



Thank you for your interest in partnering with the Lowcountry Food Bank (LCFB) in the fight to end hunger. The Lowcountry Food Bank is a non-profit food distribution center dedicated to feeding those experiencing hunger in the ten coastal counties of South Carolina. We partner with local non-profits and faith-based organizations to distribute food across our service area. The LCFB is a member of the Feeding America Network of food banks which enforces national compliance regulations for food banks and their member agencies, including requirements stated below.

Our next application period will take place in **February of 2022**. Beginning on February 1, 2022, organizations will be able to submit their information through an online form located on the LCFB's website. We have not yet determined our focus counties for 2022, but only organizations located within the focus counties will be considered for membership. This document will be updated by December 2021 to list the focus counties.

### **The Application Process:**

The LCFB invests extensive time with new applicants to ensure that new members are provided with all necessary information to run a successful food distribution organization. In order to become a member of the LCFB partner agency network, an agency must first be accepted into the Agency Development Program. If accepted, the Agency Development Program lasts about **four months** from beginning to end. During this time there are various phases including a Probationary Period.

Below are the steps that a prospective agency must complete to be considered for acceptance into the Agency Development Program:

- Attend a New Member Information Session (see end of this document for details)
  - Prospective members will be provided a workbook at this session called *Blueprints for a Quality Agency* – instructions for completion of the workbook will be provided along with a Membership Application
  - All requirements for membership will be described in detail
- Submit New Member Application and additional required paperwork for consideration, with a \$100 application fee

If accepted into the Agency Development Program the prospective agency must also:

- Complete and submit appropriate phases of *Blueprints for a Quality Agency*
- Meet and work with assigned LCFB mentor agency
- Attend New Member Orientation
- Complete all objectives set forth in the Probationary Period



## Requirements for Membership:

In order to be considered for membership with the Lowcountry Food Bank, agencies must do the following:

- Operate in an area that is in need of an additional feeding program based on our needs assessment tool/be located in a focus county
- Provide proof of tax-exempt status under Section 501(c) (3) of the Federal Internal Revenue Service statutes **or** be a faith-based organization in good standing with the state and/or denomination
- Be accessible to the general public (if operating a food pantry or soup kitchen). A food program cannot serve only a select population such as members of their own church congregation
- Maintain standard, consistent hours of operation and **distribute food to the community at least once a week**. The expectation is to utilize partnership with the Lowcountry Food Bank to provide adequate food for clients; therefore, periods of inactivity (no poundage from the Lowcountry Food Bank for 2 consecutive months) may lead to deactivation
- Provide food assistance to those in need without charging or asking for donations
- Operate using a “client choice” model, which allows clients to choose what they receive from a variety of foods, better enabling clients to meet their personal dietary needs. Instead of a pre-packed bag of groceries, clients will select the food themselves.
- Have adequate means of transportation to and from the Lowcountry Food Bank to pick up food orders. The agency will need to have regular access to one or more large vehicles (e.g., SUVs, trucks, cargo vans) to transport food
- Have **at least** two employees or volunteers to manage and operate the food program
- Keep up-to-date and accurate client records. The Lowcountry Food Bank requires agencies to keep records of people served, so we encourage prospective agencies to develop a client intake form and method of tracking numbers and demographics of people served
- Have access to internet service, a printer, a scanner, and a copy machine
- IF distributing perishable food items such as produce, milk, and meat, the agency must have a refrigerator and freezer designated for the food pantry
- Maintain an adequate budget to support a sustainable food program

*\*\* If you are applying as an on-site feeding program (plan to cook with the food), a current Manager ServSafe Certificate is required. This certification may be obtained from local organizations such as Atlantic Food Safety.*

Our application review committee will consider factors such as: how frequently applicants can distribute food, the location of the applicant in relation to our other agencies, and overall readiness for partnership with the LCFB. Thank you for understanding.

**Please watch our website for updates: <https://lowcountryfoodbank.org/about-us/partner-agencies/>**

**Please contact [membershipservices@lcfbank.org](mailto:membershipservices@lcfbank.org) for more information.**