaded on lighter, more fragile products (pastries, bread)
- No eating or drinking is allowed in the cooler or the bread room
- There is a 30-minute time limit for “shop for.” Any agency exceeding this time limit will be asked to leave

## Return Policies

Food product may be returned for credit only if its conditions are unsafe for use or consumption. Such condition includes excessive rust, dents or infestation. The final decision as to the safety of the item will be made by the Food Bank Product Recovery Manager who is trained to make such determinations.

- Partner agencies are encouraged to file a damage report at [www.austinfoodbank.org/damaged-product-reporting](http://www.austinfoodbank.org/damaged-product-reporting) within 48 hours
- Credit will be issued on the agency’s next monthly statement
- Food Bank reserves the right to replace the item with a comparable item

## Grievances

### Grievances against partner agencies

- The Food Bank Agency Relations Department must respond to all public partner agency complaints
- AR may notify the partner agency and/or board of directors about the complaint, and if action is required, will initiate investigation protocols
- AR reserves the right to visit any partner agency unannounced to investigate complaints made by the public
- Investigation results will be documented in the partner agency’s file, and the partner agency will be notified in writing if any action needs to be taken

## Grievances against the Food Bank

- Partner agencies may submit a written grievance statement to the Agency Services Director. The statement must include the reasons for the grievance, pertinent facts, and what the partner agency believes would be an acceptable solution to the problem
- The Agency Services Director will develop a plan of action in writing within seven working days of receiving the grievance notice
- The partner agency may appeal this decision to the Food Bank CEO within ten working days. The decision on appeal will be given to the partner agency in writing within seven working days of receiving the appeal. The Food Bank CEO's decision is final
- A partner agency will not be discriminated against or suffer any reprisals by the Food Bank as a result of filing a grievance

## Holds, Suspension, Termination, & Appeal Processes

If partner agencies violate Food Bank policies and procedures, there are three possible actions: Account Hold, Suspension, or Termination.

### Holds

Partner Agency accounts may be placed on a “Hold” status for the following reasons:

- **Credit Hold** – Agency has exceeded the credit limit and/or has not paid bill.
- **Document Hold** – Agency has been prompted to submit documentation (Training certificates, board of directors list, 501(c)(3) / IRS documents, etc.) and is not responding to or communicating with the Agency Relations team in a timely manner.
- **Monitor Hold** – Agency is due for annual monitor and is not responding to or communicating with the Agency Relations team in a timely manner.
- **USDA Hold** – Agency has violated USDA policies and must implement a corrective action plan.
- **Report Hold** – Monthly reports must be submitted through the online reporting system on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month that is being reported (Example: November's report due on December 1<sup>st</sup>). There is a 15-day grace period to file the report before a report hold is placed on the agency account.

### Suspension

The purpose of a suspension is to discontinue a partner agency's Food Bank use for a specific amount of time due to a major violation. A suspended agency loses all the rights and privileges of a partner agency as well as its status as such.

- A partner agency may be suspended without first being placed on Hold for serious violations
- A suspension shall not last more than six months
- The suspension and corrective action plan must be communicated in writing to the partner agency
- A suspended partner agency may regain its partner agency status if the Agency Relations Manager approves and if the agency has completed its corrective action plan
- Example of a suspension violation (but not limited to): Moving Food Bank resources to a new location without previous approval

#### Suspension: Excessive Monthly Report Holds

- Once an agency has accrued 4 report holds in a calendar year, the account will automatically be suspended until the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month. The suspension will not be removed until the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month, even after the late report is received.
- Every late monthly report received after an agency has accrued 4 report holds in a calendar year will automatically be suspended until the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month. The suspension will not be removed until the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month, even after the late report is received.
- Excessive holds in a calendar year may lead to termination

#### Termination

The purpose of termination is to discontinue a partner agency's access to the Food Bank due to a violation or partner/food bank request. Termination means that an agency loses all rights and privileges of a Partner Agency as well as its status as such.

- A partner agency may be terminated without having first been put on hold or suspension for serious violations
- The termination notification must be communicated in writing to the partner agency

- A terminated partner agency may reapply to become a Food Bank partner agency no sooner than one year after termination
- Example of a termination violation (but not limited to): Partner agency selling food that it has received from the Food Bank

### Appeals Process

- A partner agency may appeal a suspension or termination, but not a hold
- A partner agency must submit a written appeal to the Agency Services Director within ten working days of their suspension/termination notice. If the appeal is not received within 10 working days, an appeal hearing will be denied
- An appeal hearing of the Food Bank CEO, COO, and Agency Services Director will convene to address the appeal. The Food Bank membership privileges of the partner agency may be suspended pending the decision of the hearing
- A notification of the appeal decision will be sent to the partner agency within seven working days
- If a terminated partner agency is reactivated as a Food Bank partner agency, it will be placed on a 90 day evaluation period. At the end of the 90 days the partnership will be assessed by the Agency Services Director to ensure that all minimum requirements are being met. If the agency has failed to meet these standards the partnership will be terminated with no appeals process

## Programs & Resources

### Agency Retail Pick-Up

Agency retail pickup is one of the many ways the Food Bank is working to reduce food waste and ensure the families we serve have access to the fresh, healthy foods they need to thrive. This initiative saves time and resources by empowering partner agencies to pick up food donations directly from retailers near them. Interested partner agencies may contact the Agency Relations department for more information.

### Fresh Produce Containers

The Central Texas Food Bank produce hubs allow partner agencies to receive additional fresh produce from a partner in their area (Currently Caritas of Waco and Churches Touching Lives for Christ in Temple). Partner agencies are encouraged to source fresh, healthy produce through the produce hubs. This food is separate from regular Food Bank orders and is coordinated directly with the produce container host site. All produce hubs currently require no handling fees, mixed loads of a variety of produce, flexible pick-up times, and fresher purchased produce from the Food Bank. To participate, partners must sign the produce container Agency Agreement online and submit a pick-up request form to the site of their choosing.

### Fresh Food for Families-FFFF

Fresh Food For Families provides free monthly distributions of fruits, vegetables and other fresh foods to low-income families. These distributions supplement existing grocery budgets with much-needed nutritious foods. An average of 4,489 families gets fresh produce and other fresh foods through the Fresh Food For Families program each month.

### HOPE (Healthy Options Program for the Elderly)

The mission of the Healthy Options Program for the Elderly (HOPE) is to reduce hunger among low-income seniors age 55 or older by providing them with free monthly distributions of healthy, shelf-stable foods. Each month, HOPE clients receive a 15- to 20-pound bag of non-perishable groceries as nutritious additions to their existing diets. Items include canned fruits and vegetables, canned protein, cereal and pasta

### Kids Café

Kids Cafe serves as a direct partnership between the Food Bank and existing after-school programs to provide nutritious meals to low-income children who may not otherwise have access to healthy and balanced nutrition outside of school. Kids Cafes are safe, nurturing places where neighborhood children can go after school to receive a free meal and participate in programs such as homework assistance, physical activities and more.

### Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides nutritious lunches and snacks to children of low-income families who lack a dependable source of nutritious meals during summer breaks. SFSP is a program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## Backpack

The Backpack program is designed to meet weekend meal needs for children in low-income families. At the end of each week, participating children receive bags of healthy, nutritious, non-perishable meals that they take home with them and eat during the weekend. Each Backpack contains approximately four meals.

## Mobile Food Pantry

By taking the food directly to clients, our mobile food pantries fill geographic and service gaps in emergency food assistance by providing Central Texans in need with basic staples, fruits and vegetables, and frozen foods where local food assistance services cannot keep up with demand.

## CHOICES Nutrition Education

CHOICES is a nutrition education program that helps individuals and families make smart choices at mealtime. The classes help people eligible for SNAP (food stamps) make healthy food choices within a limited budget and choose active lifestyles. All classes are free and open to qualified individuals.

## Disaster Relief

When the unthinkable happens, the Food Bank is prepared to respond. We work with Feeding America, the American Red Cross, federal and state agencies and other partners to provide direct food and water assistance, transportation of emergency supplies to affected areas and more.

## Breast Feeding

In an effort to meet the health needs of our youngest community members, the Food Bank has expanded services to include Breastfeeding Education to encourage, educate and support families in their breastfeeding efforts. The Breastfeeding Education program provides services through a trained breastfeeding peer counselor, a mother who has personal breastfeeding experience, a passion for helping other families achieve their breastfeeding goals and education and training to provide core support during both prenatal and postpartum periods. Services provided to SNAP-eligible families include prenatal classes and counseling, early postpartum support, home visits and referral to other agencies. Contact the Food Bank's Nutrition Education department to host a class, to refer a client or to receive more information.

## Social Services



Social services outreach and education provides one-on-one application assistance to families and individuals qualifying for SNAP (food stamp) benefits to help them move out of the hunger line.

The Food Bank's Social Services Outreach Department (SSOD) coordinators provide phone and in-person consultations for families and individuals in need of social services assistance. In partnership with Texas Health and Human Services, SSOD coordinators educate community members and partner agencies on state-administered and federally-funded social services and health care programs:

- SNAP (food stamps)
- Children's Medicaid
- Medicaid for adults
- CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program)
- CHIP Perinatal Program
- TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)
- Women's Health Program (family planning and health screenings)

SSOD outreach workers help in several ways:

- explaining social services programs
- filling out applications completely and correctly
- delivering completed applications to HHSC
- following up on applications
- advocating on behalf of applicants

Contact the SSOD team to schedule a coordinator at your next distribution.

### Advocacy

The Food Bank realizes hunger is a symptom of other societal problems such as economic conditions, poverty and unemployment. Other issues including drought, food and gas prices, healthcare costs and limited social service support also affect the demand on services provided

by Food Banks and our partner agency networks. The Food Bank continues to be a leader in public policy issues affecting hunger – from City Hall to the U.S. Capitol. We work in partnership with other Texas Food Banks as well as many other organizations on behalf of the hungry, to ensure that access to healthy food is available for all Central Texans. As a Food Bank partner agency, we ask that you not only stay informed about our advocacy & public policy efforts, but get involved and participate in them. Advocate for hunger relief – sign up for our action alerts at <https://www.austinfoodbank.org/get-involved/advocate>.

