

WEST OHIO FOOD BANK
Policies and Guidelines for Membership

This document is a statement of West Ohio Food Banks' criteria for participation. It is intended for use by organizations interested in applying for membership and by current members. West Ohio Food Bank reserves the right to add, alter or rescind any or all of these policies and guidelines as it deems necessary or as required by our national affiliate, Feeding America; or local, state or federal government.

GENERAL POLICIES

1. **TAX EXEMPT STATUS:** All organizations receiving supplies from West Ohio Food Bank must be federally tax exempt 501(c)3 organizations; or wholly owned by a 501(c) 3 organization; or a 501(c) 3 equivalent such as churches; or have an established 501(c) 3 Separate Fund. Tax exempt corporate status must be qualified either in the state of Ohio or Indiana.
2. **LOCATION:** All member organizations must provide services to and reside in West Ohio Food Bank's geographical service territory.
3. **MEMBERSHIP FEE:** Helps to defray some of the additional services provided over & above costs associated with food distribution: Annual Agency Meeting, nutritional information, informational newsletters, Agency Council relations, arranging Annual Agency Education Day, and providing information for client education to other available community or state services. Annual agency membership fee is \$75, payable monthly, quarterly, or annually. Agencies with 2 or more programs, additional fee of \$25 annually.

SPECIFIC POLICIES

1. USE OF SUPPLIES RECEIVED FROM WEST OHIO FOOD BANK

FOOD DISTRIBUTION: All supplies obtained from West Ohio Food Bank by its' membership must be distributed in accordance with the provisions under Section 170(e)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, which requires that the supplies be given to the needy, ill or infants at no charge to the ultimate recipient.

- A. ***THANK YOU BAGS FOR VOLUNTEERS:*** Members may not distribute bags of food or other supplies to volunteers or workers as a gift for their labors.
- B. ***EMERGENCY FOOD FOR WORKERS/VOLUNTEERS:*** Members may provide emergency supplies to workers or volunteers who meet the same eligibility criteria established for people requesting help.
- C. ***IN HOUSE USE OF SUPPLIES:*** Members may use non-food supplies, such as cleaning supplies and toiletries in support of their operations. Please, remain mindful that these supplies are greatly needed by people seeking help.
- D. ***TASTING/TESTING:*** Members may prepare foods received from West Ohio to help determine best and alternate uses, provide samples to people accessing services, and familiarize volunteers/staff with different types of food so the uncommon foods actually get distributed. Volunteers/staff can not get food for their own purpose and repay the member charity.
- E. ***FUNDRAISING EVENTS:*** Supplies received from West Ohio may not be used in any fund raising activities, such as dinners or bake sales, or as "prizes". Supplies may be used in functions such as volunteer or donor recognition events as long as there are no charges to attend.
- F. ***DISASTER RELIEF:*** Supplies may be used in **local** disaster relief efforts both for victim assistance and clean up, as well as volunteer consumption. If the disaster is beyond your organization's capabilities, contact West Ohio for further assistance. Agencies of West Ohio Food Bank may not distribute **outside** their service area.
- G. ***BARTERING:*** West Ohio Food Bank products **MAY NOT BE SOLD, BARTERED, OR TRADED IN ACCORDANCE WITH YOUR "AGENCY AGREEMENT"**.

- 2. DISPOSAL OF UNUSABLE SUPPLIES:** In your opinion, if product received from West Ohio appears questionable, please call West Ohio immediately and speak with Emily, Brian or Lisa to report your concerns. Please have the following information ready:
- a) Type of product – as listed on your invoice
 - b) Date received from West Ohio – on invoice
 - c) Code dates – from product itself
 - d) Reasons why you question the supplies viability

Based on this information, we will provide instructions for use, return or disposal of the product in question. All product deemed unusable when received from West Ohio, which carried a shared maintenance charge, will be credited on your next invoice.

3. MEMBER ELIGIBILITY

- A. **OPERATIONS:** Organizations applying for membership must qualify under General Policies, Sections 1 and 2, in addition to the following:
- a. Show demonstrated community support,
 - b. In operation no less than six months,
 - c. Meet all required local, state and federal laws regarding food preparation and/or distribution,
 - d. Meet or exceed storage guidelines listed in Section 6,
 - e. Be accessible to the public at least three days per week,
 - f. Keep adequate records of people served monthly. Eligibility to Take Food Home forms must be kept on file for at least 3 years. WOFB invoices must be kept on file for at least 1 year.
 - g. Provide monthly statistical reports, in a timely manner, to West Ohio. Statistical reports from member agencies are due the 15th of the month following the month to which the report pertains. Those agencies which fail to file reports by the 15th of the second month following the month to which the report pertains will be placed on hold until reports are brought up to date.
 - h. Maintain membership or participate in only one Food Bank,
 - i. Allow West Ohio representatives reasonable access to conduct site reviews at any given time.
- B. **NON 501(c)3:** A non 501(c)3 organization may obtain membership if the following criteria are met:
- a. The member must operate under the auspices of a 501(c)3 organization,
 - b. The 501(c)3 extending its' non profit status must affirm such designation in writing by corporate resolution of their Board of Directors and signed by the Executive Officer,
 - c. The 501(c)3 must be programmatically, fiscally and legally responsible for supplies obtained from West Ohio,
 - d. Payment of invoices must come from the 501(c) 3, not the non-501(c) 3 organization.
- C. **PRIORITIZATION OF SERVICES:** Youth programs, camps, day care centers, senior citizens meals programs and similar organizations must develop a method to determine that the benefit of supplies obtained from West Ohio primarily serves the needy, ill or infants. Please provide copies of the procedure and its' findings to West Ohio Food Bank.
- D. **HOME BASED SERVICES:** Associations of adoptive homes are not eligible for membership. Programs may not be operated out of private residences or homes. Program food storage must not be in private residences or homes.
- E. **COMPREHENSIVE CARE PROGRAMS:** Residential or on site comprehensive care programs that charge a fee for service (such as substance abuse programs and halfway houses, foster care), with meals being a part of that service, may become members of West Ohio, providing they are licensed and/or certified by the necessary governing municipality or state and otherwise qualify.
- F. **MUNICIPAL PROGRAMS:** Programs which are 100% tax supported or operated by a branch of government are considered municipal programs and are not eligible for membership.

4. CLIENT ELIGIBILITY

- A. *FOOD DISTRIBUTION GUIDELINES:* Generally, people accessing your services should have incomes which fall at or below 200% of the poverty guidelines as established by the federal government annually. West Ohio will provide copies of these guidelines. Beyond income eligibility, agencies may ask for photo I.D. and proof of residency at intake, *no social security numbers can be documented*. Your organization should determine its' policies and procedures for food distribution and post these procedures in a visible location within your organization. Please provide copies. *Additionally clients do not have to live in a community for a given time before they receive food. Homeless persons or people who have just arrived in the area may not be able to provide an address and cannot be refused food because they have no address.*
- B. *FOOD PANTRIES:* Must allow clients to access food, at a minimum of once a month, until such time they no longer need to visit a food pantry.
- C. *Referrals:* Food Pantries must not require clients to have referrals.
- D. *CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE:* Members may not refuse services to any person requesting help on the grounds of race, religious affiliation, national origin, sex or handicap. *Requiring attendance at religious services prior to or after distribution of food is forbidden.*
- E. *LABOR DISPUTES:* Members may provide assistance to persons affected by labor disputes if the organizations normal standards of determining need are met.
- F. *DONATIONS FROM CLIENTS:* Monetary donations **must not** be solicited from clients. No donation canister, receptacles, envelopes, etc., are to be located in the soup kitchen, pantry area or in-take area.

5. FEES SHARED MAINTENANCE FEE (SMF)

- A. *FEES:* West Ohio may assess a fee to its members for the costs associated with transporting, handling and warehousing the supplies, and may range from 18¢ to 25¢ per pound for the food ordered by the member organization.
- B. *USDA COMMODITIES:* West Ohio may assess a fee of 10¢ a pound to its members for the cost associated with transporting, handling and warehousing the commodities.
- C. *PAYING FEES:* Fees are due upon receipt of the organizations order, however, they do not fall past due for 60 days. An invoice falling past due renders the member subject to suspension until payment is received or arrangements for payment are made.
- D. *CREDIT LINE:* In general, every member is extended a \$100 to \$300 credit line for fees. Based on service and history, West Ohio may extend a higher credit line if needed.
- E. *Delivery Fee:* Delivery fees for West Ohio Food Bank are 10¢ a pound effective 10/1/2008.

6. STORAGE REQUIREMENTS

Remember, we are here to help people through a food crisis. In order to maintain the integrity of the food you distribute to people in need, below are the requirements for storage. A good rule of thumb: When in doubt about the safety of food – throw it out! Remember, if you wouldn't serve it to your family; don't expect anyone else to either.

A. STRUCTURE

1. The food storage facility should be temperature controlled, with adequate ventilation. Allowable temperature variance is 45 to 85 degrees.
2. The structure should be secure, with locks in good working order and, if necessary, windows with security glass or grillwork.
3. All walls and floors should be washable, in good repair and have non-toxic food service approved paint or sealer applied, with no cracked, chipped, scaling, peeling or torn areas.
4. Food storage areas should be separate from interviewing areas.
5. A pest control program should be performed regularly. Where evidence of infestation occurs, a commercial pest control company must be engaged.

B. DRY STORAGE

1. All surfaces should be of a non-porous, washable material, and be washed with an USDA approved disinfectant at least quarterly, and as needed during the interim.
2. No product can be stored directly on the floor. If supply exceeds shelving capacity, excess can be stored on pallets, but must be at least 12" from all walls.
3. Thermometers must be present in all dry storage areas.
4. Dry food storage should be of adequate size to allow for easy stock rotation and inventory.
5. All non-food products must be stored separately from food products. At a minimum, all non-food products should be stored on lower shelves and never above food products.

C. REFRIGERATED & FROZEN STORAGE

1. Refrigerators should maintain temperatures not exceeding 45 degrees. Freezers should maintain 0 degrees.
2. Thermometers must be present in all refrigerators and freezers.
3. All refrigerators and freezers should be defrosted and cleaned with an USDA approved disinfectant at least quarterly, and as needed in the interim.
4. Refrigerators and freezers should be large enough to allow for easy stock rotation and inventory.

7. VIOLATIONS OF POLICIES:

- A. **SUSPENSION:** A member may be suspended from participation in West Ohio if found to be in violation of any of these policies. Suspensions may be 30, 60 or 90 days in duration. Suspension may completely exclude the member from accessing supplies or may limit the types and amounts of supplies the affected member can access. A suspended member will be notified in writing of the reasons for suspension and detail the plan for the member to successfully restore their membership status.
- B. **TERMINATION:** A member may be terminated from participation in West Ohio if they are found to be in violation of any of these policies. A member so affected will be notified in writing of the reasons for termination.
- C. **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE:** Any member either suspended or terminated believing they have been unjustly treated, may request a grievance hearing within 10 working days from the date of the notice of such action. The Executive Director of West Ohio will conduct the hearing; with the Associate Director, two representatives of the affected members and the Agency Representative on the Board of Trustees of West Ohio. The Executive Director will detail the results of the meeting in writing, to all those present at the meeting.

If you have any questions, please call Anna Miller or Emily Stimmel at 419-222-7946

Keep this document with the Signed Agency Agreement to review.

Revised: October 5, 2009