



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 coastal South Carolina. We partner with local non-profits and faith-based organizations to distribute food across our ten-county service area: Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Georgetown, Hampton, Horry, Jasper, and Williamsburg counties.

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 the first quarter of 2024.**

Organizations can submit their contact information through an online form located on the LCFB's website under the Partner Agencies tab.

### **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. To become a member of the LCFB partner agency network, an agency must first be approved for initial screening. 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 be complete to be considered for partnership:

- Attend a New Member Information Session
- Submit New Member Application and additional required paperwork for consideration, with a \$100 application fee

If approved to move forward, a prospective agency must also:

- Complete food safety training, pantry choice training, and Link2Feed (pantry visit software) training
- Meet and work with assigned LCFB mentor agency
- Attend New Member Orientation
- Complete all objectives set forth in the Probationary Period



## **Requirements for Membership:**

To be considered for membership with the Lowcountry Food Bank, agencies must do the following:

- 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 public (if operating a food pantry or soup kitchen). For example, 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 at least once a week. At least one of your weekly distributions must take place on a Saturday or after 4:00 pm Monday-Friday. The expectation is to utilize partnership with the Lowcountry Food Bank to provide adequate food for their neighbors; therefore, periods of inactivity (no food from the Lowcountry Food Bank for two consecutive months) may lead to deactivation.
- Provide food assistance to those in need without charging or asking for donations.
- Operate using a “pantry choice” model, which allows your neighbors to choose what they receive from a variety of foods, better enabling them to meet their personal dietary needs. Instead of a pre-packed bag of groceries, your neighbors 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 records. The Lowcountry Food Bank requires agencies to utilize an online management software, so it is important that your volunteers be comfortable using technology.
- Have reliable 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.**