

Client Choice and Dignity

Presented by:
the Food Bank of Western MA



The Food Bank
of Western Massachusetts

Overview

- What is client choice?
- Why offer client choice?
- The benefits
- Different distribution methods
- Where do I start?

What is client choice?

Client choice pantries allow people the freedom to select their own items based on what they already have and their preference, instead of receiving pre-packed bags of food they might not need or use for health or personal reasons.

Why use client choice?



Benefits

- Reduces food waste
- Makes ordering easier – pantries get a better idea of popular items
- Upholds the dignity of clients
- Meets clients' health needs
- Makes clients feel like they are shopping based on their needs
- Builds bond between clients and pantry volunteers
- Reduces time spent pre-packaging

Ways to include choice at your site

- Go over the different models
- Discuss with your team
 - Equipment needs
 - Physical space
 - Amount of volunteers
- Work together to decide which model works best for your pantry
- Any space can be used to offer client choice
- Any model can be modified for your pantry or a combination of models

Client Choice Models

- Supermarket Model / Table Model
- Inventory List Model
- Window Model



Supermarket Model

- Food is set up by food groups
- Clients walk through the space and select food off the shelves according to site guidelines
- Allows clients to handle food and look at the labels just as if they were shopping in a grocery store
- Considered to be the most client-friendly, since it simulates a typical grocery shopping experience.

Supermarket Model



Supermarket Model

Pros

- More one-on-one time between volunteers and clients
- Client friendly and provides the most choice
- Simulates the grocery shopping experience

Cons

- Requires large amount of space
- May reduce amount of clients that can shop at 1 time
- Requires shelving and extra equipment

Supermarket Model

Example Beginning Steps

- Organize food on pantry shelves by food groups.
- When clients sign in, staff gives them a Food Card listing how many items they may take based on family size
 - can also place erasable labels on the pantry shelves
- Clients walk through the pantry alone or a team member can walk them through the process.
- Like in a supermarket, clients can “check-out” and pack their food in a bag or box with the help of a staff member

Table Model

- Food is set up on tables by food groups
- Clients walk by each table to select and pack their food.
- The pantry needs enough room for clients to walk by each table
- Staff can stand by the food tables to guide clients and answer questions about the food. This model can serve many clients at one time.
- This model allows clients to physically handle food as they would do shopping at a store.

Table Model



Table Model

Pros

- More one-on-one time between volunteers and clients
- staff/volunteers serve more clients at on time.
- Simulates the grocery shopping experience

Cons

- Pantry has to have enough room for clients to walk around.
- Need to have enough staff to guide and answer questions.

Table Model

Example Beginning Steps

- Organize food on tables by food group.
- When clients sign in, they are given a food card listing how many items they may take based on family size.
- Clients walk by the tables selecting and packing their food.

Inventory List Model

- A list of food available is posted or given to clients.
- Clients select their food from the list.
- Team members assemble the clients' food bag based on the items selected.
- This model is helpful for clients who have trouble moving around and for agencies with limited space.
- Clients can select foods without having to leave their seats.

Inventory List Model

Client Choice Pantry Shopping List

Items Available per Food Group	Number of People in Household			
	1	2	3-4	5-6
Grains	2	3	4	6
Vegetables	3	5	8	11
Fruits	3	5	8	11
Dairy	2	3	4	6
Meat/Protein	2	3	5	7
Combination Foods	1	2	4	6
Fats & Oils	1	1	2	2
Sweets	1	1	1	2

Please write the number you are requesting beside each item.

No.	Grains	No.	Dairy	No.	Fats/Oils
	bread, 1 bag or loaf		fluid milk, 1/2 gallon		Margarine or butter, 1 pound
	rice, 15 oz		dry milk, 25 oz		Vegetable oil, 48 oz
	pasta, 16 oz		yogurt, 36 oz		
	cereal, 1 box		cheese, 1 block		
	oatmeal, 10 oz				
No.	Vegetables	No.	Meat/Protein	No.	Sweets
	fresh broccoli, 1 bag or bunch		Turkey, 8 oz		Jelly, 18 oz
	broccoli, 1 bag		Chicken, 8 oz		Pancake syrup, 24 oz
	canned peas, 1 can		Peanut butter, 1 jar		Ice cream, 1 jar



Inventory List Model

Pros

- Helpful for clients who have trouble moving around.
- Helpful for pantries with limited space.
- Clients don't have to leave their seats.

Cons

- Pantries have to have enough staff/volunteers.
- Materials are needed to make a list of food available.
 - Copier machine
- Translator for non-English speakers.

Inventory List Model

Example Beginning Steps

- When clients sign in, they are given a food card listing how many items they can select based on family size.
 - Staff also shows clients the list of food available.
- Clients can either check list of choices or tell staff their food choices.
- The pantry team then pack the items into a bag or box.

Window Model

- Clients stand outside of the pantry and verbally select foods item they want by looking at the shelves.
- Pantry staff packs the food bags according to clients' selection and family size.
- This model is effective to providing client choice when pantry has limited space and short on staffing.

Window Model



Window Model

Pros

- Offers client choice with limited space.
- Not a lot of equipment needed.
- Staff and client interaction.

Cons

- Can only serve a small number of clients.
- Team members needed before pantry open to organize and stock food shelves.
- Translation needed for non-English speakers.

Window Model

Example Beginning Steps

- Organize food on shelves by food group and ensure that all items are visible from window or door.
- When clients sign in, they are given food card listing how many items they can get based on family size.
 - A sign can be placed by the window with all the details.
- Clients select food by pointing to the items they want.
- The worker picks the food items off the shelf and packs food into a bag or box.

Where do I start?

Before making the switch, plan ahead by:

- Stock more of the popular food.
 - What foods do your clients often ask for?
 - Do you run out of some food before others?
- Stock less of the unpopular food.
 - What food do you receive back in food drives?
 - What food do you find in trash containers outside the pantry?
 - What food do you have problems giving out?

Where do I start?

- If you organize or benefit from food drives, encourage people to donate specific foods that are popular with your clients.
- Recipes that can use the same staple ingredients for three days are helpful for clients to plan balanced meals.
 - Reach out to the Food Bank nutrition team if you need help with recipes, signage, or cooking tips you can display to help push more of the “unpopular” food items

Where do I start?

- **Remember:** Take it slow and strategize a plan that will best work for you, your staff, and volunteers
- Weigh the challenges and advantages to using client choice
- Take small steps to implement change to help clients and staff adjust
 - Listen to feedback → what is working and what is not working
- Slow and steady progress to long term change

Where do I start?

We are here to support you!

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