

High Plains Food Bank Partner Agency Manual



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About High Plains Food Bank

Mission Statement: *“To alleviate hunger in the Texas Panhandle.”*

Founded in 1982, High Plains Food Bank (HPFB) is a nonprofit organization serving as the clearing house for collection, storage, and distribution of donated and purchased grocery products, providing aide to the top 29 counties in the Texas Panhandle. HPFB partners with over 190 different agencies, including churches, senior centers, childcare facilities, halfway houses, soup kitchens, Kids Cafes, emergency pantries, shelters, and other nonprofits to help end local hunger.

Many families in the Texas Panhandle are food insecure. As a member of the Feeding America network, HPFB can provide 4 meals worth of food for every dollar donated. Sources of donated food include the USDA’s Emergency Food Assistance Program, local food drives, grocery stores, restaurants, processing plants, ranchers, feedlot operators and individual donors. It is food that can't be sold. A can may be dented, one egg of a dozen is broken, expiration date is close, or the food has been prepared and unserved, yet it is still wholesome food when properly handled. In addition, HPFB purchases food to supplement the warehouse supply in order to provide the variety of foods high needed for balanced nutrition.



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General Partner Agency Requirements

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

General Requirements:

- The safe and proper handling of food product, which conforms to all local, state, and federal regulations.
- Willingness to abide by HPFB, USDA, and Feeding America policies, procedures, and record keeping requirements.
- Staff and volunteers of the program will not engage in discrimination against any person based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.
- Staff and volunteers of the program must show respect to all clients.
- Partner agencies must allow the Food Bank to monitor their food distributions

Annual Monitor Visits

The purpose of the annual monitor is to ensure partner agencies are adhering to all Food Bank, Feeding America, and USDA requirements. Feeding America requires the Food Bank to monitor its partner agencies every two years. The Food Bank reserves the right to conduct monitor visits more frequently if a complaint is filed on the agency or agency is found to be out of compliance.

Food Bank Food Sourcing

Donated Product

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. 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 at either no cost or \$0.16 per pound.

USDA/TEFAP

The Food Bank receives staple food items through The Emergency Food Assistance Program. TEFAP is a federal emergency food program administered through USDA. Agencies wishing to receive TEFAP must qualify clients and make sure they meet eligibility for the program.

Purchased Foods

The Food Bank budgets funding for staple food items or items we typically lack in inventory. We work with vendors to get the best price on these items. These items go onto the Food List at exactly the price that we pay for them.

Surplus Products

Partner agencies may take advantage of many free, donated items available in the Surplus Area of the Warehouse. These free items include produce, dairy, breads, desserts, drinks, and non food items. In order to receive these items agencies must be in good standing with the Food Bank. For example, agencies must not have a balance on their account and must place an order every 2 months.

Handling Fees and Payments

Handling Fees

Partner Agencies pay a handling fee to help defray miscellaneous operational costs. This is not a charge for food. The fee is assessed on the gross weight of the product received. The Food Bank has a \$.16 per pound handling fee. The Food Bank may reduce or eliminate this fee on certain products at its discretion.

Invoices

Partner agencies will be mailed an 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. This means, your agency will not be allowed to order or receive surplus until the balance is paid.

Payment Methods

Agencies are encouraged to pay invoices by check or money order. Checks will NOT be accepted from a personal checking account or cash. We ask that you please include the invoice number or the agency number on the check when submitting.

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 TDA, who then consolidates reports nationwide to submit to USDA and Feeding America. These reports are due by the 15th of the following month. Partner agencies can not anticipate number of clients served. Partner agencies who did not serve anyone must still turn in a report with zero totals for the month. Depending on the type of program, either total number of meals or total number of households and individuals served must be reported as follows:

- On Site Programs: On Site feeding programs (soup kitchens, residential programs, shelters, etc.) must report the total number of individual meals and snacks that are served each month. The agency will also provide the number of individuals who were served a meal. The agency must also break down the total number of individuals into the correct ethnic category.

- The total number of individuals is the total number of unduplicated individuals.
- For example, if an agency serves 30 people 2 meals per day and you were open 31 days out of the month, the total number of meals served that month would be 1860. Take the total number of individual's (30) x number of meals (2) x number of days meals were served (31). (30x2x31=1860)
- Food Pantries: Pantries, agency hands out non prepared food, must report the total number of households and individuals that received food each month. Agencies must separate the total number of individuals into the correct ethnic category.
 - If a single person is served, they are considered to be a household.
 - If a family is provided groceries more than once during the month, each visit may be counted separately. For example, if you have 5 households visit the pantry and each household has 3 family members, your total number of individuals would be 15 (5x3=15) and your total number of households would be 5.

Monthly Reports are due by the 15th of the following month. If they are past that date, the agency will be place on hold and unable to order food or receive surplus until the report is completed. The best way to avoid this, is to complete your monthly report each month at months end.

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.

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

- Organizations must not engage in explicitly religious activities as part of TEFAP, including over religious content such as worship, religious instruction, and proselytization.
- An explicitly religious activity at a site much be separated in time or location from the TEFAP distribution
- Organizations must not require participants or applicants to participate in explicitly religious activities to receive TEFAP.

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

It is acceptable to...	It is unacceptable to...
Hang a cross on a wall at the TEFAP site.	Require participants to stand by a cross and recite a prayer prior to a TEFAP distribution.
Place a menorah on a table at the site during the holiday season.	Refuse USDA foods to participants who do not practice 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 to be distributed to clients.
Have a religious official, just as a pastor, assist with TEFAP distributions.	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 distributions are on a lower level.	Hold a prayer service in the same room as a 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 a 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 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.

Upon the request of the 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 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 client. Agencies can always refer the client back to the Food Bank.

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 for 3 years. Upon request, referral records must be made available to TDA, CEs, and sub-distributing agencies.

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 Poster

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

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.

Non-Discrimination Statement

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, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

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 responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or 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 discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) 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; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

Agency Operations

All products (food and 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 food donation. Agencies may not distribute food 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 at least once a month.
- Partner agency hours of operation must be made public. (sign on the building, website, 211)
- “And Justice for All” poster must be posted in an unobstructed location that is visible to clients. The Emergency Food Assistance Written Notice or 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.
- 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. One days serves seniors, but discriminates against everyone under a certain age.

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.

Sharing Food

The Food Bank may permit partner agencies to distribute 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.
- 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 Donated Products

The partner agency may use non-food items 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 agency's facility.
- Donated products may not be used at a meeting where fundraising is conducted.
- Donated product may not be used for the purpose of fundraising either as prepared food or prizes.
- Volunteers may not be rewarded with donated product.
- Partner agencies may permit staff/volunteers to consume donated product for the following reasons:
 - To become familiar with the product (to be in a better position to advise clients of use or nutrition education).
 - To test product for safe consumption.

Primary vs. Incidental Use

Partner agencies that serve both the 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 (needy, ill or infants) and that there is no reasonable way to serve the non-needy except through the meal program. Examples of these 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 themselves may find themselves as clients. If a

volunteer is food insecure, receiving food assistance should be the priority over volunteering. If the only available volunteers are clients, partner agencies must ensure the following:

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

Meals for Volunteers and Staff

Site volunteers and staff 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. Volunteer meals must be counted in the monthly agency reports.

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. 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 or self pest control, copies of service reports and chemicals used should be made available to the Food Bank and must be kept onsite. 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 ask agencies to use professional pest control if deemed necessary.

Temperature Logs

All cold storage units are required to have a thermometer that is readily accessible. Refrigerator temperatures should be held at 40 degrees F or below and freezer temperatures should be held at 0 degrees F or below. Temperature logs should be made available during monitor visits. Cooler and freezer temperatures must be checked and recorded during regular business hours, and during shut down or vacation periods. They must be checked at minimum of every other day, immediately after a power loss, and late Friday afternoon and early Monday mornings if the agency is not open on the weekends.

Food Safety and 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 be either a certified Food Manager (on sites) or a Food Handler (pantries) from an accredited course. In addition, all agency staff and volunteers who interact with clients 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. This document is available on hpfb.org. Partner agencies are responsible for documenting their training records, which will be requested during monitor visits.

Health Department Inspection and Food Manager Certificate (Onsite Kitchens)

If the partner agency is a meal provider or repacks 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 made available during monitor visits.

Intake Forms and Sign-In Sheets

Intake forms and sign-in sheets must be kept on site for 3 years. Electronic data tracking systems may be used to maintain client records. However, the hard copy of the intake forms and sheets must be kept if the client electronic signatures are not being collected.

Eligibility and 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: name, address, number of persons in the household, household income, and signature.

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

- Identification
- Address
- Income

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

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

Clients must agree to cooperate (to the extent the household is capable) to clarify or provide information needed to establish eligibility. Clients must not sell or exchange USDA TEFAP food and must report changes in circumstances.

Partner agencies may also collect additional data (social security number, phone number, etc.) for other services. The federally required information to determine eligibility must be collected before the partner agency request additional data. The collection of additional data must not be a real or perceived barrier to qualify for USDA TEFAP foods.

Citizenship

There are no citizenship requirements. Partner agencies must not require any applicant 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 a one time, emergency food package to individuals before referring them elsewhere.

Income Guidelines/Eligibility

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 foods for a period from 1-6 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.

USDA annually publishes the TEFAP Income Eligibility Guidelines, which contains household qualifying income cut-offs for annual, monthly, twice monthly, biweekly, 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. They are published yearly.

Current income guidelines and intake forms must be utilized by partner agencies by July 1st of each year. 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 TEFAP foods after the 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 foods and may not exceed 12 months. We recommend that you have clients complete new forms in January of each year.

Categorical Eligibility

A household is automatically eligible for USDA TEFAP foods if it currently receives assistance from one of the following programs:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- Medicaid

The Proxy

A proxy is a person designated by a participant to act for the participant as necessary throughout every process of TEFAP. Proxies can provide signatures 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. CEs must collect the following information:

- Participant's name
- Name of distribution site
- Authorization, including proxy name
- Participant's signature
- Duration of proxy

The partner agency must maintain each written proxy designation on file. Proxy identification must be reviewed at each application, certification, food package distribution, and recertification. There are two ways to change a proxy. The client can change it in a written, signed statement or in person at the distribution site.

Confidentiality

CEs and partner agencies must protect the confidentiality of any information that has been provided on an application for eligibility, whether the application is paper or electronic. The information may be used only to determine eligibility for TEFAP benefits and to verify income. Do not release any information that contains a TEFAP participant's name or other information.

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 a qualified church, or sponsored by a 501(c)(3) or a church. The agency must adhere to all requirements under the 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 of 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.
- 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 by their group exemption
- Current listing of the organization on IRS website section under Exempt Organizations Selection Check (publication 78 data) indicating they are a Public Charity ("PC")
- Faith Based Organization Eligibility Form that includes documentation of the organization's ability to meet at least 9 or the 14 possible criteria established by the IRS

to be considered a Church, 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, need, or infants”

- 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 sponsoring organization’s exemption or Church status following the criteria listed above.

TEFAP Agreement

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

Agency Agreement

This agreement serves as confirmation that the partner agency adheres to all guidelines set in the policies and procedures manual and follows the basic qualifications for being a partner agency. This is completed every two years during monitor visits.

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 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, FIFO (First In/First Out)
- Food items meet local & federal health standards.

Refrigerator/Freezer Area

- Refrigerators and freezers should either be in a locked area, or they must be lockable.
- Units must be clean and odor free.
- Items stored in walk-in units must be 4 inches off the 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 may need to 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, FIFO (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 degrees F or below and 0 degrees 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's 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 degrees F or higher for cooking, 140 degrees F for holding and 165 degrees F when reheating. 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 degrees F and cannot be re-frozen unless cooked at the appropriate temperatures. Food should be placed in a pan to catch drops 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'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.

Ordering and Pick Up Procedures

All out of town agencies are assigned a certain day(s) of the month that their order will be delivered to them, free of charge. There is no designated time, as it all depends on the driver's schedule. Agencies are welcome to ask for a driver's phone number so they can track their order or request or decline surplus.

In town agencies will select their day and time to come pick up from the warehouse. Warehouse hours of operation are 8:00a.m.-12:00p.m. and then 1:00p.m.-3:00p.m. Agencies are allowed to shop for surplus while they are here picking up an order, without their surplus card. Agencies must call the main line if they are unable to pick up their order on the scheduled day. Agencies have three days to pick up their order if no call is made to reschedule.

Partner agencies are required to routinely order from the Food Bank. Agencies are asked to place an order every TWO months in order to receive any of the free surplus food. If any agency does not place an order, they will be placed on hold and unable to receive any free product until an order is placed. Agencies can have 3 open orders in our system at a time.

Primarius Web Window

Primarius Web Window (PWW) is the online ordering system that the Food Bank asks that all agencies use to place orders. PWW is a live, real time look at our inventory. All agencies will be given a unique username and password to login into their accounts. Agencies will also be given a step by step walk through manual of the website.

Limits

The Food Bank reserves the right to limit certain items that we may have only received a small quantity of. The Food Bank does this to ensure that all agencies have equal opportunity to order products.

Deadlines for Placing Orders

Agencies are emailed a deliver schedule each month with the date that the order will be dropped off. The delivery schedule also has a column that states when an agencies order must be finalized. Out of town agencies must have their orders finalized two business days in advance. In town agencies must have their order finalized by 11:00 a.m. of the day before their scheduled pick up time.

In Town Pick Up Procedures

- Agencies will park at the dock and notify the Food Bank that they are here to pick up their order.
- Agencies are required to check their orders and sign the invoice before the product is ever loaded into their vehicles.
- Only 2 vehicles can be parked at the dock at a time.
- Agencies must adhere to all instructions given by the Food Bank Warehouse Staff and treat them with respect.
- Agencies are allowed to receive surplus product while picking up an order, but remain in the yellow lines at all times. THIS IS FOR YOUR SAFETY.
- Only 2 individuals from each agency may be in the Food Bank at a time.
- No children under the age of 16 are allowed in the Warehouse.
- Agencies need to wear closed toed shoes if in the Warehouse.
- Agencies are responsible for loading their vehicles. Unless the order can be placed in the back of a vehicle/trailer with a forklift. If you do need assistance, please ask.
- Food Bank personnel reserve the right to limit the amount of product leaving the Food Bank if they believe the agency's vehicle cannot handle the load. They also reserve the right to limit surplus items if the staff feels the amount is in excess.
- Agencies receiving dairy and/or frozen items must bring coolers to transport the product if travel time exceeds 20 minutes.
- Agencies need to return banana boxes, pallets, and crates to the Food Bank at the Product Recovery Dock.

Out of Town Delivery Procedures

- The agency must be present on their scheduled delivery date. Driver's will give the agency a phone call once they arrive. If the agency does not answer, the driver will wait 15 minutes before moving on to their next stop.
- Agency representatives should never enter the Food Bank truck or attempt to operate Food Bank equipment.
- The driver will attempt to place product into the building unless the equipment will not safely fit through a door. The food will be staged outside if not able to place in the building. It is the responsibility of the agency to have volunteers to move the product inside.
- Agencies must check the orders and make sure all items are correct. They will sign an invoice and hand it back to the driver.
- If an unpredicted event occurs and deliver is not available that day, the Food Bank will notify the agency and reschedule the delivery as soon as possible.
- Out of Town agencies are allowed to pick up at the Food Bank in between deliveries.
- Agencies should have previously used banana boxes, pallets, and crates neatly stacked for the driver to load into the truck to bring back to the Food Bank.

Surplus Procedures

Agencies are allowed to come to the Food Bank during operational hours to receive surplus product without placing an order.

- Agencies must have their surplus card with them. A picture of the card is not sufficient.
- Agencies must place an order every two months.
- Agencies can only have 2 vehicles at the dock at a time.
- Agencies can only come 1 time per day for surplus.
- The Food Bank reserves the right to limit each agency on surplus items. We try to equitably distribute surplus product to all our agencies, including rural agencies.

Grievance and Complaint Procedure

Grievance Against the High Plains Food Bank

The Agency will not be discriminated against, harassed, suffer any reprisals, against HPFB for filing a grievance.

Procedures:

An Agency may submit a written grievance addressed to the Executive Director of HPFB. This letter must include the reasons for the grievance, pertinent facts, and what the Agency believes would be an acceptable solution to the problem. Executive Director of HPFB will study and make recommendations to determine that all grievances and concerns have been addressed. HPFB's response to this grievance will occur within 10 working days. The Agency will be notified in writing of the response. If no solution is worked at this level, the Agency may appeal to the HPFB Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors will then notify all parties of its decision. The decision of the Board of Directors is final.

Grievances, Complaints of Fraud, or Negligence Against Member Agencies

- Fraud – The intentional concealment or willful misrepresentation of information to receive USDA Foods.
- Negligence – Improper distribution or use of USDA Foods; or failure to properly store, handle, or care for the food).
- Misuse of USDA Foods – Includes (but is not limited to) selling, trading, or giving them to ineligible persons. CEs assume financial liability for negligent or fraudulent administration of TEFAP, if they are aware of such activity but choose not to report to TDA.

Procedure for Reporting Fraud

CEs should create and follow written procedures for fraud or misuse of foods. CEs must immediately report suspected fraud or misuse of USDA Foods to TDA. When reporting, include information on the amount of USDA Foods involved, location of the incident, suspected parties, and other details and facts.

HPFB must respond to complaints by the public on any of the HPFB member agencies.

Procedures:

When a grievance or compliant is received regarding a member agency. The grievance/compliant will be forwarded to the Agency Relations Department and/or the Executive Director of HPFB.

A detailed report will be processed, listing the complainants' contact information the date, time and concern. A Food Bank representative will notify the Agency involved of the complaint received and address the concerns noted; if the solution is not resolved with a call a meeting will set with the Agency's Representative to address the concerns of the specific complaints. A letter may be followed by a phone conversation with the Agency's representative or a visit to the Agency by a HPFB representative.

The conclusions of the investigation and any recommendations will be presented to the Executive Director of HPFB and will be documented in the Agency's file. The Agency will be notified of the conclusions and any decisions within ten working days.

Summary of Investigative Findings

The person completing this form is responsible for conducting an initial investigation of the report to determine its likely credibility and to gather evidence substantiating or disputing the reported incident. This investigation should include as appropriate, but not be limited to the following steps:

Summarize below details from an interview of the reporting party, seeking to include at a minimum the following details:

- Date and time of observed incident(s)
- Parties associated with the reported incident(s)
- Description of questionable activity observed
- Other pertinent information or details that help advance an investigation of the questioned incident(s)
- Is this a Civil Rights Compliant? Follow TDA procedures if Civil Rights were violated

Summarize below key steps taken to investigate and document investigation outcomes, including any available evidence that substantiates or disputes the reported incident.

RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR / BOARD OF DIRECTORS CHAIR

Upon completion of an initial investigation into the reported incident, the person completing this form is responsible for recommending a course of action to conclude the investigation, if sufficient evidence exists to reasonably conclude an outcome of the investigation, or continue it further, if uncertainty remains. Use the space below to summarize to the Executive Director the recommended course of action. If the Executive Director is the party being investigated, then present this recommendation to the Chair of the Board of Directors.

Report of Incident to TDA

If initial investigation determines the report merits, the person completing this form is to report the incident to the Texas Department of Agriculture.

Holds and Termination

Holds

Agency can be placed on “hold” for the following reasons:

- Credit Hold-Agency has not paid their balance within 60 days.
- Document Hold-this usually occurs after the annual training. All agencies all required to submit Civil Rights Training and other required documents each year.
- Monitor Hold-Agencies can be placed on hold if unavailable for monitor or unable to be contacted to schedule in a timely manner.
- Report Hold-Agencies must submit Monthly Agency Reports by the 15th of the following month.
- Surplus Hold-Agencies can be placed on hold from receiving surplus if they have not submitted an order within 2 months.

Once the agency has corrected the issue, the hold will be lifted immediately.

Terminations

The Food Bank very rarely terminates an agency. If the agency has inactivity on their account for 6 months, their account will be made inactive. In order to become active again, they must contact the Agency Relations Department and start the process as if they are a brand new agency.

If an agency is found to be out of compliance, the Food Bank will work with the agency to ensure that all rules are being followed. The agency will be subject to random monitor drop ins. If the agency cannot or will not correct the problem, the decision will be directed to the Executive Director of the Food Bank.

Programs and Resources

Agency Direct Connect

The Food Bank has identified agencies in our rural counties to directly pick up from the retail donor and the donated products to their pantry. The agencies must weigh the food and report the pounds directly to the Food Bank. If your agency is interested in this program, please contact the Warehouse Manager.

Kids Café

Kids Cafe is a program of Feeding America, offered by High Plains Food Bank to at-risk children in our service area in need of daily, healthy meals. Kids Cafe confronts childhood hunger and obesity by providing meals that follow USDA recommended nutritional guidelines. For many children in the Texas Panhandle, the meal provided through Kids Cafe is a daily nutritious dinner they may otherwise go without.

The Garden

The Garden is an urban farm that serves as a community classroom used to teach such topics as gardening basics and nutrition education. Utilizing strategic ecosystems, the Garden maximizes the use of each resource, providing a practical and sustainable model for individual gardeners to follow. The Garden focuses on community outreach, equipping students, apartment residents, and homeowners alike with the training needed to grow fresh, healthy food on a budget. Since August 2009, the Garden project has served as a full production, all-organic urban farm and the cornerstone of our Nutrition Education Program. In 2010, the one-acre site produced 20,000 lbs of fresh produce including: watermelon, cantaloupe, cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, lettuce, beans, and many herbs. Now, we are growing more variety than ever with a focus on heirloom plants.

Mobile Harvest

In 2018, the Garden launched its Mobile Harvest Program, which provides fresh produce to high need areas of our community. In addition, the Garden continued to support multiple community garden sites to help provide healthy organic produce to area food deserts. The Garden at High Plains Food Bank is offering a drive-through produce distribution.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program

The Senior Adult Food Program, Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) is offered to senior adults, ages 60 years and older, who meet the USDA Income Eligibility Guidelines. Each month, CSFP participants receive a 25-30-pound box of shelf-stable groceries, valued at \$60-\$70, and a 2-pound block of commodity cheese to supplement their diets. Contents include canned fruits, vegetables, and animal proteins. There is also cereal and additional protein items like dry beans, peanut butter, grains, liquid milk, and dry milk on alternating months. Each item provided to CSFP clients is intended to be a healthy addition to meals they prepare at home when other food sources are running low.

Direct Mobile Distributions

The Food Bank delivers 35-40 pound boxes to clients who qualify based on income guidelines in rural communities where we have no other agencies available. The Food Bank works alongside community to leaders to reach clients and build partnerships with other community resources to establish a pantry or onsite in the area that can be a lasting solution in the community to supply clients with food.

Social Services

Our Social Services team builds and reinforces food bank capacity by providing skilled support to our food bank partners as they connect people to federal nutrition and health programs like SNAP (food stamps) and Medicaid. They help eligible families understand and apply for the benefits they need.

Our team provides education and one-on-one application assistance to families and individuals qualifying for SNAP benefits to help them alleviate food insecurity. Case navigators provide phone and in-person consultations and/or appointments. They educate community members and partner agencies on state-administered and federally funded social services and health care programs such as:

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

The team helps in several other ways:

- Explain social services programs and make referrals to available resources to help clients become self-sufficient
- Fill out paper applications for programs listed above completely and correctly and submit to Health and Human Services
- Set up user accounts, complete and submit electronic applications through the online portal at www.yourtexasbenefits.com
- Provide case management
- Advocate on behalf of applicants



Date of Training: _____

Name of Trainer: _____

Please indicate which topics were covered in this training: (circle or highlight)

- Properly transporting, storing, handling, and using USDA Foods,
- Applying eligibility criteria for households,
- Following written application procedures,
- Ensuring client rights (including civil rights requirements),
- Following complaint procedures,
- Processing household applications or requests for meals in the contracted service area,
- Assisting applicant households to complete their applications, and
- Referring residents from other contracted service areas to locations where they may apply for USDA Foods.”

By signing below, HPFB staff, agency staff, and/or volunteers certify that they have received the aforementioned TEFAP and HPFB new agency training.

Agency Representative Signature

Date

HPFB Representative Signature

Date