

Organizing & Operating an Efficient Emergency Food Pantry



CAPITAL AREA
FOOD BANK
OF TEXAS

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Capital Area Food Bank of Texas

Mission

The mission of the Capital Area Food Bank of Texas is to nourish hungry people and lead the community in ending hunger.

Background

Since 1981, CAFB has distributed more than 75 million pounds of food and grocery products to more than 340 food pantries and other human service agencies in 21 counties in Central Texas.

In September of 1997, CAFB moved from its previous location to its new 55,000 square-foot facility on South Congress in Austin. Since then, distribution to partner agencies has grown 20-25% each year. Today, CAFB serves more agencies more effectively than ever before through expanded programs and services like Rural Food Delivery, Weekly Distribution, Fresh Food For Families, Kids Cafe, and Healthy Options Program for the Elderly (HOPE).

CAFB is able to provide food products throughout the variety of programs thanks in part to our affiliation with America's Second Harvest (A2H). A2H supports a network of food banks throughout the United States by soliciting national food manufacturers for donations that benefit all of its members. Affiliation with A2H allows a food bank to receive many food products that they would be unable to receive otherwise. CAFB also solicits donations from local food companies for distribution to partner agencies such as yours.

food bank – an organization that receives and stores food and other grocery products and then distributes these donations to human service agencies that serve people in need.

food pantries (direct service provider) – an organization that distributes free food and services directly to community members in need.

Organizing and Operating an Efficient Food Pantry

This guide is designed to help agencies organize an emergency food pantry or to improve an existing operation. The guidelines regarding safe food storage, client information intake, and food distribution will help to ensure that the partnership with Capital Area Food Bank of Texas (CAFB) is a successful and productive alliance.

What is an Emergency Food Pantry?

The majority of the CAFB affiliated emergency food pantries are sponsored by faith-based organizations which has a mission to provide food to those in need in the community. However, some organizations operate a food pantry as an additional service to complement their primary mission. While all food pantries share a common goal of feeding the hungry, each pantry's approach to meeting this goal will vary. Each pantry is different in the size and scope, depending on the following variables; a) the amount of funding available, b) your capacity for storage, and c) the number of available volunteers. The food pantry may be a small part of the overall mission of the non-profit or the sole reason for the agency's existence. There is no typical emergency food pantry.

Key to Be a Successful Emergency Food Pantry

A successful food pantry requires that you have the motivation to be proactive in the fight against hunger and the empathy to treat every client with respect and compassion. The reality is that hunger is a problem that has affected more people in the past few years than ever before. The number of people seeking assistance with food has increased substantially. This alarming trend is illustrated by the increasing amount of food that leaves our dock and the statistics documented by the staff of the food pantries throughout Central Texas.

Paid staff, volunteers or a combination of both may staff an emergency food pantry. The important thing is to keep the shelves stocked with food and to have interviewers with patience, empathy, and compassion.



The following section is for the agency just beginning their pantry operation or an existing food pantry looking for ways to rejuvenate a program that is already in place.

Asset Mapping of Your Service Area

asset mapping – An asset map is an inventory of the strengths and gifts of the people who make up a community. Asset mapping reveals the assets of the entire community and highlights the interconnections among them, which in turn reveals how to access those assets.

Asset mapping can be a tool at many stages of the community-building process, and involve many different participants. It is particularly useful as a starting point in the process. Once the assets are identified and accessible, a variety of new ideas about directions for community building may follow. As more people come into the process, bringing ideas as well as skills and resources, new approaches to old problems can evolve.

The best way to maximize the number of people that may be served and the amount of food that can be distributed is to look at the resources within the community. Meet with others in your city or neighborhood with like-minded goals and missions. The key is to make your pantry an efficient way to feed people, engage the community, encourage involvement, and sustain the program for a long period.

How to begin mapping your community's assets

- Begin by talking to clients and other social service agencies, looking online for reliable statistics about your community and reviewing CAFB's stats at www.austinfoodbank.org.
- Make a list of all the social service organizations and leaders in your county. Research online and in the community to make sure you really know what's out there.
- Call a meeting of civic committees, community organizers, local non-profits, city officials, churches, religious organizations, etc. The decision-makers from these groups should attend this meeting, as it does little good to have a meeting with people who recognize the need but are unable to commit to anything tangible.
- Identify the goal of the organization; i.e. feeding people in need.
- Decide, as the facilitator, what your organization will bring to the table. Then ask what other organizations can contribute to the mission. Other organizations may be able to provide building space, vehicles to pick up food, office equipment, funding, or volunteers.

Building an effective collaboration can be difficult if one agency has more to do than others. One of the hardest things to accomplish is to ensure that all members within this group have a vital role to play in the overall mission. Encouraging everyone to take an active role is important in creating a sense of ownership. The key to success is remembering the mission at hand – feeding our neighbors in need.

How to Maximize Your Resources

There are many ways to enhance your purchasing power. You can stretch your dollar by making the most of your resources.

- The shopping list from the Food Bank has many items that are useful for use in daily operations of the agency, as well as for providing food to those in need. Agencies may pull non-food items (hand soap, toilet paper, cleaning supplies, etc.) from inventory for use in operations or upkeep in support of the agency's food distribution program. Be mindful that any such institutional uses must by law be "incidental to primary use of the care of the ill, needy, or infants" (*America's Second Harvest Manual*).
- Encourage partnerships with other churches to increase purchasing power. For example, there are many churches without the available space necessary to open a pantry in their own facility but feel a need and desire to help feed those in need. Encourage them to provide a monthly stipend to your organization to help support your program.
- At times, the availability of some donated or purchased products from the Food Bank is limited. High protein items such as peanut butter, beans or nonfood items such as diapers are a "hot" commodity among emergency food pantries. Encourage churches and other social service agencies in your community to hold product drives for those items that typically are hard to get. This will help supplement your pantry with those much-needed items.
- Gain support within your own church, synagogue, civic group, etc.
- Encourage youth groups, teens needing community service hours, or anyone able to help with fundraising to help support your pantry.

Pantry Operation

The operators of an emergency food pantry have many considerations to think about before opening to the public. Hours are very important. Many pantries will make the mistake of only being open during the day. It is generally easier to find people that are willing and able to volunteer during the day. However, the working poor



are one of the largest groups seeking food assistance. Daytime hours require people to take time off from work to get food for their families. A good suggestion would be to be open during evening hours as well as daytime hours. You might suggest that non-working people come during the day, and open during the evening for those with steady employment. Another good practice is to coordinate your hours with other pantries. Try not to be open at the same time. If the times are staggered, you will be able to provide more coverage.

Before you get started

1. **Set guidelines for behavior.** Each agency has the right to refuse service to anyone that uses obscenities, is under the influence of a controlled substance, or makes you feel in danger, etc.
2. The following information should be posted on a sign for your guests to see:
 - Areas of coverage-Will the agency serve a certain set of zip codes, etc.?

- **Agency Mission**-This should be posted in the waiting area. An agency mission should be short, sweet and to the point, stating the purpose of the agency.
 - **Hours and days of operation** This should be posted and visible to the agency's guests.
 - **Eligibility requirements:** Determine what information your clients need to bring in order to be served. Do they need picture ID, old utility bills, etc. or is a verbal declaration of need acceptable? Just remember that each person must have the same requirements. It is a good idea to post this information.
 - **Length of time between visits:** Will the same client be able to come once a month, twice, or more? This will depend on how much you can financially afford to provide. Being flexible and willing to adjust when necessary is important. You will learn with experience.
3. Provide training for volunteers; intake procedures, interviewing skills, empathy training, good dent versus bad dents, etc.
 4. Arrange for a private area for the interviewer and the client. This provides the client a more comfortable atmosphere during the interview process.
 5. Provide small toys or books in the waiting room to keep children occupied.
 6. Arrange for enough chairs in the waiting room.

Becoming a Partner Agency

One of the many benefits of becoming a partner agency with CAFB is that your organization may obtain a variety of high quality donated product at very low cost because of your savings on food costs. You can channel your limited resources to your agency's other important programs, like counseling, health care, housing or utility assistance. Becoming a partner agency with CAFB also allows agency staff to receive food handling training and ongoing support through educational opportunities for the agency's feeding program. CAFB annual Agency Appreciation Forum also provides a great networking opportunity to meet your peers, share ideas, and hear about other partners programs in our network.

The minimal cost for CAFB membership consists of an annual fee of \$5.00. In addition, a handling fee called "Shared Maintenance" (SMF) of \$0.15 / pound or less is assessed for most manufacturer-cased products, salvage items and USDA commodities. The SMF helps offset some of CAFB's operational costs, such as refrigeration and transportation. A variety of fresh produce, bread, pastries and dairy products are available on a daily basis, free of charge (no SMF).

The first step is to complete the application packet for partnership. You can download this from the www.austinfoodbank.org

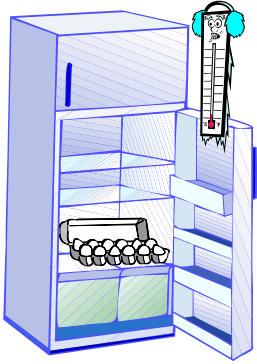
After your application for partnership with the Capital Area Food Bank of Texas is received and approved, our Agency Relations staff will inspect your facility for compliance with our policies and procedures which follow this section. At that time they will also determine which products your agency is eligible to receive and will help you develop an ordering and pick-up schedule. If your agency is located outside the Austin area, we can arrange for the agency to pick up food items at one of our convenient Rural Food Delivery sites.

CAFB Minimum Requirements (See Policies & Procedures, section III)

- There is a \$5.00 annual fee for membership and a handling fee of 15¢ per pound for all items with the exception of dairy, produce, and breads and pastries. This handling fee helps to offset CAFB's operational costs for refrigeration and transportation.
- Volunteers are required to come to the CAFB Orientation class to learn about proper food handling, food storage, civil rights training, and Food Bank policies and procedures. *(At least one person from each agency is required to come to the class annually.)*
- The Capital Area Food Bank of Texas requires that you post signage in your pantry regarding non-discrimination and civil rights of clients. The Food Bank provides these signs for your facilities will be checked to see that proper signage is visible to the clients.

Food Storage

Keeping food fresh requires attention to proper food safety rules at each stage. From transportation of product to storage, and finally preparation best practices are essential. Much of the donated product received at the Food Bank may be close to its *best if used by date*. It is imperative that you take steps to maximize the length of time the product lasts. To do this, you must be sure that the storage location is capable of holding food items at the appropriate temperature.



- Perishable products such as meats and dairy products will begin to spoil if not held at the proper temperature and could become a health hazard.
- During transportation and storage, perishable product should be kept at 40 degrees or below. You must bring a cooler with ice when you pick up your food order to transport items if you are traveling more than 20 minutes. The products should be promptly stored in the refrigerator or freezer.
- Eggs should be stored on the bottom shelf in the refrigerator. This is to avoid cross contamination in case of breakage.
- A thermometer should be placed in the refrigerator and the freezer so you can easily monitor temperatures. You must maintain a temperature log and record the temperature on a daily basis. If your agency is not open daily, check the temperature on the days you are open. This will allow you to check for any fluctuations in temperature.
- When you are cooking perishable items, it is important to keep food hot (above 140 degrees F) until it is served, then quickly chill the product for storage if not consumed immediately. Perishable foods kept at room temperature are in the danger zone. The longer they are kept at room temperature, the more likely food is to spoil which may result in food poisoning.

Dry shelf stable food storage

- Food must be stored a minimum of 6" from the floor. This allows for adequate cleaning and inspection for infestation of insects or rodents.
- Food stored on pallets is unacceptable as it increases the likelihood that bugs will nest in the crevices of the slats. The only time it is acceptable for food to be stored on pallets is when it is being used as a staging area and the food will not be stored there for long.
- Food and non-food items must be stored on separate shelves. If space is an issue, cleaning supplies, laundry detergent, etc. must be on the bottom to avoid cross contamination in case of leakage.
- The door leading to the food storage pantry must be lockable.
- There should be no outside light visible through cracks in the wall or ceiling of the pantry.
- Adequate pest control must be in place. If you are doing your own pest control using products such as RAID® or a boric acid mixture, a chemical log of the chemicals used must be available in case someone becomes ill.
- Organize your food using a "First In, First Out" (FIFO) method of distribution. This simply means to rotate your stock to assure that the items that have been on the shelves the longest are the first to be distributed.
- Maintain a clean and dry storage area. The shelves should clean with no debris on the floor.
- Keep non-canned foods (flour, rice, etc. that are in permeable packaging) in rodent proof bins such as clean plastic containers with tight lids. Do not overstock this type of food since weevil infestation may occur after prolonged storage periods.
- Screens must be in good repair so that unwanted pests cannot reach the food.
- There should be no holes or gaps in the pipe conduits, floor, ceiling, or doors to allow insects or rodents access to the food.



- Garbage cans must be covered.
- The area must be cool and dry (climate controlled) to guard food against the outside elements.
- Do not use contact paper on the shelves as the glue attracts insects.
- Food may not be stored in a separate storage facility.
- Food may not be stored in a residence.

CAFB Evaluation of Product Received for Distribution

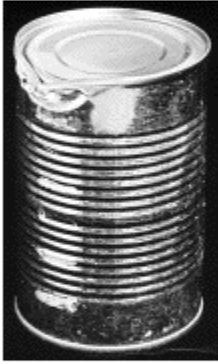
The Capital Area Food Bank of Texas does everything possible to see that the food that partner agencies receive from us has been evaluated for signs of cross contamination and infestation. We also evaluate the integrity of the packaging, whether it is permeable or non-permeable.

You may find that your local health department and the Food Bank standards differ. There have been times when the local health department deducted points from an inspection due to the dented cans on the agency shelf. In many cases the cans were received from CAFB and passed our inspection. This has been an ongoing issue between the Food Bank and the local health departments. The health department acknowledges that at times the packaging may not be in the best condition. In most cases, that is why they are considered salvaged products. The health departments also are aware that we use guidelines set forth from the America's Second Harvest food salvage program. The Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) and America's Second Harvest collaborated to develop a comprehensive document to facilitate a consensus among both entities. We use the Guidelines for Evaluation and Disposition of Damaged Canned Food Containers (GEDDCFC).

While we do understand that the city and county health departments are responsible for assuring that the food given to clients will not harm them, we also assume that same responsibility when we evaluate product. Because the Food Bank routinely receives dented product from our grocery store salvage program we have measures in place to evaluate everything that comes into the Food Bank. The product is inspected by the product recovery department at the Food Bank before being released to the public. You will find the guidelines and samples of storage in the appendix of this guide.

You should also note that as a food pantry, you are not required to get a health inspection of your pantry unless you plan to repackage food. It is typically not necessary to go to the trouble or expense of an inspection unless you plan to prepare meals as well as run a pantry. You should always remember that repackaging USDA commodities is never allowed. Please do not do so under any circumstances. Guidelines for safe food storage and distribution may be found in the appendix.

Serious Can Defects



Dented at junction
of side and end



Sharp dent or
dent on seam



Swollen or bulging



Pitted rust or
leaking

Cans with any of these defects
may be unsafe.
Discard them!



Intake Procedures

The idea of conducting an interview or intake may cause anxiety on the part of the interviewer and the interviewee if the experience is something new. The same questions should be asked of every person that is interviewed for consistency and to avoid the appearance of discrimination. Because we live in such diverse society with possible language barriers, the people working in the pantry should represent the population of the neighborhood you are serving. It is very important that your agency have someone available to help with translation when possible.

Client's records are to be kept confidential and this message must be effectively conveyed to your client. Any information you receive from your clients should be kept under lock and key.

Remember, if you plan to use a computer to store your information, you still must get your clients signatures annually.

In order to receive USDA commodities, there are only five pieces of information that you are required to collect from your guests. The following is a list of the minimum requirements for your intake form. All of which are included in the mandatory intake form for your clients that is located in the appendix.

Name
Address
Household size
Income, and
Signature.

Empathy- Identification with and understanding of another situation, feelings, and motives.

Sympathy- A feeling or expression of pity or sorrow for the distress of another.

Interviewing clients

Always treat clients (guests) with respect. Asking for help is hard for most people. Whether this is the first time or just one of many times that your guest is requesting food assistance, they deserve to be treated with dignity. Taking the time to talk to people is an important way to show that they are valued. Sympathy is not necessary; in fact, the act of sympathy is counter-productive in most cases. Empathy is called for when attempting to value another person. Try putting yourself into your guest's shoes. Empathize (appreciate and understand) with their struggle, but do not sympathize (pity) the person. We must make every effort to not judge people based on the clothes they wear, the car they drive, the way they talk, etc. We cannot possibly know their circumstances, and we should not make judgments based on assumptions.

One should consider the possibility that in a church-run food pantry, a client might also be a church member. It is difficult for some to ask questions regarding income. There is a form located in the appendix with the income guidelines. All the interviewer needs to ask is if the person earns less than the number listed in the column with the appropriate household size. If they do, ask them to sign the form to keep for your files. Many find this approach less intrusive and you are still getting the necessary information.

Verbal declaration of need should be sufficient. Written documents, pay stubs, or utility bills, are not necessary for USDA or Food Bank purposes. Many agencies choose to take more information from their clients as a means of helping to identify resources other than food that the clients need. Some ask for children's ages or clothing sizes if they also have a clothing closet. A good rule of thumb is to not collect more information than will actually be used. There is no need to be intrusive in your guest's lives. There are other samples of intake forms in the appendix. Choose the one that is right for your agency or come up with one of your own.

Various Food Distribution Methods

There are different schools of thought regarding the right way to distribute food. Some people will argue that as long as people have little to eat, then any assistance you can give them is better than what they have. Others comment on the abundance of calorie packed foods that are available. One might wonder how beneficial it is to

hand someone a box of donuts. The truth is, if the choice were between a box of donuts and a bag of potatoes, then of course, the potatoes would be the smarter choice for their versatility and nutritional value. The reality is, what you give someone to eat should be based on the persons situation. For a homeless person that has no means of preparing the potatoes and really needs empty calories to take him from the street where he is sleeping to the soup kitchen, the donuts may seem beneficial.

If you learn anything from this guide, it should be that there is no “one way” to distribute food to those in need. Methods vary from one to the other based on types of food on hand. The storage capabilities of each agency also determine what goes into the bag. If refrigeration is not available, then an agency is unable to provide fresh fruit and vegetables. As a result, this agency may provide canned and dry foods only. The absence of a freezer to store meat at the agency means that you must find another source of protein for your clients. You work within your resources or explore other options.

Distribution practices will also vary with the people that run the pantry. Some will look specifically at the nutritional value while others realize that they have to make choices based on the kinds of food they have available. You may find that many of the choices are made for you based on funding, donations of food, and storage space available. Inherently, because we are all trying to provide food to people, we can hope that what we are able to give will be appreciated.

The following ideas are designed to promote thought within your organization to decide the best approach for you. Find a process that works best for you, your organization and your volunteers. Many times, you will find that you are able to glean some ideas from a variety of sources and come up with the one that best suits your needs.

If you have the luxury of maintaining a stocked pantry with lots of variety and clients have the means to prepare food, then the following guide will help provide a more nutritionally balanced approach. The following ideas for packing a nutritious food bag were developed by University of Texas nutrition interns and our own registered Dietician. We have made a conscious effort to bring in foods with high nutritional content to help facilitate your efforts of making smart food choices for you and your clients.

Do's and Don'ts of Designing a Nutritious Food Bag

Do's:

1. Choose Foods High in Vitamins, Minerals, Fiber

- Carrots rather than green beans or corn
- Wheat bread over white bread
- Fruit juices instead of sodas or tea
- Fresh and frozen produce v. canned
- Low sodium canned v. regular canned

2. Choose Foods/Snacks Low in Fat

- Look for “reduced fat” and “low fat” and “fat free” on packages.
- Better snack choices include graham crackers, pretzels, vanilla wafers, ginger snaps, rice cakes. Dried fruits and nuts, melba toast, plain popcorn
- Beans are a good source of protein; they're even better when combined with rice
- Tuna and sardines are low in fat, high in protein, B vitamins, iron; sardines are also high in calcium
- Read the food label;” items should contain no more than 30% of calories from fat.

3. Follow the Guidelines of the Food Guide Pyramid

- Eat 6-11 servings of bread and cereals per day
- Eat 2-3 servings of fruit
- Eat 3-5 servings of vegetables
- Eat 2-4 servings of milk and milk products (including cheese, yogurt)

- Eat 2-3 servings of meat or meat alternative (such as peanut butter, eggs, dried beans, nuts)

Be sure your clients receive a variety of foods from these groups.

4. Include at Least One of the Following in Each Bag:

(Use this guideline for a family of four for three days)

- a. Beef, poultry, seafood, beans and rice, nuts, peanut butter for protein
- b. Nonfat dry milk, milk and yogurt (if available), soy products such as tofu, green leafy vegetables for calcium, vitamin D
- c. Spinach, carrots, peas, zucchini, squash, mixed greens, broccoli for vitamins and minerals
- d. Include one dark green or orange colored vegetable per day
- e. Any fresh, canned, frozen or dried fruits, especially citrus fruits (vitamins C) and melons for vitamin A, C
 - Choose fresh and dried fruits for higher nutrient content
 - Choose unsweetened canned fruits and juices in light syrup v. heavy syrup
- f. Whole grain breads, bagels, muffins, hot/cold cereals, pita bread, tortillas, saltines, rice, and pasta for nutrients such as fiber
- g. Loaf of bread or a package of tortillas or pasta
- h. 1-lb. Or one 14 oz. box of rice
- i. 2 cans of beans or 1lb. bag of dry beans
- j. 2 cans of tuna or 1 can salmon (or use other meat alternative; peanut butter, beans)
- k. 2-3 cans of fruit or 8 pieces of fruit
- l. 3 cans or 2-3 10oz./1lb. packages of frozen vegetables
- m. 2 quarts of milk (1 gallon with children/adolescents) or equivalent amount of dry milk

Don'ts:

- 1. Don't overdo it on junk-** sugary, high fat foods such as cookies, pastries, candy, chips, and processed entrees provide excessive calories and few nutrients.
- 2. Don't forget to include foods from all food groups**
- 3. Don't neglect client preferences, cultural preferences, or dietetic needs**
 - Decrease amounts of concentrated sweets such as candy, cake, fruit juice, or sodas if client is diabetic;
 - Increase calorie dense foods such as meat, cheese, gravy, and margarine for elderly persons with limited access to food.

More distribution options

Of course, there are other ways to prepare a food bag. You should always take into consideration what the person you are helping would actually like to take home to their family. This idea of *Client Choice* has often been called *Waste Not, Want Not* simply because there is less waste if all the food will be eaten.

Client Choice

Try to ask yourself what it must feel like to walk into your neighborhood grocery store and see a grocery cart with your name on it, full of food. The first thing you notice is that you are given sugar sweetened cereal, canned fruit with heavy syrup, crackers and canned soup. Because you are diabetic, these things may not be the smart choices for your diet. All the sugar and added salt would not be good for your body.

Considering what to do in this situation is difficult. You do not want it to appear that you are ungrateful but if you take this particular food home, you will still be going without food. You may worry that the volunteer may feel that you are just being picky. After all, if she really cared what you wanted she would have asked, right? The truth is, there are many reasons why pantries operate with pre-bagged food rather than asking a guest about

special dietary restrictions or dislikes a particular food. Many believe that pre-bagged food is just faster, or that they might need more volunteers to operate a “client choice” pantry. In most cases, no more volunteers are needed. No more room is required to be effective. The best part of operating a client choice pantry is that it dignifies a difficult situation by valuing the clients and the choices they make in what they take home for their family’s meals.

The premise is simple where “client choice” is concerned. Giving your guests food that they will not eat only contributes to food waste. So, why not ask what they will feed their family? Do they have particular likes or dislikes? Do they have special dietary requests? These are important questions.

Another important aspect of food distribution is to consider the population you are serving. There are some foods that are more culture specific than others. These are not universal rules or blanket statements, but in every group, there are trends. For instance, while kimchee is a popular food among many Koreans; not all Korean people necessarily like it. It is important to treat each person as an individual rather than making assumptions based upon group membership such as ethnicity, language, or nationality.

The following options are a compilation of various distribution methods used throughout the network of agencies. We recommend client choice, but with limits. This method combines the validation of the individuals wants and needs, but within the realm of the pantry limitations. Choose the one that works best for you or develop one of your own.

1. Choice with Limits – for a family of 4 for 3 days

Each person makes his or her own choice by checking off a list of available items. For instance, if the pantry has corn, green beans, peas, and squash in the vegetable section. The client is given the choice to take three of the available products. High protein foods (assorted meat, tuna, and salmon) snacks and desserts, etc. are also sectioned so the client can check off the items he or she wants from each section. The checklist is then presented to the person that will fill the bags. A chart in English and Spanish is in the appendix.

2. Fixed Menu Plus “Grab Bag” Option

The pantry distributes its traditional fixed standardized food box. Also displayed are a variety of other items such as fresh produce. The client is permitted to take limited (one bag, six items, etc.) or unlimited amounts of those goods or miscellaneous items to add to the food box.

3. Fixed Menu Bags for Emergency Clients (i.e. burned out of home)

The pantry maintains a supply of fixed bags for those few clients who have no food in the house and must be supplied with everything to survive until the crisis passes.

Or

Those that need food to supplement what they get from WIC or food stamps, etc. are permitted to select an assortment of goods from the pantry without the pretext of those goods meeting all their needs.

4. Goal Pounds Assortment-

The pantry attempts to provide food that fully covers the food pyramid. Clients are permitted clients to take a specific number of pounds total of those goods, figured at just over a pound per person per meal. Color-coded shelving may help to display different items as they appear on the food guide pyramid.

(America’s Second Harvest” suggests that 3.75 pounds of food per person, per day is necessary to provide nutritious days meal).

5. Open distribution

This is very simple yet by far the most untraditional way to run a food pantry. The pantry gets all the food it can from the Food Bank and permits guests to shop as they would at a grocery store. No limits, no restrictions, just trust.

Fundraising

The most urgent need for most organizations is raising the crucial operating funds. Before beginning any kind of fundraising campaign, be sure you have the infrastructure in place to effectively manage incoming donations. Especially now, when so many charitable organizations are facing increasing public scrutiny of how they manage their funds, it is important to have a secure and efficient system in place to handle money.

Make sure you know the answers to the following questions before beginning a fundraising campaign:

- Who receives incoming donations?
- How are incoming donations recorded? Are accurate, confidential records being kept?
- Is money quickly deposited into a bank account?
- Who is responsible for managing funds?
- Who is responsible for acknowledging donations received? Remember it is important to always thank your donors for gifts of any size, and the IRS requires that you provide receipts for any donation of \$250 or more.

Always be sure to maintain thorough, accurate financial records and be mindful of what tax paperwork you may be required to file. If your organization is raising substantial funds, you may want to consider hiring a professional auditor to create an audited financial statement for you annually. This kind of documentation will be essential for many grants you may apply for, and it is important to have documentation available at donors' requests that shows that you are being a good and careful steward of donated funds.

As long as you know how you are going to handle donated funds when you receive them, you can pursue a number of courses to locate money to finance your program. Three main areas of financial support for you to consider are donations from individuals, grants from foundations and corporations, and community events.

Individual Giving

According to the American Association of Fundraising Counsel's "Giving USA 2006" report, more than 76% of all charitable contributions come from individuals as direct gifts, while only about 5% come from corporations and 12.4% from foundations. Nearly 8% more also comes from individuals in the form of bequests.

What does this mean for your pantry? Your best source of support is going to be the individuals who know you and support your work. A group of committed, consistent donors will be worth far more in the long run than a one-time grant. Start with individuals who already are familiar with your work. Do you have a natural donor constituency such as members of a congregation or maybe even families and individuals that have benefited from your work in the past and may now be in a position to help others?

A good place to start is with a simple mailing, either a newsletter or a letter describing your work and requesting support. Remember: **Never be embarrassed or reluctant to ask for money!** Your work is good and important, you are helping people in desperate need, and there is no need to be timid about asking people to support that work. In fact, you may be surprised to find that many people will give generously to support a cause they believe in if you give them a chance to respond.

If you already have a good-sized list of people to mail to, start looking at ways to create a more sophisticated donation program. Don't be afraid to send out letters asking for support several times a year. Look for ways to increase your donor list, and eventually you may want to research a direct mail acquisition program. In this kind of program you would send a letter to a large number of prospective donors and "capture" new donors to become part of your house list that you mail to on a regular basis.

There are many resources available to help you get started in Direct Mail fundraising, including workshops, books, web sites, and full-service companies that will do all the work for you. A good place to start is at www.malwarwick.com. Mal Warwick is a Direct Mail expert who has also published several books on the subject. Remember, however, that for most direct mail fundraising, you need to be prepared to invest some money at the front end for things like printing and postage, but the long-term returns will be a pool of committed donors that provide a substantial, consistent source of revenue for your work.

Grants

If you're trying to get your program off the ground and need an initial investment, trying to expand a program or service, or need funds for a capital expenditure such as building renovation, equipment, or even a new facility, a grant from a foundation or corporation may be your best bet. It is possible to find grants that will provide funds for general operating purposes, but it is difficult. Generally, most grant funders want to support a specific program or project.

Each grant funder will have different requirements for submitting a proposal, so make sure you research them thoroughly and submit all the necessary information. A good place to start the grant research process is at the Regional Foundation Library, operated by Austin's Hogg Foundation and a Cooperating Collection in the Foundation Center network. Contact the Library at 512-471-5041 or by email at hf.library@uts.cc.utexas.edu to set up an appointment to visit. The staff will meet with you to determine your needs and explain the available resources at the Library.

The Nonprofit Resource Center of Texas, located in San Antonio, also has research materials and offers workshops on grant-writing and other fundraising topics. The Center can be reached at 210-227-4333, or through the web site at www.nprc.org. The Center also publishes the *Directory of Texas Foundations*, a very useful index of funders categorized by areas of interest, geography, and types of grants available.

In addition to private foundations, remember that many corporations and even smaller businesses make grants and charitable contributions. Some larger companies have formal grant-making processes similar to foundations, while smaller businesses may have an employee committee that determines funding priorities, or the business owner may choose which causes to support. There may also be opportunities for in-kind donations of equipment or other supplies available if you ask. Remember: It never hurts to call up and ask if a business may be willing to become your partner in feeding hungry people! A business that sponsors a particular program has the opportunity to become involved with your program and may be an excellent long-term supporter. Consider inviting a group of employees to volunteer at your site so they can see firsthand how their funds are helping people in the community.

Just like individual donors, make sure you thank your corporate and foundation partners and keep accurate records of grants received. Many grantors will request a follow-up report on the progress of your program or project and an accounting of how the money was spent.

Community Events

You can raise money, food or other needed items, and public awareness through community events. A neighborhood food drive has the potential to raise dollars as well, as it's sometimes even easier for people to donate cash than cans of food. Bake sales, raffles, and benefit meals are all tried and true means of raising funds for your program and can also give your supporters and the public the opportunity to visit your program site and learn more about the work you do. Always try to take advantage of opportunities to add potential supporters to your mailing list. Publicize your event by submitting it to the local news media, church bulletins, and neighborhood newsletters.

More Resources

One of the best resources for fundraising information, workshops, and publications is the Association of Fundraising Professionals. AFP is an international organization with a large chapter in the Greater Austin area. The AFP web site is at www.afpnet.org and the Austin chapter is at www.afpaustin.org. The local chapter offers monthly lunch meetings and other training opportunities. Almost all events are open to both members and non-members.

Another wonderful resource in the Central Texas area is the ACC Center for Community-Based & Nonprofit Organizations, on the web at <http://www2.austincc.edu/npo>, or call 512-223-7076. A true community resource, the Center offers numerous free learning opportunities throughout the year.

These are just a few of the resources and funding possibilities available to you. Again, the most important thing is it **never hurts to ask!** According to the Independent Sector report, *Giving & Volunteering in the United States*, nearly 90% of households give to charity. People are willing to donate if they are given the opportunity, and feeding our hungry neighbors is one of the most compelling reasons to give.

Volunteers

Volunteer Recruitment

Recruiting volunteers is integral to making the agency's mission work. More importantly, however, is matching volunteers to activities they will not only enjoy, but will continue to pursue. Access to the Internet makes this easier than ever before. Web sites like www.volunteermatch.org, www.volunteersolutions.org, www.idealists.org and www.servenet.org take the guesswork out of this process by sorting by geography, interest and availability. They match the activity to the person for you.

You should begin the process by writing a good generic recruitment ad to help you find your perfect volunteers. The ads may be posted on the web sites listed above so that you can find people that meet your agency's qualifications. One important thing to note is to approach recruitment as something you are able to receive but also an opportunity to give in return. Most people do not volunteer for altruistic reasons only; they give of themselves to contribute to a good cause.

Another good opportunity, often overlooked by some is the access to local universities and corporate volunteers in your community. Reach out to them and involve the community. Many of these organizations have groups that would like to do community service activities either to fulfill civic or education obligations. Go beyond the congregants in your church, synagogue, or other place of worship. Other places to look include:

- Volunteer fairs
- Mission fairs
- High schools

Keep in the mind the volunteer activity you need to fill, but be open-minded enough to recognize a particular talent that a person has. You never know, there are many very qualified people out of work and ready to volunteer. You may find someone with a particular knowledge of computers that may help you design that new database that you have wanted rather than bag up food. The question is to decide how you can best utilize this particular volunteer.

Volunteer Management

Volunteers are your greatest asset. One of the biggest mistakes agencies make is to over-utilize volunteers. Everyone has his or her limits and it is important not to reach those limits. You should access existing community recruiting tools like newsletters, newspapers, web-sites, TV and Radio ads, etc. for volunteers.

- Volunteers are your partners. They have something to give and you have something to give in return. The benefits go both ways. Not only do you receive the help you need, but the volunteers have a feeling of belonging, a sense of contribution, job skill development, etc.
- A good practice is to allow the volunteer to pick his or her time of service when possible. Being flexible with activities will benefit all parties.
- Matching individuals to something they want to do will ensure greater connection and longer satisfaction.
- Encourage them to spread their time out over longer periods so they do not feel overwhelmed.
- A verbal thank you will go a long way. Certificates at incremental stages of time are an inexpensive way to show your volunteers that you appreciate them (i.e. every 20 hours, 50 hours, etc.).
- *Thank you* bags from Food Bank items may not be given to volunteers and, in fact, violate federal labor laws, But do try to think of other ways to show your appreciation.

Capacity Building

In a recent survey, 58% of CAFB Partner Agencies said that they believe they are doing the best they can with their current resources but would like to do more.

As a part of our Capacity Building Initiative, we encourage agencies to think big. We know there is no typical emergency food pantry because we see such a wide range of sizes, structures, and operations within our own Partner Agency base. However, building an agencies capacity, means assessing your current abilities, capacity and efficiencies critically. Remember to include all aspects of your current abilities such as funding, physical space, number of volunteers, as well as vision, strategy and culture.

The seven categories of capacity are vision, strategy, team, food and funds, organization, systems and infrastructure, and culture.

Once your agency is ready to move forward and strengthen your operations, contact the CAFB Capacity Building department to assist you in building capacity and sustainability for your agency.

Adrienne Harrold
Capacity Building Manager
aharrold@austinfoodbank.org
800.786.2616. ext. 208

Meredith Mull
Capacity Building Specialist, AmeriCorps VISTA
mmull@austinfoodbank.org
800.786.2616 ext. 205

APPENDIX

Decoding the Freshness Dates

- **Baked Goods, Cereal, Snacks and some Canned Goods**

Phrases such as “**Best Before,**” “**Better if Used Before,**” or “**Best If Used By**” tell you how long the product will retain its best flavor or quality. They are found on products like baked goods, cereals, snacks, and some canned foods. The food is still safe to eat after this date, but it might have become stale or changed somewhat in taste or texture.

- **Yogurt Eggs and other Foods that require refrigeration**

The “**Expiration,**” “**Use By,**” or “**Use Before**” date, which appears on yogurt, eggs, and other foods that require refrigeration, goes a bit further. A product past its expiration date should be used within the guidelines of storage stated in the Capital Area Food Bank Guidelines for Perishable and Non-Perishable Food Items. When “Expires” or “Use By” appears on items like yeast or refrigerated dough, it indicates how long the product will retain its rising power.

- **Highly Perishable Food with a particular shelf life, like Meat, Milk, and Bread**

The “**Sell By**” date, often referred to as the “Pull” date by manufacturers, is usually found on highly perishable foods with a particularly short shelf life, like meat, milk, and bread. It indicates the last day the product should appear on a supermarket shelf.

When refrigerated at 40°F or below most foods will remain safe to eat for about five days after the “Sell By” date. However, you should pay special attention to meats. Fresh beef and pork keep no more than 3 to 5 days in the refrigerator, while fresh poultry, seafood, and ground or chopped meat should be used within a day or two of purchase. Many highly perishable items may be frozen on or before the “sell by” date. Please refer to Capital Area Food Bank Guidelines for Perishable and Non-Perishable Food Items for storage length guidelines of frozen product.

Note: Although the store should pull a product after the “Sell By” date has passed, it remains legal to sell the food (as long as it’s still safe to eat). Shoppers are advised to select packages with the latest date available and to inform the manager if old foods are still being displayed on the shelf.

- **“Pack” “Closed” or “Coded dates are not intended for consumers**

Other types of dates, known as “**Pack,**” “**Closed,**” or “**Coded**” dates, represent the date on which a food was packaged or processed for sale. Take, for instance, “A70319R 23:16,” which you might find on a jar of **Mott’s Applesauce**. The “A” is the code for the particular plant at which the applesauce was produced. The “7” is for 1997; “0319” means that the applesauce was produced on March 19 of that year. “R” signifies that it’s Regular applesauce (as opposed to, say, Cinnamon), and “23:16” shows the time of packing –11:16 p.m. **Pack dates are not intended for consumers but rather are used by manufacturers and retailers, in tandem with lot numbers, to track inventory, rotate food on shelves, and locate items in case of a recall.**

How do you decipher a date that appears without any words or alone? Since dates are printed at the manufacturer’s discretion, their meanings may be different for each product line. You can not decipher all the manufacturers’ codes.



**CAPITAL AREA
FOOD BANK
OF TEXAS**

**Guidelines for Perishable and Non-Perishable
Food Items**

Last updated: 04/06

Item	Storage Temperature	Storage Length	*Discard
Eggs	40° F or Below	Eggs in shell – 3 weeks past expiration date Hard cooked – 1 week past expiration date Pasteurized or substitute – 10 days past expiration date	Off odor, color or taste
Milk * Borden	40° F 0° F	Consume 4 days past expiration date *Borden milk is up to expiration date 3 months past expiration date	Off odor or taste
Yogurt/Sour Cream	40° F (Do not Freeze)	14 days past expiration date	Mold, off odor or taste
Frozen Meat	0° F or below	Up to 1 year past expiration date	Off odor, color, open package or freezer burned
Cheese	40° F 0° F	14 days past expiration date 3 months past expiration date	Discard if package is open
Baked Goods	Keep in cool and dry place	Up to 10 days past expiration date	Any visible mold, discard entire piece
Non-Perishable Prepackaged Food (canned items)	Store in well ventilated and climate controlled area	Up to 5 years past expiration date	Bulging or springiness on ends, leaking, severe dents, pitted rust or rust under the rim
Baby Food	Store in well ventilated and climate controlled area	Discard after expiration date	Popped safety seal, cracks, leaks
Adult Formula	Store in well ventilated and climate controlled area	Discard after expiration date	Popped safety seal, cracks, leaks
Cans/bottles/aseptic containers	Store in well ventilated and climate controlled area	Up to 3 years past expiration date	Bulging, springiness on end, leaking, damaged seals, severe dents or rust, popped safety seal
Cereal/Crackers	Store in well ventilated and climate controlled area	Up to 1 year past expiration date	Stale, insects
Dried beans/pasta	Store in well ventilated and climate controlled area	Up to 3 years past expiration date	Insects, mold or stale
Freezer products	0° F or below	Up to 1 year past expiration date	Off odor or taste
Prepared salads/foods & dips	40° F	Use by expiration date	Past date
Refrigerated juices & teas	40° F	Up to 4 weeks past expiration date	Mold, fermentation, off odor or taste
Rice	Store in well ventilated and climate controlled area	Up to 3 years past expiration date	Insects, mold or stale
Mayonnaise	Store in well ventilated and climate controlled area	3 months past expiration date	Jar is leaking, open or seal has been broken. Food is discolored or has off odor
Dressings	Store in well ventilated and climate controlled area	10 months past expiration date	Jar is leaking, open or seal has been broken. Food is discolored or has off odor
Processed refrigerated foods (tofu)	40° F	Up to 30 days past expiration date,	Seal is broken in all compartments, Food is discolored or has off color.
Produce	40° F Temperature may vary depending on type of produce	Refer to discard	Mold, decay, fungus, insects, discoloration, off odor or taste
Prepackaged lettuce	40° F	Up to 14 days past the expiration date, If past expiration date check, for off odor before consuming.	Mold, decay, fungus, insects, discoloration, off odor or taste
Candy	Store in well ventilated and climate controlled area	Refer to discard	Candy is wrapped and does not have an outer sealed package, decay, insects, discoloration, off odor or taste

Recommendations are only valid if the product has been stored and handled correctly and the protective seal has not been broken.

* Food Product past the expiration date, pull, or sell-by date will lose some flavor, yet will still contain nutritional value. This does not include product listed above that is not recommended to be used after its expiration date, pull or sell-by date.

Decoding the Freshness Dates:

- **Baked goods, cereal, snacks and some canned goods**

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Frozen Food Handling Instructions:

Thawing can be done in four ways:

1. In a refrigerator at 40° F. Place food in a pan to catch drips.
2. Under COLD running water or immersed in cold water. Food should be wrapped tightly in plastic. DO NOT thaw at room temperature for longer than two hours. Another option is to place in a pan of cold water in the refrigerator.
3. In a microwave oven, but only in small quantities and if cooked immediately after thawing.
4. As part of the cooking process. Stir while cooking.

COOK OR EAT AS SOON AS IT IS THAWED. ALWAYS INSPECT FOOD BEFORE AND AFTER IT HAS BEEN THAWED. IF IT SMELLS BAD OR IS DISCOLORED, DISCARD IMMEDIATELY. IF IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT.

For further information or questions, contact the USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline:

Number: 1-800-535-4555

Web site address: <http://www.usda.gov/fsis>

Labeling Requirements:

The Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act require specific information to be on products prior to distribution.

Food product labels must contain:

- The common name of the product on the principal display panel.
- The name and place of business of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor.
- The net quantity of the contents on the principal display panel.
- The common or usual name of each ingredient, listed in descending order of prominence.

PARTNER



**CAPITAL AREA
FOOD BANK
OF TEXAS**

CAFB Food Pantry Intake Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: (____) _____

Number of People in Household: _____

Are you on any form of government assistance, ie: Food Stamps, Social Security, etc.?

Yes No

Are you or a member of your household currently employed?

Yes No

If a member of the household is employed, do you fall at or below the income eligibility requirements listed below? (This is for USDA commodities only)

Yes No

TEXCAP INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008

The chart below provides the income limits for households applying to participate in the TEXCAP program. The first column lists household by size. The next three columns provide maximum allowable income limits, in annual, monthly, and weekly amounts.

AN APPLICANT HOUSEHOLD IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR USDA ITEMS IF THE HOUSEHOLD'S GROSS INCOME EXCEEDS:

Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$18,889	\$1,575	\$364
2	\$25,327	\$2,111	\$488
3	\$31,765	\$2,648	\$611
4	\$38,203	\$3,184	\$735
5	\$44,641	\$3,721	\$859
6	\$51,079	\$4,257	\$963
7	\$57,517	\$4,794	\$1,107
8	\$63,955	\$5,330	\$1,230

For each additional person add:

\$6,438 \$537 \$124

Note: Use gross income to determine eligibility. EXCEPTIONS: (1) Farmers and self-employed households qualify on net income (total income minus expenses). (2) A household with unexpected and unavoidable expense of household crisis may qualify for temporary, emergency food assistance without regard to the household's gross or net income.

Client Signature

Date

* All CAFB Partner Agencies are required to use this intake form

Your CHOICE with LIMITS

Beverages (2)	Staples (2)	Can Vegetables (3)	Frozen Meats (1)
Juice Soda tea Coffee _____Other	sugar Flour Instant milk Dry beans Instant mashed pots rice _____Other	Corn Green beans Peas Black-eyed peas _____Other	Pork Ham Meat Frozen salmon _____Other
Soups (2)	Sauces (2)	Can Fruit (1)	Personal Hygiene (2)
Ramon noodles Vegetable Chicken noodle Broth _____other	Tomato sauce Tomato paste Picante sauce Pasta sauces _____other	Peaches Pears Apples pumpkin _____other	Shampoo Soap Body lotion toothpaste _____other
Dry Goods (2)	Protein (2)	Snacks/Desserts (1)	Breakfast Foods (1)
Mac and cheese Hamburger helper Tuna helper Macaroni spaghetti Crackers spinach Lasagna Rice a Roni Assorted pasta Bisquick ravioli Noodles	Tuna Salmon Canned meat Peanut butter Luncheon meat Potted meat Sardines Chicken pork Canned chili	Pudding Jell-O Cake mix frosting _____other	Cereal Oatmeal Pop tarts Cream of wheat Breakfast bars
Other	Other	Other	Other

Please specify if you need the following: baby food or diapers, condiments, adult or baby formulas, personal hygiene items such as sanitary napkins, deodorant, toilet tissue, laundry soap, etc.

La DECISION es tuya, con LIMITES

Beverages (2)	Staples (2)	Vegetal enbotado (3)	Carnes congelochas (1)
Jugo Soda té Café _____ Otrá	Azúcar Harina Leche instante Frijoles Instante papas instante arroz _____ Otrá	Maíz Frijoles Verdes guisantes Chicharo negro _____ Otrá	El salmon puerco Carne jamón _____ Otrá
Sopas (2)	Salsas (2)	Fruta embotada (1)	Hygiene Personal (2)
Tallarín de pollo Caldo Tallarines de Verdura tomaté _____ other	Tomaté Salsa Picante Salde de pastas _____ other	calabaza manzanas peras duraznos _____ other	Shampoo El jabón Crema para el cuerpo pasta dental _____ other
Dry Goods (2)	Proteina (2)	Snacks/Desserts (1)	Comida para el almuerzo (1)
macarrone con queso Hamburger helper macarrones Espagueti Golletas Espinaca Lasagna Arroz un roni Pastas clasificadas Pastas Bisquick Raviolis tallarines	Atún Salmon Carne de alumerzo Pollo puerco Chile conservado Sardinas	pudin gelatina Mazcla de la torta El helar Harina para pastel	Cereal avena Tarts Crema de trigo Barras del desayuno
Other	Other	Other	Other