

FOOD BANK OF NORTHWEST LOUISIANA

Agency Handbook



Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana



The Mission of the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana is to serve as the primary resource for fighting hunger in Northwest Louisiana

Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana

Welcome

This handbook is to provide new and existing member agencies and their staff to general information, policies and procedures involved in being a member agency of the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana. New and existing member agencies and their staff to general information Being a member means that you have joined in a partnership dedicated to fight hunger in your community. We are thankful to have you as part of our network and grateful to work with you in this important mission.

History of the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana

Our organization began with individuals from Shreveport, Louisiana area churches with food pantries that met to discuss the need for establishing a local Food Bank. This group evolved to an organized Steering Committee in 1996. In January 1997, Dr. and Mrs. Charles T. Beard donated a building at 2307 Texas Avenue that was the home of the Food Bank for almost 24 years. In April 2021, the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana moved into its current location at 285 Mt. Zion Road in Shreveport, Louisiana.

About the Food Bank

The Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana is the largest distributor of donated food and hunger relief organization in the region since 1997. Through the partnership of 150 collaborating non-profit organizations and churches, we distribute millions of pounds of food annually within our service area of Caddo, Bossier, DeSoto, Red River, Webster, Claiborne and Bienville Parishes. We provide food through several different programs: Food Distribution Program, Senior Box Program, Back Pack Program, Mobile Food Pantry, Kids Cafe After School Meals, Summer Feeding Program and Disaster relief

Food Pantry or Food Bank – let's use the correct term

A **food bank** is a non-profit distribution center that safely stores millions of pounds of food that are made available to partner agencies to support local food programs, like a food pantry. There are only 5 food banks in the state of Louisiana located in Shreveport, Monroe, Alexandria, Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

A **food pantry** is a church or facility where hungry families and individuals can receive food. Supplied with food from a food bank, a food pantry provides food for hundreds of people each week.

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FOOD BANK OF NORTHWEST LOUISIANA MEMBERSHIP GENERAL PRACTICES

The Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana has three types of agencies as members:

- Food Pantry: Provides USDA and supplemental food to low income families. Usually a pantry provides enough food for a minimum of 3-4 days for an individual or a family.
- Residential Program: Provides meals to registered clients for consumption only on their premises. These agencies can be homeless shelters, group homes, rehabilitation programs, and residential living facilities.
- Soup Kitchen: Provides meals prepared on site to walk in clients.

All member agencies of the Food Bank are required to sign a Food Bank and USDA agreement. It is required that the member agency will adhere to and follow the regulations and rules in the agreement and the guidelines for participation. The key personnel in the member agency must be familiar with these regulations and guidelines. Failure to comply will mean the suspension of Food Bank membership. If there are any questions about these regulations, please contact the Food Bank Agency Relations Director. If any key personnel changes are made within your member agency, please notify the Food Bank immediately to update your agreements and contact information.

Annual Monitoring Visit

Each year a staff person from the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana will make an onsite visit at each member agency. During the visit, Food Bank staff will inspect records, provide training as outlined in the 10-file folder system, and update any agency information. Please be flexible about the scheduling of these visits. The information gathered during these monitoring visits is documented in a standard form. This visit also allows the Food Bank staff person to take time with your agency to learn about your program, train staff and answer any questions. If an agency cancels or “no shows” their annual monitoring visit three times, their agency will be placed on hold from ordering for 3 months.

Annual Meeting

Part of the requirements of being a member agency of the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana is to attend all required meetings. The Food Bank will host an annual agency meeting to address new policies, issues or concerns. This also provides an opportunity for the member agencies to network and find out what others are doing or to share a good idea. It is mandatory that one agency representative must be present for all required meetings.

Record Keeping

The Food Bank requires all Member Agencies to submit a monthly report of all meal and food service records served each month. The report is due to the Food Bank on the 5th of each month. The member agency will email the report monthly. Failure to submit your monthly report by the 5th of the month will automatically place your agency on hold.

As a member of the Food Bank, you are required to keep certain records at the food distribution site:

- All client records for 3 years
- All Food Bank invoices for 3 years
- Servsafe Certificate
- Current IRS 501 C 3 status
- Temperature logs
- A current copy of the signed agreements
- Pest Control contract and receipts
- Current Health Department inspection/license, for soup kitchens, residential facilities or any meal site.

FOOD BANK OPERATIONS PROCEDURES

Ordering Procedure

You will receive your shopping list by e-mail weekly.

All orders are processed on a “first come, first served” basis. Please be sure to indicate the agency name, ID #, contact information, name of the person ordering, the desired pickup date and the desired pickup time. You must allow 24 hours between the time the order is placed and the time you wish to pick up.

All agencies are required to have a minimum order of \$20.00 per agency order. Because of our limited truck fleet and drivers, to qualify for a delivery, you must order a full truck load. Deliveries are not guaranteed. If you are unable to receive a full truck load, we might be able to combine your delivery with another member agency that is nearby. You might not get your first choice on a delivery day and time with a shared delivery. We will try our best to accommodate everyone.

Agency Shopping List

The agency shopping list is grouped in categories by “like product.” If you review the Item classification column, you will notice that all the Beverages are grouped; all the Cereal is grouped, etc. Some food items are not available for all member agencies to order, such as Sal meat. The different columns and their meanings follow.

LINE NUMBER – self-explanatory. If you are unsure, please call us.

QUANTITY – space provided for you to type/write in the number of cases you wish to order for your agency

PRODUCT NUMBER – the number assigned by the Food Bank for inventory purposes

DESCRIPTION – this contains a very brief description of the case product including the count and the size of the individual packages (ex. FROSTED FLAKES 14/24.3 oz. means that there are 14 boxes of Frosted Flakes and each box contains 24.3 oz. of cereal)

STORAGE – how the product must be stored. There are three types of storage.

- DRY – dry storage, no refrigeration required
- REF-- must be stored in the refrigerator
- FRZ – must be stored in the freezer

UNIT –the weight of one case of product

FEE/LB – the shared maintenance fee per pound of product

TOTAL FEE – the total shared maintenance fee for one case of product

“SHARED MAINTENANCE FEE”- is a handling fee that helps to cover the cost of acquiring, transporting and storing food. The maximum fee is .19 cents per pound.

Often times the Food Bank will have available foods that are beyond the “best by” or “use by” date. We follow USDA’s guidelines on product food safety. Please contact us if you have questions regarding the guidelines.

Warehouse Rules

- Pick-up times
 - Be on time; arrive at your scheduled pickup date and time. Hours of operation are: Monday- Thursday from 8-12 & 1-2:30 (No pickups between 12 – 1 pm) Friday from 8 am-12 pm ONLY. These pickup times may be subject to change.
- Orders must be placed 24 hours in advance. In order to treat each agency with the respect, the warehouse staff will not be allowed to pull any additional product while you wait.
- Invoices:
 - When you arrive at the Food Bank, pick up your invoice at the “order pick up” side door. After validating you have received everything on your invoice please sign one copy and return to the Food Bank prior to leaving.
 - We prefer payment when picking up your order. Please bring an agency check, credit card or money order with you. Statements are mailed out after the end of the month. All balances must be paid as soon as possible. A balance over 60 days will put the agency on hold and nothing can be ordered until the account is current.
 - You may pay your invoice online on our website at: www.foodbanknla.org and click, “Make a donation” select Agency in the dropdown box. Please put the name of your agency in the payment information. There is an envelope section at the bottom of the screen where you can add the agency name if it is not the name on the credit card.
 - Delivery Fees are as follows:
 - \$31 In Town (Shreveport-Bossier area only)
 - \$43 22- 49 miles round trip
 - \$85 50 - 100 miles round trip
 - \$95 100+ miles round trip
 - Fees are subject to change.
- If you have any questions concerning product or pick-up, please ask at the order pick up window. They will provide you with the most accurate information.
- The Food Bank will not load or unload products in vehicles.
- You are responsible for having adequate help to load your order. The Food Bank staff will bring your order to the edge of the loading dock for you. The Food Bank is not responsible for damages or problems that may occur during loading and offloading.
- Check your order against the invoice you receive as you load. Make sure the order is accurate BEFORE you leave the dock area. Our warehouse staff does an excellent job of pulling orders; however, they occasionally make mistakes. It is your responsibility to check the order against the invoice as you load. Any discrepancies must be settled before you leave the dock area. Refunds will not be made once you have signed your

invoice and left the premises. If your order is being delivered by the Food Bank please notify the driver of any discrepancies.

- Agencies will be charged a \$25.00 Restocking Fee for any order not claimed within 48 hours of scheduled pick up time.
- All product picked up from the Food Bank must be brought directly back to your agency and not stored anywhere else.
- The Food Bank accepts no responsibility for any building or property damage at your location.
- The food you receive from the Food Bank is for client use only.
- Food or product received from the Food Bank CANNOT be:
 - Sold
 - Removed from agency property
 - Donated to another business or Non-Profit
 - Taken to disaster relief or homeless camps
 - Stored off site
 - Used for special events
- If you are getting a delivery from the Food Bank, you must have adequate help to unload the delivery. Our drivers will only unload your order on pallets on the ground and do not break down pallets or bring anything inside.
- Agencies must have volunteer and staff support to unload a full 12-pallet truck and storage for 12 pallets of food at their facility if they are getting a delivery.
- You will receive two copies of your invoice (order) at the time you pick up or get your delivery. You must keep one and return a signed copy to the Food Bank. Please use the invoice you keep to make your payment.
- If ordering refrigerated or frozen product, you must have enough refrigeration and freezer space at your site location to store those items. You may not store any food off site, at your home or business or any other location.

Safe Food Storage

Keeping food fresh requires attention to proper food safety rules at each stage of transportation, storage and preparation. Perishable products, such as meats and dairy products will begin to spoil quickly if they are not kept at the right temperature. These products must be transferred quickly from vehicle to refrigerators or freezers at your site. Prepared food to be served hot must be kept above 140 degrees until it is served and then quickly chilled for storage. Perishable foods kept at room temperature are in the danger zone. Store and refrigerate food at 40 degrees and frozen food at 0 degrees.

Key points for food storage of all Food Bank products:

- Must have a documented pest control service; minimum of quarterly, monthly preferred.
- Keep rice, beans, flour, etc. in rodent proof bins.
- Store all food off the floor so pest control and cleaning can be done. The Food Bank has pallets if you need them.
- Store all cleaning supplies in a different area, separate from the food, never on a shelf over food.
- Organize your food stock by using a “First In, First Out” system of distribution.
- Write the date your food is received on the outside of the box.
- Do not have more than 3 months of product at your site.
- Maintain a clean and dry storage area with a temperature between 45 and 85 degrees, the optimum being 70-75 degrees. The closer to optimum, the longer the food will maintain its quality.
- Keep a thermometer in your refrigerator/freezer and record temperatures every 48 hours at a minimum.
- Use a thermometer in your dry storage area.

Please contact the Food Bank if any USDA or Food Bank food has been handled incorrectly, has been found unusable or unfit for human consumption. The Food Bank must account for the food and must take responsibility for its destruction.

Food Safety Certification

Every member agency must complete a Food Safety Training Course. Feeding America recommends the ServSafe on-line training.

Website: www.servsafe.com

- Look for “**Servsafe Food Handler Training**” at the top of the page and “click here”.
- Buy food handler products (left hand corner of page)
- Click on “Get started” and add your state
- Click on “Online Servsafe Food handler course and assessment bundle” (\$15)
- Add to cart
- Create your user name and password and profile
- When you check out, make sure you add the promo code below in the section, “promo code.”
- Enter Code: **FEEDAMER10** in the shopping cart page to receive the discounted price of \$10.50.
- You may take the modules and exam at your own pace. Once you have the exam completed, forward a copy of your certificate of completion to Agency Relations as soon as you receive your certificate. Please keep a copy for your records. This certificate is good for 3 years.
- If the person with the certificate leaves your agency, a new certificate must be submitted within 2 weeks of placing the next order.

Safe Food Transportation

Perishable food needs to be transported in a refrigerated vehicle or ice chests. When transporting food in an open truck, a tarp is required to cover the product.

- No product may be loaded above the bed of the truck.
- No product may be loaded on top of any vehicle, such as a station wagon or van.
- No product may be loaded in way that blocks the vision of the driver.

Please review the list below to learn what types of vehicles are typically used by agencies and the approximate poundage that each type can carry:

- Cars can accommodate between 50-500 pounds of food.
- Sport utility vehicles can accommodate between 500-1000 pounds of food.
- Pick-up trucks can accommodate between 1,500-2,000 pounds of food.
- Cargo vans can accommodate between 3,000-3,500 pounds of food.
- Four-pallet box truck can accommodate between 3,500-4,000 pounds of food.
- Six-pallet box truck can accommodate between 5,000+ pounds of food.

Public Outreach

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

VIOLATIONS OF AGENCY MEMBERSHIP

The Food Bank is required by the IRS, Feeding America, and the United States Department of Agriculture to enforce proper and legal product usage. Therefore, the following violations to your agency's membership agreement are strictly prohibited, and any violation may result in restriction, "on hold status", or termination of your membership.

- Exchanging or selling any donated food or grocery product for money, property or services.
- Using any food or product from the Food Bank other than for your agency's authorized program with the Food Bank.
- Being delinquent in payment of shared maintenance fees or any checks being return for non-sufficient funds.
- Late monthly reports.
- Failure to use Oasis Insight or client tracking software at every distribution or time of service (food pantries).
- Storing or transporting any donated food or grocery product improperly.
- Stockpiling any food or grocery product.
- Inadequate record keeping.
- Requiring clients or patrons of your member agency to monetarily contribute in exchange for food or meals.
- Any violation of any state or local statute, ordinance, code or regulation related to the handling or storage of food and grocery products.
- Storing or transporting any food or grocery product improperly.
- Food Pantries refusing to use Oasis insight on a monthly basis.
- Unsanitary food storage conditions and/or pest/rodent problems.
- Expired Health permit/inspection.
- Not attending the annual agency meeting.
- Canceling scheduled monitoring visits three times or a staff member not being present over three times.
- Engaging in physical violence or verbal/written abuse or intimidation/threatening behavior towards any staff member, volunteer, agency partner or agency client.
- Requiring a client to be a member of your church or religious affiliation or require counseling or membership, fees, dues, etc. to receive food.
- Termination or expiration of your 501(c) 3 tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service. This document must be current and on file at the Food Bank.
- Any discrimination in service delivery based on age, disability, gender, race, religion or political affiliation.
- False Accusation or discrimination against Food Bank staff or volunteers.
- Preferential treatment of clients served.
- Giving food product to volunteers or staff that are not participating in the program.
- If an agency is inactive with the Food Bank for ordering and distribution of food products for more than a year, the Food Bank will terminate the membership. An agency wishing to regain active status must re-apply for agency membership.

Procedures For Addressing Agency Violations

The Food Bank will handle each agency violation as a reason for terminating agency membership. The purpose of our mission is to ensure that food products are available to the needy, through the responsible efforts of our agencies. The following procedures will be applied to any agency violation:

- Ordering and receiving Food Bank product may be immediately suspended.
- An agency found to be in violation of any of these requirements shall be issued a written warning, addressing the issue of concern and the corrective action required.
- If the violation is not corrected within a reasonable amount of time, the agency shall be issued a second warning. This warning will reiterate the concerns and outline an appropriate timetable for compliance by the agency.
- If the agency fails to comply, the agency will be placed on hold status. Under hold status, an agency may not utilize the Food Bank's services until regaining compliance with policies and procedures. Notification of hold status will be confirmed in writing. The Agency Relations Coordinator has authority to place member agencies on hold. The Executive Director shall be informed when any member agency is placed on hold.
- If compliance is not accomplished as determined by the allotted time the agency's membership will be terminated. Only the Executive Director has the authority to terminate a member agency. Upon termination, an agency will lose the privileges of a member agency for a minimum of six months. At the end of six months, an agency may reapply for membership as a new agency and evidence of correction and a site visit.

Grievance Procedure

Any member agency may appeal the Executive Director's termination decision by sending written notice of appeal to the Board of Directors within 30 days of such notification. All decisions of the Board of Directors will be final.

Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana Agency Requirements

Food Pantry (USDA)

USDA Agreement and Agency Agreement: The individual authorized by the member agency's Board of Directors to sign agreements such as the President of the organization, CEO or Executive Director (not the pantry director) must sign this form.

The Client Application: The form is filled out once a year. All forms expire on June 30 and must be renewed each year. All pantries are required to use the USDA TEFAP client application. One application per household is required.

Current USDA Income Guidelines: Guidelines are updated annually. Persons who do not qualify can receive commodities one time only and should be given the opportunity to fill out an application. A file is maintained for denied applications.

Distribution Rate: The Food Bank must have a copy of the pantries' current distribution rate. A sample distribution rate has been provided for guidance. Currently, the minimum is 81 pounds of food per household once a month. This number will increase each year.

Distribution List: Persons picking up food for a client must sign their own name. In the column, "number in household" enter the number of adults/the number of children (i.e. 4/2). Everyone receiving food must sign the Distribution List.

Temperature Log: A Temperature Log should be completed preferably every day but must be done at least every other day.

- Freezer - 0° degrees F or below.
- Coolers: 32°-40° F.
- Dry Space: not above 70° F.

Annual Monitoring Form: Monitoring is conducted annually. All documentation pertaining to the program will need to be available for the visit including copies of the invoices for the food received from the Food Bank. Discrepancies must be cleared within 30 days and a corrective action statement sent to the Food Bank. Failure to do so will place your agency in "On Hold" status. Keep 3 years of completed forms on site.

Monthly Report Form: This form must be received by the Food Bank by the 5th of the month via email. The area provided for households served are only food pantries (distributes food in a box or bag). Make an entry in all blocks.

"And Justice for All" Poster: This poster must be displayed in plain view for your clients. If there is a complaint, refer client to Food Bank first to avoid problems with USDA.

Please notify the Food Bank immediately with any complaints with USDA product.

Food Pantry (USDA) Continued

Invoices: Copies of the past 3 years of Food Bank invoices must be kept on file.

Pest Control Contract: Pest control contract in place with a reputable pest control company. Proof of invoices and pest control log is required. The pest control company must come a minimum of once every 3 months.

Food Safety Certificate: At least one person from every partner agency must have a Food Safety Certificate. If the person that has the certificate leaves, another person must complete the course within 2 weeks.

Storage Site Review: This form is completed annually. The form will be forwarded with the Notification of Visit emails forwarded approximately one month prior to the date of visit. The form is kept with the other records that pertain to the program and must be completed prior to the agency monitor visiting the site.

Public Outreach: Must post a sign that indicates both the presence of the food program and the days and hours of operation. This sign must be clearly visible to the public.

Client Software: All Food Pantries must agree to use the Food Bank's Client Tracking software such as Oasis Insight. The agency must have a working internet connection and a computer or tablet at the pantry location. Oasis insight **MUST** be used each time a pantry distribution occurs.

Change in Agency Name: If your member agency name changes, please provide us with the correct name change and 501 c 3 information to support that change.

Food Pantry: Always refer to your member agency as a ***"Food Pantry," not a "Food Bank."***

Storage and other compliance requirements:

- Large dry storage area with shelving at least 6 inches off the ground.
- Commercial grade walk in refrigeration and freezer units.
- Thermometers inside each refrigerator, freezer and dry storage.
- Must have at least 7-10 reliable volunteers and staff members to assist in distributions, and for deliveries.

Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana Agency Requirements

Residential facilities/Shelter/Soup Kitchens (USDA)

USDA Agreement and Agency Agreement: The individual authorized by the member agency's Board of Directors to sign agreements, such as the President of the organization, CEO, or Executive Director (not the soup kitchen director) must sign this form.

Temperature Log: This log should be completed preferably every day but must be done at least every other day.

- Freezer: 0° F or below.
- Coolers: 32°-40° F.
- Dry Space: not above 70° F.

Annual Monitoring Form: Monitoring is conducted annually. All documentation pertaining to the program will need to be available for the visit including copies of the invoices for the food received from the food bank. Discrepancies must be cleared within 30 days and a corrective action statement sent the Food Bank. Failure to do so will place your agency in "ON HOLD" status. Keep 3 years of completed forms on site.

Monthly Report Form: This form must be received by the Food Bank by the 5th of the month via email. The "On Site Feeding" section of the form should be filled out completely. The number of meals served should be multiplied by 1.2 pounds. In the area provided for meals served put the number of actual meals served, for example; if the same 12 people eat breakfast for 10 days straight enter 120 in the breakfast area. It does not matter if the people are the same or not. Make an entry in all blocks.

"And Justice for All" Poster: This poster must be displayed in plain view for your clients. If there is a complaint, refer client to Food Bank first to avoid problems with USDA.

Storage Site Review: This form is completed annually before the annual site inspection.

Invoices: Copies of the past 3 years of Food Bank invoices must be kept on file.

Pest Control Contract: Proof of service through a pest log and invoices.

Food Safety Certificate: At least one person from every partner agency must have a Food Safety Certificate. If the person that has the certificate leaves, another person must complete the course within 2 weeks.

Health Department Inspection: Current health inspection and permit must be available for review.

Public Outreach: Must post a sign that indicates both the presence of the food program and the days and hours of operation. This sign must be clearly visible to the public.

Residential Facilities/Shelter/Soup kitchen (USDA) Continued

Food Service: All meals must be prepared on site and served on site to their residents or clients.

Storage and other compliance requirements:

- Large dry storage area with shelving at least 6 inches off the ground
- Commercial grade walk in refrigeration and freezer units
- Thermometers inside each refrigerator and freezer
- Must have at least 7-10 reliable volunteers and staff members to assist in distributions
- All kitchen equipment must be in working order and all food must be cooked and prepared at the agency site.
- Gloves, hairnets and other protective safety gear are encouraged when preparing meals.
- All hot food must be served at 140 degrees or higher.
- Beneficiary rights must be posted.
- Please notify the Food Bank immediately with any complaints regarding USDA product.