

**FOOD BANK OF EASTERN MICHIGAN**  
***"CHANGING THE FACE OF HUNGER"***



**MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS**  
**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**JANUARY 2014**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Food Banking has been in existence for over two decades in Michigan and across the nation. The policies of the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan have as their foundation, our view of

1. The people who are hungry and
2. The networks that exist to help them.

To understand our policies, you must understand this viewpoint.

We believe that two food assistance networks, one primary and the other emergency, exist in our state. Government programs such as the Food Stamp program (through the Department of Social Services), the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program (through the Health Department), and Senior Meal Programs are the **primary assistance network**. Food Banks and member agencies are the **emergency assistance network**, and as such, we fill the void created by the inadequacy of the primary assistance network.

## **SECTION I: MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA**

Background: All member organizations must meet the following criteria for membership in the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan Network.

### **Criteria**

1. Must have a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt status with the IRS or have established ties to a governing body with a 501 (c) (3)
2. Must be a non-profit entity with over 50% of its clientele being ill, poor, or infants.
3. Must be licensed by the State of Michigan and/or other appropriate bodies, as a food service establishment if on site meals are provided.

### Processing Timelines

1. Turn in Application
2. Orientation
3. Location visit with inspection

Most delays in processing are due to incomplete applications with no 501(c) (3) returned to Food Bank of Eastern Michigan.

**Note:** Exception to any of the above stated criteria will be reviewed upon request, and on an individual basis, by Food Bank of Eastern Michigan.

## **SECTION II: PRINCIPLES OF FOOD BANKING**

Background: The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan Network is built on several policy principals. These policies must guide the over all philosophy by which you use Food Bank products.

### **Policies**

1. Products obtained from the Food Bank must be given free to the ill, needy, and infants as per Section 170 (E) (3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. Agency will not engage in discrimination, in the provision of service, against any person because of race, color, citizenship, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation including gender identity, unfavorable discharge from the military or status as a protected veteran.
2. Products obtained from the Food Bank are to be used to fill the gaps that the primary food assistance network, i.e., government feeding programs, misses. Products must be distributed to recipients in the form of meals or pre-packed distribution packages.
3. Food Bank member organizations must have a primary source(s) of funding other than voluntary donations received from the recipients with an outline of where their funding comes from.
4. Products received from the Food Bank must not be sold, bartered, or traded.
5. Products obtained from the Food Bank may not be used for parties, fundraisers, or similar events.
6. Products obtained from the Food Bank are not intended for regular use by staff or other persons who are not being served by the program.
7. Member organizations must be agreeable to supporting the operations of the Food Bank with the suggested shared maintenance contribution and annual membership contribution.
8. Church pantries may not exclusively serve their membership and can not require recipients to participate in a religious service or program in order to obtain food.
9. May not reward service (volunteers) with food product obtained from the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan.
10. Food must always be served at no cost to those in need. Please understand that serious legal difficulties can result if these rules are not followed.

**Note:** Exception to any of the above stated policies will be reviewed upon request, and on an individual basis, by Food Bank of Eastern Michigan.

## **SECTION III: STORAGE & HANDLING**

Background: Maintaining product integrity is everything inside of food banking. The number one reason food manufacturers donate product to the food bank network is because they know that we will ensure that all food is handled and stored properly. The following policies have been developed to maintain product integrity.

## **Policies**

1. All product obtained from the Food Bank must be stored on site at the member organization's facility and not in a personal residence.
2. All storage areas must be clean, dry, free of contaminants, and secure.
3. All product obtained from the Food Bank must be stored at least 6 inches off the floor.
4. Proper pest control methods, i.e., no poisons, must be practiced.
5. All freezers and refrigerators must be clean.
6. Freezer temperature must be zero degrees or below.
7. Refrigerator temperature must be 40 degrees or below.
8. Have sanitation and temperature charts posted.
9. Member organizations may only repackage bulk food if they have appropriate facilities and licensing.
10. Unlabeled products available to congregate agencies must be kept in labeled cases until used.
11. Product "use by dates" does not necessarily indicate the useful life of a product. Products are often good beyond this date. Products that have passed their "use by dates" and show signs of deterioration must be discarded. The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan is available for consultation on questionable products.
12. Agencies will adhere to additional donor stipulations, as applicable.
13. All product will be accepted in "as is" condition.
14. Must have a minimum of one preferably two ServeSafe trained on staff.

**Note:** Exception to any of the above stated policies will be reviewed upon request, and on an individual basis, by the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan.

## **SECTION IV: RECORD KEEPING**

Background: Record keeping is an extremely important function of a Food Bank member organization. There are two reasons why we ask you to keep certain types of records. Foremost, people who help our network with donations of money and/or food want to know how many people we are helping. This is a very legitimate request from donors and foundations or corporations providing grant funding. It's easy to think, we're here to feed people and not to count numbers but we simply cannot, as a network, operate in this manner. It is critical that we all work together to tell our communities the number of people who have been helped.

Secondly, we also keep some records, like invoices, in the event that a donor recalls a product because of some problem or defect. All the records which we ask you to keep have been kept at a minimum of three years.

## **Policies**

1. A copy of the invoice must be returned to your organization with the product obtained from the Food Bank. The order must then be re-inspected and signed for accuracy upon receipt at your organization.
2. Invoices from Food Bank of Eastern Michigan must be kept on file for three years.
3. All member organizations must keep an unduplicated count of the people served.
4. Reports on the number of unduplicated people served must be submitted monthly. Those member organizations more than 2 months delinquent in submitting monthly reports will not be allowed to receive product from the Food Bank. After two months the agency will be given a phone call and put on hold. After six months the agency will be given a letter that they are delinquent with monthly reports.
5. All agencies on hold without resolution for more that 6 months may be terminated and the agency director or board chair will be informed by letter.
6. Agency must ensure that all frontline staff/volunteers receive Civil Rights training once per year.
7. All agencies accepting USDA/TEFAP product who are operating a food pantry or Mobile Food Pantry distribution must utilize an intake form adhering to USDA guidelines.

**Note:** There are no exceptions to these policies.

## **SECTION V: GENERAL OPERATIONS**

Background: The following policies are of a general nature and do not fit into one neat category. They are, however, as important as any of our policies.

### **Policies**

1. An annual membership contribution of \$100.00 is due once a year by February 28th. New members will be assessed an annual membership contribution pro-rated by quarter.
2. If inventories of products are low, the Food Bank reserves the right to limit products to member organizations. In the event of such action, a member organization allocation formula based on submitted monthly reports for the prior three months excluding the November and December will be used.
3. Products that carry distribution restrictions outlined by the donor will only be distributed to eligible member organizations.
4. Member organizations are responsible to take only those products which are applicable to their program use.
5. Member organizations are responsible to take only the quantity of products to meet their immediate needs and not create unreasonable reserves.
6. Member organizations that are 60 days or more delinquent in paying their shared maintenance account will not be allowed to obtain product from the Food Bank.
7. Member organizations are required to attend an annual network meeting each year.
8. The Food Bank is required to monitor member organizations every year. This consists of inspecting storage of product, distribution processes, and record keeping. If a member organization is found to be out of compliance with Food Bank policy, the

organization may be placed on hold until *corrective action(s)* are taken. Failure to implement required corrective action(s) will result in the revoking of membership. Food Bank of Eastern Michigan reserves the right to make unannounced inspections.

9. Product may not leave the designated service area of the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan.
10. The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan reserves the right to terminate our partnership without a stated cause or advance notice.

## **SECTION VI: FOOD BANK PROCEDURES**

1. The Food Bank is open for orders and pickups, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm. The last working day of the month only boxed and shelved reclamation will be available due to our monthly inventory process. No orders will be taken on this day.
2. Appointments are necessary to pick up an order at the Food Bank. Call in advance for a food order appointment. If an appointment cannot be kept, please call as soon as possible to cancel. Agency may be assessed a restocking fee if failing to pick-up an order on a designated day/time. **When you cannot keep your appointment and you do not call us, we cannot give your time slot to another member organization who is in need of food.**
3. We request that only 2 people from a member organization come into the Food Bank to pickup an order. More people, however, might be needed to help load your vehicle.
4. Member organizations are required to present their agency number when placing an order.
5. For safety purposes, member organizations are not permitted in the warehouse unless accompanied by Food Bank staff.
6. When picking up an order, member organizations must check for accuracy and sign the warehouse release form. Once you have signed the release form and take possession of the order, no changes will be made (i.e., you say you only got 2 cases of beans, the warehouse release that you signed says you got 3, we charge you for all 3 cases). If there are any questions or concerns about your order, please resolve them before you sign the warehouse release form.
7. It is the responsibility of the member organization to notify the Food Bank of any changes in program, location or contact person.
8. All agencies must have a valid phone number with voice mail system or answering machine in use when a person cannot answer the phone.
9. All agencies must have a valid email address.
10. Member organizations will be billed for shared maintenance contributions monthly. Accounts are due within 30 days.
11. If an agency is over 15 minutes late, they will not be able to do reclamation but only pickup their order.
12. Online orders will be entered into the system twice daily. Cut-off for pickup orders is 48 hours before pickup. Delivery orders are 48 hours before delivery.

## **SECTION VII: DEFINITIONS**

Definition of needy: IRS regulations related to "tax deductibility of certain charitable contributions" published in the Federal Register on February 1, 1982; define the term "infant" to mean a minor child or anyone less than 18 years of age in the State of Michigan. "Needy" is defined as a person "who lacks the necessities of life, involving physical, mental or emotional well-being as a result of poverty or temporary distress. Examples of needy persons include a person who is financially impoverished as a result of low income and lack of financial resources, a person who temporarily lacks food or shelter (and the means to provide it), a person who is the victim of a civil disaster (such as a civil disturbance), a person who is temporarily not self-sufficient as the result of a sudden and severe personal or family crisis (such as a person who is the victim of a crime of violence or who has been physically abused), a person who is a refugee or immigrant and who is experiencing language, cultural, or financial difficulties, a minor child who is not self-sufficient and who is not cared for by a parent or guardian, and a person who is not self-sufficient as a result of previous institutionalization (such as a former prisoner or a former patient in a mental institution).

"Ill" person is a person who requires medical care within the meaning of section 1.213-1(e). Examples of ill persons include a person suffering from physical injury, a person with a significant impairment of a bodily organ, a person with an existing handicap, whether from birth or later injury, a person suffering from malnutrition, a person with a disease, sickness, or infection which significantly impairs physical health, a person partially or totally incapable of self-care (including incapacity due to old age). A person suffering from mental illness is included if the person is hospitalized or institutionalized for the mental disorder, or, although the person is non-hospitalized or non-institutionalized, if the person's mental illness constitutes a significant health impairment.

We believe that the hungry basically fit into three broad groups.

### **Group 1: The Chronically Poor**

This group of people are those whose annual income falls under the poverty line as defined by the government. They spend much, and sometimes all, of their lives in poverty. Some move into and out of the labor force; others are disabled and unable to work. People in this group are most likely to be eligible for assistance from the government. Government assistance programs, however, often fail to totally meet their ongoing need.

The Federal government bases its definition of poverty, which determines eligibility for most assistance programs, as well as benefit levels of many programs, on a 1955 food consumption survey. It found that the average family spent one-third of its income on food. The official poverty line is defined as an income equal to three times the cost of food under USDA's Thrifty Food Plan, the most modest of several family food budget plans. It assumes that a family spends a dollar per person per meal each day. The poverty line is \$21,200 for a family of four (Department of Health and Human Services).

This definition presupposes a high degree of nutritional knowledge and time for careful food shopping and food preparation. Food stamps are supposed to supplement the 30 percent of income which recipients use for food. Benefits provide an average of just 75 cents per person per meal per day. But low-income people often do not have convenient access to grocery stores. And the 30 percent of income assumption is increasingly unrealistic. The federal government reduced its spending on low-income housing programs by 70 percent between 1978 and 1991, contributing to a shortage of affordable housing. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 45 percent of poor renters spend at least 70 percent of their incomes on shelter. The remaining 30 percent must cover not only food, but health care, child care, and other necessities."\* This group is likely to need some help from the Food Bank Network on a regular basis.

\* "Hunger 1994 -Fourth Annual Report on the State of World Hunger"  
Bread for The World Institute

## **Group 2: The Situationally Poor**

This group of people are those individuals who are experiencing poverty on a temporary basis. Factors such as divorce, injuries, layoffs, high medical bills, and unexpected expenses have caused an immediate financial crisis. Most of these individuals do not stay in poverty more than one year. This group may or may not be eligible for governmental assistance. They might need help from the Food Bank Network on a regular basis during their time of need (especially if they don't qualify for any government assistance).

## **Group 3: The Working Poor**

This group of people are those individuals who work, often at full-time, year-round jobs, but who do not earn enough to support a family above the poverty line. This group does have some resources that can be used for food but usually will need help at some point during the month. Most of the working poor do not qualify for government assistance and it will be up to our network to meet their needs.

We believe that most of the people who are helped by our network are those who are chronically poor or those who are the working poor. One week's supply of food should help both these groups to avoid crisis situations. The chronically poor should be relying on the government for their major food assistance, while the working poor should be able to use a percentage of what they earn on food. The situationally poor might need more extensive help from us if they do not qualify for government assistance. While we realize that exceptions do occur, we believe that the pattern of help described here is the general rule of thumb that emergency food networks follow.

**\*Please sign and return the next page with your application...**



**Please note that by signing our agreement, we all agree that the relationship formed is an “at will” partnership. As such, Food Bank of Eastern Michigan and any partner organization is allowed to sever the relationship without advance notice or an officially stated reason. Both parties agree that this type of disengagement will not be associated with a cause to make a legal claim or “harm” to any recipient or for you to seek recovery from “damages” of any kind. Your signature on a Food Bank of Eastern Michigan application means that you understand and agree with this statement regarding membership.**

**I hereby certify that I have received and understand the policies and procedures of the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan. I further certify that my organization will operate within the intent of these policies and procedures.**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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