

# Volunteer Handbook



**Food Bank of  
Northwest Louisiana**

MEMBER OF  
**FEEDING<sup>®</sup>  
AMERICA**

## **COV-19 INFORMATION:**

**Volunteers are critical to the success of the Food Bank and we will continue to host volunteer shifts at the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana to meet the needs of our hungry neighbors.**

Normal operations including volunteer shifts are continuing at the Food Bank, but additional precautionary hygiene measures and contingencies are in place to maintain the health and wellness of our substantial volunteer workforce as well as those that receive our food:

- We are taking necessary measures to ensure all employees, visitors, and persons served who are experiencing any symptoms of illness stay home and avoid contact
- We are following the recommendations of the CDC to help stop the spread of germs and have posted their guidelines in public areas as a reminder for those coming to the Food Bank
- Volunteers will be prompted to wash hands before, during and after the shift
- Work areas are cleaned after each shift
- High touch surfaces are cleaned frequently

In addition, we have also provided the following suggestions to employees, volunteers, partners and other supporters:

- If you feel ill, stay home and avoid exposing others
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipes
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve (not your hands)

## **About the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana**

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana is to be the primary resource for fighting hunger in Northwest Louisiana.

### **Background**

The Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana began simply, in 1995, when a group of individuals from churches with food pantries and benevolent organizations met to discuss the need of establishing a Food Bank to serve northwest Louisiana. The group evolved into the Steering Committee that formally organized January 20, 1996. The Committee met officials from Feeding America, the nation's hunger awareness organization. In January 1997 a building was donated by the Charles Beard family. After a great deal of work, the Food Bank was opened for business April 17, 1997. In nineteen years it has grown to a massive distribution center, providing over eight million pounds of food annually.

### **About the Food Bank**

The Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana is the largest distributor of donated food and hunger relief organization in the region. Last year, through the association of 150 collaborating non-profit food providing organizations, we distributed 11.8 million pounds of food with a value of \$17 million 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 Meal and Summer Feeding Program.

Providing more service than almost any other non-profit organization in Northwest Louisiana, we distribute food to 75,000 clients each year. Each client receives food approximately 8 times per year from the Food Bank free of charge. The Food Bank provides these services and products to all eligible individuals, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, age, physical and or mental ability. We ensure that our partners comply with all applicable State, Federal and local legal requirements through inspection and contractual agreement. Each distributing collaborating partner organization uses client tracking software to prevent duplication of service and is monitored to avoid program misuse.

### **Accreditation & Affiliation**

The Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization registered as tax-exempt with the Internal Revenue Service. The Food Bank of NWLA is one of more than 200 food banks and food-rescue organizations affiliated with Feeding America, the nation's largest hunger awareness organization.

# Volunteer Policies and Practices

## Hours of Operation

Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana is open Monday – Friday from 8:00AM – 4:00PM.

## Scheduling and Sign In

The Volunteers are scheduled by the Volunteer Coordinator. For scheduling, call the Food Bank at 318.675.2400 ext. 100. Volunteer opportunities are generally Monday – Thursday from 9:00 AM – 12:00PM. Evenings and Saturdays are available depending on preregistration.

Please sign in on the volunteer sign in sheet, located at the front desk, and note how many volunteers are in your group (if you are the coordinator and part of a volunteer group, please have each volunteer sign in/out), and how many hours you volunteered.

## Height and Age Requirements

The minimum height requirement is 42". Individuals younger than 16 years old must be accompanied by adult chaperones (1 adult: 4 minors).

## Are Chaperones Required

Chaperones are required for youth groups. Any individual who is under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

1 chaperone per 4 students between the ages of 10-13 (4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade).

1 chaperone per 8 students between the ages of 14-18 (9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade).

All age requirements are strictly enforced to ensure the safety and productivity of our volunteers\*\*

## Application Process:

All volunteers must complete a volunteer profile form prior to volunteering. (Volunteers under the age of 18 must have a parent or guardian to sign their volunteer profile).

Please print all information clearly. This will assure that you are getting credit for the hours that you have volunteered.

## Late Arrivals/Cancellations

Groups must notify the Food Bank within 48 hours in the event of a cancellation, significant group size change or change in arrival time. Volunteer shifts begin at 8:30 am and 1:00 pm. Each shift includes orientation/training, time to work on the project, and then a wrap up, and a tour if requested. Please arrive at your designated start time. If you are going to be more than 10 minutes late please notify us so that we may get other volunteers started.

## Dress Code

All volunteers must wear closed-toed shoes. NO EXCEPTIONS! (NO Sandals or flip-flops) and comfortable clothing that you don't mind getting dirty. The warehouse is not climate controlled so it is chilly in the winter and hot in the summer.

## Training

A representative of the Food Bank will meet with you at the beginning of your volunteer shift to explain rules, regulations, and procedures. A Food Bank staff person will be available to answer questions at all times.

## Harassment Policy

The Food Bank of NWLA wishes to provide its volunteers with a professional and congenial work environment. We expect volunteers to treat one another with courtesy, consideration, and professionalism. The Food Bank of NWLA prohibits discrimination, sexual harassment, or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability or veteran status. We will not tolerate conduct by any volunteer which harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's work or creates an offensive or hostile work environment.

## Grievance Procedure

You are encouraged to bring your concerns up for discussion with the Food Bank staff person. If your concerns cannot be settled at this level, you have the option of filing a complaint, preferably in writing, to the Executive Director.

## Drug-Free Environment

The Food Bank of NWLA strictly prohibits the use, sale, dispensing, possession, or manufacture of illegal drugs in the workplace or while engaged in Food Bank activities.

## Smoking / Chewing

The Food Bank of NWLA is a non-smoking facility. A smoking area is located outside the building for smoke breaks. Please ask a staff member about the smoke area location and they will give you the information.

## Records

Every volunteer is entered into the Food Bank of NWLA's record database. Each activity the volunteer is involved with and the number of hours are recorded in his/her file. Please notify the Volunteer Coordinator with change of address, phone, and e-mail as needed. If you would like a copy of your volunteer record, please place this request with the Volunteer Coordinator. If you have a special form that needs to be filled out please let the Volunteer Coordinator know.

## Safety

Please be aware of the locations of our Safety Data Sheets (SD'S) once known as Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS). You can find this information in a 3 ring binder in the Sorting Room and Warehouse. These binders cover information on the cleaning materials that we use in the warehouse.

## Media

If any media outlet contacts you regarding information or an interview about the Food Bank of NWLA, please refer them to a Food Bank staff member. If a media representative approaches you while on Food Bank property or at a Food Bank event, please refrain from answering any questions or sharing your opinions on a Food Bank matter. Refer all media to a staff member.

## Childcare

Childcare is not provided for volunteers during volunteer service. Parents wishing for their elementary school-aged children to work alongside them when volunteering must receive prior permission from the Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteer activities require children to be a minimum of 42" tall and 10 years of age or older.

## Health Notification

Due to food safety concerns, volunteers who are sick on the day of a scheduled shift, should reschedule for another day. Volunteers will NOT be allowed to work if they have been recently exposed to, or being treated for: salmonella typhi, hepatitis A, norovirus, or if you are currently suffering from vomiting, diarrhea or jaundice.

## Inclement Weather/Emergency Closing

In some cases the Food Bank may close due to inclement weather or an emergency. Call the front desk at 318.675.2400 for more information on openings and closings.

## First Aid/Emergency Procedures

First Aid Kits are located throughout the facility including in the food sorting room. In the event of an accident or injury, notify a staff person immediately. If you are ever injured, report your injury to a staff person. You may be asked to fill out an accident report. In the event of a fire, you are instructed to leave the building through the nearest exit, proceed out of the building immediately, and congregate in the driveway near the entry gate.

## Court-Mandated Volunteers / Community Service Volunteers

Please inform us ahead of time if your volunteer service is to fulfill a court mandated community service requirement. All court-mandated volunteers must be approved and meet with Food Bank staff prior to beginning their service. Please bring documentation from the judge or lawyer stating the reason that you are being asked to do community service on your first visit to Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana. Your community service cannot begin until we receive your paperwork.

## Special Projects

Please let us know if you have a special skill or talent you can share with us. We have additional opportunities to become involved to help the community through service such as: Gardening, Clerical duties, Painting, Auto Mechanics, Electrical, Plumbing, IT/Computers, CDL Driver, Senior Box Home Delivery, Carpet Cleaning, General Cleaning.

## Rules and Regulations for Volunteers

- All volunteers must wear close-toed shoes! (No sandals).
- Please refrain from using cell phones or ear buds while volunteering. If you need to make a call, please step back into the lobby or outside. Ear buds and/or headphones are considered a safety hazard.
- All volunteers must remain in the area where assigned.
- Do not lift items that are too heavy. Always ask for assistance
- No driving Food Bank vehicles or equipment.
- No throwing or tossing cans or any other products.
- Manual pallet jacks may be used to move lightweight pallets with instruction and permission from staff.
- No driving fork lifts.
- Do not operate the electrical/motorized pallet jacks.
- No riding or standing on pallet jacks, buggies or carts.
- No running or playing on pallets.
- No climbing on racks. Alert a staff member if products cannot be reached.
- No climbing in and out of the totes or barrels. Alert a staff member if products cannot be reached.
- No drinking alcoholic beverages while volunteering.
- Do not remove any item, including food, from the Food Bank or from a Food Bank event, even if it is being discarded.
- No food or drinks are allowed in the sorting room or warehouse at any time. No gum is allowed to be chewed while you are in the sorting room or warehouse.
- No backpacks, purses, and etc. are allowed in the sorting room or warehouse. Please leave these in your vehicle.

## VOLUNTEER APPLICATION and RELEASE

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

Name you go by if different than listed: \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Phone: (List 2) \_\_\_\_\_

### Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana Volunteer Agreement

I understand that it is prohibited for me to remove any Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana products, food, and confidential information (files, forms, emails other written or electronic documentation, etc.) for any use. I give the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana permission to conduct a background check on me prior to or during my volunteer service. I understand that volunteer service is at will and can be terminated, for any reason, or for no reason at all, and with or without advance notice, at any time by Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana. The policies relating to volunteers are intended as guidelines for volunteers and are subject to change at the sole discretion of Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana.

### Photo, Model Release and Consent Agreement

I, the undersigned, hereby irrevocably consent to the unrestricted use by Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana and/or its clients, customers, successors and assigns and those acting under its authority, and those for whom it is acting, the absolute right, for as long and as often as they may elect to copyright and/or use and/or publish any media pictures of me and in which I may be included in whole or in part, whether such pictures may be retouched, otherwise changed in character or form, or included as part of a composite picture in conjunction with my character or form, or included as part of a composite picture in conjunction with my own or fictitious name or reproductions or versions thereof in color otherwise, made through any media on or about me for art, advertising, trade or any other lawful purpose whatsoever. I hereby waive any right to inspect or approve the finished photograph, advertising copy, or printed matter that may be used in conjunction there with, or to the eventual use that it may be applied. In conjunction with the foregoing, I hereby release and hold harmless Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana and each of the above from all liability. I hereby warrant that I am providing modeling services as a professional, freelance and/or independent contractor. The Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana nor Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana Food Bank staff members are liable for any injuries that may occur while volunteering. This agreement constitutes the complete and exclusive agreement between me and Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana and I am not relying on any other representation whether oral or written.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Adult, parent or guardian)

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Child Name: \_\_\_\_\_