



Starting a Food Program

If you would like to establish a food program with the Atlanta Community Food Bank (ACFB), you should know some important things. This packet will help you understand what is involved in operating a food program. The contents of this guide are subject to change without notice.

We hope that you find this information packet helpful. If you have any questions or concerns about establishing a food program, please feel free to contact the Agency Services Department at (404) 892-3333 extension 1303.

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Attachments;

- ACFB Application for Partnership
- Sample 501(c)(3) Appendix A
- Sample Guidelines for Refusing Service Appendix B

Application Checklist

Please use this checklist to help you meet all the requirements for partnership. Each of the requirements is explained in detail on the following pages.

General Requirements:

- The agency must be located in one of the 38 counties with an established need for a food program.
- The agency must have a current copy of its own 501c (3) (Federal Tax Exemption Status letter) or:
 - The agency must have written documentation of affiliation with a mainline denomination.
 - The agency must attach a copy of its program brochure/service bulletin.
- The agency must be incorporated with the Georgia Secretary of State Office.
- The agency has operated an on premise feeding or food pantry program for at least six months prior to the date on the accompanying Partnership application form.
- The agency must have a basic business plan.
- The agency must have a budget for the food program.
- The agency must have a record-keeping system.
- The agency must have an organization check and attach a voided check with the application.
- Food Pantry programs must be open a minimum of two hours twice a week.
- Prepared Meal programs must have meals times that occur at least once a week.
- The agency must post signs that indicate both the presence of the food program and the days and hours of distribution.

Copy of license/permit for:

- Personal Care Homes—DHR license
- Residential Program—Occupancy Permit/ DHR license & current contract

(We will confirm with DHR the current number of residents in the program)

- Child Care Programs—DHR license

- County Health Department Report
- Safe Food Handler’s certificate recognized by county
- Sign and date the Membership Contract on pages 6- 7.

Equipment and Storage Requirements:

- The agency must have at least 18 cubic feet of refrigerator space and 18 cubic feet of freezer space that is designated for the food program
- A thermometer that is designated for cold storage units must be in each unit.
- Dry foods must be stored 6” off the floor in a secure room.
- Hand-washing sink
- The agency should have enough pest-proof containers with tight fitting lids to store dry products such as rice, cereal and beans.
- The agency must have a working telephone at the food program site.
- The agency must have an email address that is accessible by the food program coordinator.
- The agency must have a pest control plan and contract with a professional exterminator.

Other Considerations:

- Agencies cannot operate the food program out of a home.
- Any food from the Atlanta Community Food Bank may only be used for the approved program.
- The Atlanta Community Food Bank recommends that an agency have at least two staff members or volunteers to manage and operate the food program.
- The agency must have a means of transportation to and from the Atlanta Community Food Bank to pick up food orders.

Additional Requirements for Hot Meal Programs Only:

- Site must have at least one food handler with certificate in safe food service
- The agency must have a stove with a hood (vent) to ensure proper air ventilation.
- The agency must have a separate hand-washing sink.
 - The agency must have one dial stem thermometer to measure the temperatures of refrigerator frozen and reheated hot foods
- Make a copy of application and attachments for your records!***
- Mail the original application form and attachments to:**

Atlanta Community Food Bank
Agency Services Department
732 Joseph E. Lowery Blvd., Atlanta, GA 30318
Fax 404/892-4026 * Phone 404-892-9822

Application Follow-up:

- Applicant site visit
- Required training.

General Requirements

Types of Food Programs

The Atlanta Community Food Bank categorizes food programs into two basic types:

- **Food pantry** – community-based, nonprofit food assistance program most often found at churches, synagogues, mosques and social service agencies. Food pantries provide a limited amount of food to individuals and families facing either food emergencies or ongoing food needs.
- **On site program** – A partner agency that serves food in its facility to low income persons, such as child care centers, shelters, residential treatment programs. Also referred to as “on-premise.”

Community Need

There must be an established need in your community for a new food program. The Atlanta Community Food Bank reserves the right to review the concentration of agencies in your community. If a food program already exists in your neighborhood, then it may be more beneficial to collaborate with them. Upon request, the Food Bank will provide a list of other agencies in your area that you may contact to discuss community-specific needs. These agencies may also offer opportunities for you to learn about food program activities in your community via network meetings.

501(c) (3)

In order to be considered for partnership to the Atlanta Community Food Bank, your agency must be designated a 501(c) (3) tax-exempt organization by the Federal Government. An official copy of your organization’s 501(c) (3) determination letter must be submitted with your partnership application. The name and address of your agency should appear on the face of the document. (See a sample letter in Appendix A-) Further explanation will be required if the letter submitted with your application is under a different organization’s name, such as an explanation of affiliation. For more information, visit the irs website at:

<http://www.irs.gov/charities/article/0,,id=136196,00.html>

A Basic Business Plan

Each agency should have a basic business plan. This plan should include:

- **Mission Statement:** An agency must have a written, clearly defined mission statement. The statement should explain your intentions and it should support the need for a food program in your community- Here is an example of a basic mission statement: “The mission of Country Harvest Pantry is to distribute food to the needy and refer them to community organizations for social services.”
- **Food Program Budget:** Given that there are food costs, staffing costs, rent, etc, Atlanta Community Food Bank partners must have a current budget for their food program. The Food Bank distributes food to agencies for a share maintenance fee of \$.16 cents per pound.
- **Criteria for Client Eligibility:** Your food program must have written guidelines for food program participation which state your requirements for participation, as well as guidelines for refusing service to clients, (see Appendix B for a sample). An agency

must practice a nondiscriminatory policy. Agencies that serve specific populations (such as people living with HIV /AIDS or seniors) are exempt from this requirement. If you are interested in serving a specific population at your agency, please be sure to indicate this on your membership application.

Please understand that no matter what type of food program you establish that you are expected to serve individuals regardless of their race, color, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, creed, religion, sexual orientation, physical appearance, disability status, age, pregnancy, or any group membership.

Food Program Hours of Operations

All Atlanta Community Food Bank sites are required to follow a weekly schedule throughout the year. An agency must be open during the days and hours reported to the Food Bank.

Temporary changes to the days and hours of operation are permitted, but the agency must report those changes in writing as soon as possible to the Food Bank.. The procedure is the same for an agency who wishes to change permanent distribution days and times.

Pantry programs must have regularly scheduled food distribution at least twice a week, for a minimum of two hours.

Hot meal programs must have regularly scheduled meal times at least once a week.

Public Outreach

The 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 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 12 .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. The Food Bank can suggest other types of signage or provide you with a basic sign to post if needed. The agency must visibly publicize its presence and days and hours of operation in its community by distributing flyers or by listing its location, telephone number and days and hours of operation in a local newspaper or library.

We strongly encourage agencies to list with **United Way's 211 First Call For Help** line..

Agencies do not necessarily have to use these methods, as there may be other ways to publicize.

If you need assistance, the Food Bank can make suggestions. Agencies that serve only specific populations (such as those that serve clients living with HIV/ AIDS) are exempt from this requirement.

Equipment and Storage Requirements

Equipment Requirements

The following equipment is required of all food programs:

- 18 cubic feet of dedicated (for use only by the food program) refrigerator space.
- 18 cubic feet of dedicated freezer space.
- All units must have a cold storage thermometer in each compartment.
- Temperatures must be maintained between 35 and 40 degrees for refrigerators and between -10 and 0 degrees for freezers.
- Dry foods must be stored 6" off the floor in a room that is between 50 and 70 degrees and with humidity levels between 50% and 60%.
- The storage space must be secure and accessible only by food program staff. A hand-washing sink must be accessible by food program staff and volunteers. **The hand washing sink does not have to be in the same room with the food for food pantry programs.**
- The agency should have containers with tight fitting lids, called pest-proof containers. These containers are used to aid in the prevention of pest infestations for items such as beans, rice, grains, etc. You may use any closed container, such as a large plastic garbage can or a metal cabinet.
- A working telephone located in the same area as the food program is required.
- A computer and email address must be accessible by the food program manager.

Pest Control Requirements

An agency must have a pest control plan, a current contract with a licensed professional exterminator, and extermination logbook. The extermination logbook will hold your extermination contract and receipts for each visit. This must be available for review when a representative visits your site. The Food Bank recommends that monthly exterminators visit although some sites may require visits that are more frequent.

Other Food Program Considerations

Space Considerations

Agencies cannot operate the food program out of a home. This means that programs such as home-based day cares do not qualify for membership with the Food Bank.

Proper use of Food

Any food obtained from the Food Bank must only be used for the approved food program. It may not be used for other purposes (church anniversaries, barbeques for fundraising etc).

In addition, under no circumstances can the food program require fees for food, nor can the agency require individuals to work or volunteer in order to receive food from the program.

Staff and Staff Responsibilities

A solid staff is vital to operating a good food program. The staff could be comprised of paid employees and volunteers. Regardless of who operates the food program, there are many responsibilities involved.

The list that follows describes the duties involved with food program administration. While the Food Bank understands that many agencies may not have a different person to fulfill each responsibility, we recommend that each agency have at least two people to manage the food program.

Food Program Management: The person who manages the food program serves as the liaison between the agency and the Food Bank. This person is the primary contact for the Food Bank.

Financial Management and Accounting: There are many costs associated with operating a food program. A food program must be financially responsible. All food programs are required to keep written budgets to account for purchases, donations, services and other expenses. Accurate budget keeping is important because it enables agencies to make more cost effective decisions about food resources and related purchases.

Record keeping: Record keeping is a very important part of operating a food program. All agencies are required to provide the Food Bank. There is information we need you to keep: this information must be recorded and submitted on a monthly service form located in EHarvest (details are provided during new member orientation. In addition, all agencies

FOOD PANTRIES:

Name and address of recipient

Date of service

Number in the household

Number of children

Number of adults over 65

number of pounds given to each household

ON PREMISE AGENCIES

Dates meals were served
the number and type of meal
number of persons served at the meal.

ALL AGENCIES MUST

keep a record of capacity turned away and
Ethnicity of people in each group served.
must keep copies of their Food Bank invoices for two years.

Fund Raising: The best financial resources a food program can use are monetary grants from donors and foundations. Successful grant writing requires an effective grant writer. If your agency needs help with grant writing, or if you would like to improve your grant writing skills, the Food Bank's Seminar Series can assist you. In addition, many food programs host or participate in various fundraising events to supplement their food program budgets. The types of fundraisers that a food program may organize include car washes, bake sales, pot luck dinners, arts and crafts fairs and the Food Bank's Hunger Walk. If you need fundraising ideas, the Food Bank can assist you.

Food Resources Management: Managing the food that a program distributes or prepares for clients is a big task! The person who manages food resources should always know how much and what kind of food the program needs. This includes securing as many food resources for the program as possible and ensuring that food is picked up and arrives at the food program.

- Order Placement: Food programs place orders online in eHarvest. Food programs must have access to a computer to place orders.
- Address client concerns and improve its services. If clients have other needs, that is not directly related to food, then the Client Service Coordinator should do his/her best to refer them to the appropriate resource.

Food Drive Organization: The Food Bank is one of many resources that a food program may use to secure food. Many agencies have food drives to supplement food inventory.

- Transportation Management: This person coordinates the transportation of the food from the Food Bank and other donors to the food program. The person who manages transportation must help maintain a budget for gas, maintenance, rentals and other transportation-related costs.
- Facility Management: The building or space that a food program occupies needs to be safe, secure and pest free. The person who is in charge of facility management ensures this by conducting thorough and regular check ups.
- Pest Control Management: Pests tend to find food wherever it is stored. The person in charge of pest control management ensures that a licensed Pest Control company inspects the premises where the food program is located.

Volunteer Recruitment : Almost every food program that works with the Food Bank is operated by volunteers from the community. The person in charge of volunteer recruitment finds volunteers to assist the food program with tasks such as unloading food from trucks, stocking shelves with food, preparing bags and distributing bags to clients. The person who manages the volunteers keeps their contact information on file and schedules them for specific shifts and tasks. The volunteer manager also logs volunteer hours and accomplishments so that the food program remains aware of volunteer contributions.

Client Service Coordinator In order to be effective and efficient, each agency needs to establish policies for operating a food program. The person who coordinates client services works with clients and the community to determine how the pantry should more effectively address client concerns and improve its services. If clients have other needs, that is not directly related to food, then the Client Service Coordinator should do his/her best to refer them to the appropriate resource.

Intake Coordinator: Many clients are intimidated by or uncomfortable with the thought of going to food programs for assistance. The person who coordinates the intake process for the food program greets new clients and explains how the pantry works. The Intake Coordinator also records client information such as name, address and the number of individuals in the household.

Transportation

Since an agency is responsible for picking up its food orders from the Food Bank it must have the appropriate vehicle to transport the food back to the program site. This means that the vehicle must be able to accommodate the total weight of any food order you pick up. Many of our current partner agencies own vehicles, rent them or share transportation costs. As long as the vehicle can accommodate your order, the type of vehicle you choose to use is up to you. Please review the list below to learn what types of vehicles agencies use and the approximate poundage that each type can carry typically use:

- Cars can accommodate between 50-500 pounds of food
- Sport utility vehicles can accommodate between 500-4,000 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

Additional Requirements for Hot Meal Programs

Food Sanitation Certificates

If your agency is an on-premise/onsite feeding program and inspected by the Health Department you are required to have one safe food handler's certificate. The Atlanta Community Food Bank requires two certified safe food handlers in case the primary certified safe food handler is unable to supervise food preparation and meal service due to illness, vacation, or other unforeseen circumstances. You must post the certificates in the dining area.

Obtaining Food Service Sanitation Certification

The Atlanta Community Food Bank offers a safe food handling class through its training and education program. The Class is offered throughout the year at different times. For more information, please contact the Agency Services staff a (404) 892-3333 extension 1212. Certification classes are also offered by various local colleges and private institutions, although the cost for these classes may be higher.

Equipment

In addition to the equipment listed in the General Requirements, hot meal sites are also required to have the following:

- Stove with a hood (vent) to ensure proper air ventilation.
- Industrial dishwasher or three-step dishwashing sink.
- Hand-washing sinks separate from the dishwashing sink
- One dial stem thermometer to measure the temperatures of refrigerated, frozen and re-heated foods.

Application Follow-up

Site Visit

Upon receipt of your Atlanta Community Food Bank application for partnership, a staff member from the Agency Services Department will contact you to set up your site visit,. During this visit, the staff person will confirm that the requirements listed in the previous pages have been met, and get a better understanding of your agency. A successful application and site visit will insure partnership with the Atlanta Community Food Bank.