

Essentials For Agencies

Food Bank of Western Massachusetts

October 2023



Training Agenda

- Agency vs. Program
 - *Program Types - EFPs/NFPs*
- Types of Program Contacts
 - *Difference between Admin/Primary Contact*
 - *What on earth is "POL Contact?"*
- Points of Contact @ The Food Bank – Who to contact & when
- Maintaining membership
- Food types, fees & costs
- Ordering Deadlines & Closures
- Statements and invoices
- Monitoring Visits
- Food safety
- Distribution Policies
- Sharing Food
- Religious Activity
- Misconceptions
- Eligibility & Verification Requirements – **IMPORTANT**
- Extras
- Communication

Things we won't be covering today...

...So review your Essentials Guide!

- “Expiration” dates and labels
- Fees
- Pick up process

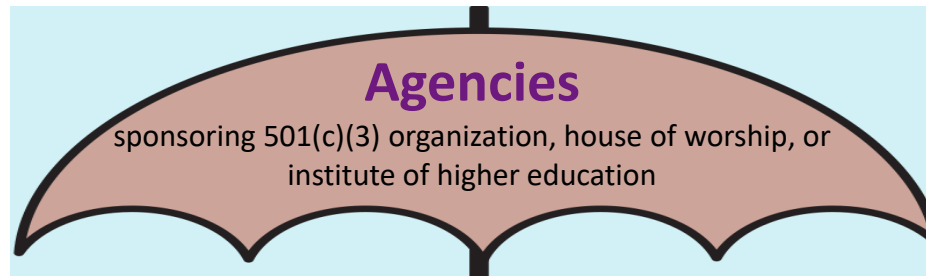
There are separate trainings for:

- USDA requirements and regulation
- In-depth online ordering explanations
- Statistics

When in doubt, give us a call or send us an email at agencyrelations@foodbankwma.org

Agency vs. Program

Essentials Guide p.5



Programs

physical locations of food distribution

Types:

Emergency Feeding Programs (EFPs)

Programs open to the public with a *primary purpose* of feeding neighbors in need or providing short-term emergency shelter

Pantries

Meal Programs

Shelters (with a stay of 6 months or less)

NEW: Campus Pantries

Non-Emergency Feeding Programs (NFPs)

Public or private programs that are organized for a separate purpose, but provide free food to members/clients/guests

Adult (Day) Care

Childcare

Drug Rehabilitation

Internal Pantry

Residential

The Food Bank is currently only accepting new EFPs EXCEPT medical offices/hospitals (internal pantries)

Program Contacts

Essentials Guide p. 21

Admin

Sponsoring *agency's* Executive Director (or similar position)

Same person for all programs across an agency

Signs Basic Membership Agreement (read: annual contract)

Primary Contact

Primary Food Bank contact at *each program*

ONLY ONE PERSON for each program

Receives all Food Bank communications

Must actively maintain & check email!

Authorized to make program changes (ex. hours, adding/removing other contacts)

Program Contacts (Continued)

POL (“Primarius Online”) Contact

Orders food online, receives order confirmation emails

Pick Up (“Authorized”)

Allowed to sign for pick up/delivery orders

If no authorized Pick Up Contact present, we can refuse to release your order!

Food Safety

Must have at least one Food Safety contact on file for each *program*

Person must have correct type of certification for your program

Must send Food Bank a copy of this person’s food safety certificate

MSR (“Monthly Service Report”)

Completes your program’s monthly statistics

Points of Contact @ FBWM

Essentials Guide p.4

Agency Relations

Agency Relations Manager

Michelle Geoffroy

Contracts & Essentials Guide • Compliance & Capacity-Building Oversight
• Oasis Insight • Stats & Sizes • Statements

Agency Relations Coordinator

Monitoring visits • USDA Compliance • Statistics

Agency Resource Coordinator

Naomi Desilets

Capacity Grants • ACE points • Program Goals & Networking Meetings •
Capacity Building • Agency Trainings

Agency Recruitment Coordinator

Kate Pousont Scarborough

Identifying prospective new members • Applications • Initial Inspections •
Onboarding

For the following you can contact agencyrelations@foodbankwma.org:

General Questions & Concerns • Program Changes
• Order & Food Quality Questions/Concerns

Food Operations

Warehouse Supervisor

Tom Leporati

Pickup schedule changes/cancellations

Food Distribution Supervisor

Antonio Acevedo

Delivery questions/concerns

Food Procurement Coordinator

Brandie Taggart

Retail pick up

Finance

Director of Finance & Administration

Jacob Hough

Financial arrears •
Invoice/Statement financial questions • Grant questions

When to Contact FBWM...

Essentials Guide p.4

You **MUST** Contact The Food Bank when...

Cannot make scheduled shopping or delivery appointment

(Failure to cancel/reschedule may result in restocking fees!)

There are certain changes at your AGENCY:

- Executive director change
- Billing contact change
- Organization Name/Address change
- Change/loss of 501c3 status

There are certain changes at your PROGRAM:

- Location (including storage or food prep spaces) – REQUIRES INSPECTION
- Hours
- Phone number
- Primary contact change
- Food safety certification change

Tips to Maintain your Membership

Essentials Guide p. 24

Keep your federal and state taxes up to date!

If not up to date, or if your 501(c)3 status changes, your agency, and all programs under it, will lose nonprofit status. Loss of nonprofit/charitable status means loss of Food Bank membership!

Place an order at least once every six months

If your program doesn't order at least once/year, we will not send a renewal contract

Current & accurate stats are a must!

If missing multiple months or submit multiple months with errors, will trigger suspension

For EFPs – stats determine program size. Program size determines MEFAP & USDA case limits

Maintain current food safety certificates

Will be required to obtain certification within 60 days of a staff/volunteer change; failure to do so will result in suspension

Food Types

Essentials Guide p.6

Which types of Programs can Access which Types of food?

Buy-In

Available to ALL Programs

- Product bought by The Food Bank, available at wholesale prices
- These are the only products that have a “cost” at The Food Bank

Donated Product

Available to all programs EXCEPT Campus Pantries

- Candy and some beverages (free)
- Non-frozen Perishables (generally free)
- Salvage, by the case, & frozen perishables
 - 19¢/lb non-Hampden county
 - 10¢/lb Hampden County

Food Types (Continued)

Fresh Produce (free)

- Donated Produce – Available to all programs EXCEPT Campus Pantries
- MEFAP Produce – Available to ALL programs

MEFAP

Available to Emergency Feeding Programs (including Campus Pantries)

- Free State-funded food.
- Case limits apply, based on program size.
- See p. 45 in Essentials guide for details.

USDA

Available to new Emergency Feeding Programs after 6 months (EXCEPT Campus Pantries)

- Free federally-funded food.
- Additional paperwork and regulations apply.
- Case limits apply, based on program size.
- See p. 45 in Essentials guide for details.

Food Types: Fees vs. Costs

Most food at The Food Bank is **totally free to you**.

Some products, however, do have a **cost** or a **fee**.

A **fee** (shared maintenance fee, membership fee, etc.) is a charge which allows Food Banks to share the associated costs of distributing donated food.

For example, while a truckload of donated chicken might be “free,” there are still significant costs to transport, store, and distribute it.

Costs are charges for the food itself and is only charged on “Buy-In” product at The Food Bank. This is product we purchase and sell at a very small mark-up, comparable to what you’d pay at BJ’s or Costco.

Fees vs. Costs: Why Does it Matter?

Essentials Guide p. 7-8 and p. 38 (Basic Membership Agreement)

When we talk to the public, it is critical for all of us that we accurately portray the relationship between the agencies and The Food Bank.

We advise agencies not to discuss cost, fees, or “prices” with media, or to say they “purchase” or “buy” food from The Food Bank because...:

- The emergency food system is complex and nuanced!...
- ...Even if **you** accurately describe “shared maintenance fees,” media may not portray it that way...
- ...And donors may not perceive it that way. They may perceive “fees” as “selling food,” which can result in decreased donations (*this has actually happened!*)

By maintaining consistent messaging across the network, we prevent inaccuracies & misconceptions that undermine the public’s trust in The Food Bank & our agency network, which can negatively impact the work we ALL do.

Ordering Deadlines

Essentials Guide p. 28

In general...

- ❑ You can OPEN your order up to 4 business days before your pick up/delivery date.
- ❑ You must SUBMIT your order at LEAST two business days before pick up/delivery.
- ❑ Orders cannot be placed during weekend for Tuesday pick up/delivery (need to receive order by Friday).

Holiday & Inventory Closings change the ordering schedule!

- ❑ The Food Bank offices & warehouse are closed for 10 major holidays.
- ❑ The warehouse **and online ordering** closes 4x a year for inventory. These are the **last two business days of every quarter** (end of December, March, June and September), with extended closings between Christmas/New Year and June 29 – July 5th.

Difference between **online ordering**, **warehouse** and **office** closures.

- Online ordering close – means ordering is not accessible
- Warehouse closed – means the warehouse is closed, no shopping or appointments available. Online Ordering may still be available!
- Offices closed – means all office operations are closed, online ordering still available (unless noted otherwise)

Unexpected Closures

Essentials Guide p. 28

Usually weather-related

Will be posted on our outgoing phone message and the following websites:

<https://www.foodbankwma.org/>

<https://www.wwlp.com/>

<https://www.westernmassnews.com/>

Pick up appointments will be rescheduled

Delivery appointments will be rescheduled **as pick ups**

Statements & Invoices

Essentials Guide p. 22-23

□ Invoices

- You will receive 3 copies of your invoice
 - You sign one copy and leave it with Food Bank staff
 - Have the other 2 copies cosigned by someone else at the program
 - Keep one copy on site, forward the other to your treasurer/billing department
- We check invoices during monitoring visits
 - Keep a copy of all physically signed (and cosigned!) invoices on site at your program.
 - You may keep electronic copies of these physically signed invoices.
 - You do NOT need paper copies of invoices that were signed electronically from 2020-2022

□ Statements are available online at the end of each month

- Lists all financial activity for your program for the month, including all invoices with outstanding balances or credits, and any payments applied during the month
- You'll only receive a statement if your program ends the month with a balance due.
- If you have grants available on your account, the current balance will be listed at the bottom of your statement – these are automatically applied to your orders until funds are depleted!

□ Payment:

- Please include 5-digit program number with payment!
- Please pay amount shown in “Total Due” box on monthly statement, OR include invoice number with payment
- Cannot pay with credit card or personal check

Monitoring Visits

Essentials Guide p. 32

Must be completed every 2 years

Time Commitment:

NFPs: 30-60 minutes

Non-USDA EFPs: 1-2 hours

USDA programs: 3-4 hours

Virtual visits: 1 hour, plus pre-visit paperwork

What we look at:

Pre-visit: file review, current tax-exempt documents, monthly statistics

Food Bank invoices for last 3 fiscal years plus the current fiscal year

Eligibility requirements, intake procedures & record keeping

Food safety inspection

Review program contacts

For USDA programs: sign in sheets, inventories, signage

Food Safety Certification

Essentials Guide p. 13

Who needs What and How often?

Who: Any program that
does not prepare any food*

What:
ServSafe Food Handler Certificate
(or equivalent)

How often:
every **3 years**

Who: Any and *All* programs where
Food is prepared and served^

What:
ServSafe Manager Certificate
(or equivalent)

How often:
every **5 years**

Basic/Food Handler: Available online thru ServSafe website. Course & exam cost \$15.

Required that at least one person who is regularly overseeing distribution has this certification and copy on file at The Food Bank

*i.e. pantry, internal pantry, etc.

Highest level of food safety. Available online thru ServSafe website. Course/exam package prices vary. Can also search for a course/exam near you.

Required that at least one person who is regularly on hand during food prep have this certification and copy on file at The Food Bank

^i.e. Youth programs, meal sites, rehabs, etc.
Where staff prepare sandwiches, microwave meals, etc.

Need to Knows – Food Safety

Essentials Guide p. 13-20

Cannot repackage meat products

Cannot repackage grains, pastas, baked goods, etc.

Can ONLY repackage fresh produce

If a can is severely dented (cracked), dented at seam, rusted, or “bubbling” at top, throw it out

If has no label, throw out (except fresh produce)

When transporting perishable and frozen foods, always have a freezer blanket or cooler on hand large enough to cover all the product.

Our staff may refuse to release cold storage product if the person picking up doesn't have equipment to maintain cold chain.

Frozen foods must remain frozen from the time they leave the Food Bank to the time they reach the program.

Make sure fridge/freezer are at proper temperatures to keep food from spoiling. **If they are at improper temps during a monitoring visit, food will be discarded*

Need to Knows – Food Safety

Essentials Guide p. 11

Food should be transported directly from Food Bank/retail donor to your program

Check food temps when picking up food *and* when it arrives at your program

- Retail pickup: required to keep temperature logs!

- For programs that do not use a refrigerated vehicle, freezer blankets or coolers are now required

Storage:

- At least 6 in. off floor and 2 in. from wall

- Don't store raw meat over ready-to-eat food

- Don't store chemicals or hygiene products over food! Store UNDER food, or preferably in a separate storage area entirely

Dates on many products are NOT related to food safety!

- See p. 19-20 in the Essentials Guide, or...

- “Keep or Toss” in the “Notable Links” section on the Online Ordering landing page

Sharing Food

Essentials Guide p. 11

Straight forward parts:

Food may not be sold, traded or provided in exchange for services.

Things you may not realize:

Food Bank food **cannot be shared** with other programs/agencies.

*This includes between programs that are under the same agency umbrella. (e.g. a pantry sharing with its mealsite)

Food Bank food for preferential treatment
(including special distribution times, shopping or pick up)

may not be given in return for:

Volunteering, participation in religious ceremony

Religious Activity

Essentials Guide p. 39 (Basic Membership Agreement)

Food may not be provided in exchange for participation in religious activity

All religious activity must occur at a separate time or location than the food distribution. This includes distribution of religious materials.

Praying with or holding religious activities with people are waiting in line for food is not permitted. (Even if voluntary, must take place at separate location or time.)

Special distributions/deliveries for church members are not allowed.

*A very quick, voluntary prayer is allowed before meals.

Common Misconceptions

Is there an income limit for people to receive food?

Nope! Except for USDA food, there are NO income restrictions on food from The Food Bank or any of our retail partners. In fact, **EFPs MUST serve everyone, regardless of income.**

How often can a program get food from The Food Bank?

As often as your program needs and is able

How often can guests come to our program?

As often as your program has the capacity to distribute. (**includes USDA!)

How much food can we give to people?

As much as you are able to provide.

Can guests pick up for another household?

Yes! As long as they provide the information you need for your monthly stats, a neighbor or friend can pick up for another household. Some programs ask the other household to complete a form giving that person permission to pick up for them, but this is not required. However, unless the other household has completed a USDA eligibility declaration, a neighbor CANNOT pick up USDA food for them.

Common Misconceptions (Continued)

Do we need to ask for ID?

You can REQUEST ID, but you cannot require it. MEFAP AND USDA both prohibit photo ID and SSN requirements. There is no requirement that any program ask for ID or ANY verifications, including for USDA. It is prohibited to deny food to TEFAP/MEFAP participants if they refuse to reveal any information that is not a requirement of TEFAP/MEFAP.

Can guests come to my pantry if they go to another?

Yes. TFB encourages people to use as many services as they need to achieve food security.

Can we serve people from another town? What about another state?

With the exception of USDA product, Food Bank food (and food from our retail partners) has **no residency restrictions**. EFPs may have a defined service area, but cannot refuse service to guests who reside elsewhere. For guests residing outside the program's service area, programs may provide limited service and refer to local resources.

Extras for All Programs

❑ SNAP

- ❑ Outreach Events
- ❑ Telephone referrals
- ❑ Applications Assistance
- ❑ Case management
- ❑ Staff & Volunteer Training

❑ Advocacy

- ❑ We work with state & federal legislators on policy priorities including:
 - SNAP
 - MEFAP
 - TEFAP (USDA)
- ❑ Advocacy Alerts let our network & supporters know when they can take action

Nutrition

- General Wellness and Nutrition Basics
- Smart Shopping on a Budget
- Healthy Eating in Recovery
- Diabetes Prevention and Management
- Cooking Demonstrations
- Food Sampling Events
- Recipes
- Can help programs with “nutritional nudges”

Agency Training Institute

- Trainings for agencies specific to topics and themes requested each year.

Extras for EFPs

Oasis Insight

Online client data tool, allows programs to gather demographic information and track multiple types of assistance

Reporting features allow you to create monthly Food Bank reports and organize information for other grant funders

Contact Agency Relations Manager for details

Retail Pickup

Pair with a local retailer to pick up food; additional reporting requirements apply

Contact Food Procurement Coordinator for details (see Essentials Guide p. 54)

- ❑ Delivery
 - ❑ Limited availability, see Essentials Guide p. 52-53 for application.
- ❑ Disaster plans – strongly encouraged!
- ❑ Annual Program Goals
- ❑ Capacity Grants
- ❑ ACE Points
- ❑ Networking Meetings

Communication & Open Dialog

NewsBites

Weekly newsletter, sent to online ordering & primary program contacts
Information for programs and clients

Recipes

Recalls & new product information

Early close dates and policy change information

Phone

- EFPs need to provide a phone number for public listing
- *Outgoing message must include location, hours & ability to leave msg*
- *Messages from Food Bank and guests must be returned within 2 business days*

□ Email

- Primary communication method!
- Agencies required to maintain active email address
- Must have at least one other email address on record, in case we can't reach anyone at the primary address
- For general communications, send to agencyrelations@foodbankwma.org

□ Food Bank website:

- Nutrition information & recipes
- Member Agency Locator
- Training announcements, past training materials
- Network Call notes
- Password: F00dBank

Communication & Open Dialog

Network Calls and Area Meetings (Zoom)

- 2nd Thursday at 2pm
- 4th Wednesday at 3pm
- Monthly Hilltown Pantries call
- Monthly Berkshire call with agencies and local partners
- Quarterly calls for Hampshire, Hampden, and Franklin Counties

Talking with the media

- Wording when engaging with media that sustains donor and community confidence & cuts down on confusion
- *Partnership with FBWM & leveraging resources*
- *Abundance rather than scarcity*
- “Food Bank” vs. “food pantry”

Open dialog, concerns/complaints and partnership

- Food quality issues, missing items
- Food needs/likes/dislikes
- How can we better help you?

A few final things...

Upcoming Events:

- Network Call 10/25/22 at 3pm

Link will be sent to Primary & Alt Contacts for all programs

Contact naomid@foodbankwma.org to sign up for:

- Online Ordering Training 11/1/22 at 10am

(All trainings will be recorded & posted to Training Resources page on our website)

Contact Information

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