



Recruiting Volunteers

The process of recruitment engages an individual to become involved with your organization. Depending on what type of individual you are seeking you may have multiple recruitment “messages” - but all messages should include the following: the specific need/role to be filled, how the volunteer can assist, and the benefits to the volunteer.

Most nonprofits rely on the help of volunteers to keep their organization running efficiently. Many pantries could not operate without the wonderful group of volunteers that dedicate their time and energy to support the mission of the organization. To maintain a group of dedicated volunteers who have positive experiences, it is important that volunteers are well managed, appropriately trained, respected, and appreciated.

Places to find volunteers include local intramural sports teams, nearby churches & other religious institutions, youth groups, high schools & colleges (including students, faculty, & staff), volunteer fairs, job fairs, young professional associations, civic/fraternal organizations, senior organizations, etc. Many large employers also encourage volunteer service and community involvement. Some employers will even allow employees to volunteer during work hours and sometimes match their time with a financial contribution.

Volunteer Job Descriptions:

Food Program Management/Director/Coordinator: The person who manages and oversees all aspects of the food program and serves as the liaison between the agency and the rest of the world. This person is the primary contact for the food program.

Distribution Management: Those agencies who distribute using a drive-thru model will need several volunteers to coordinate both other volunteers and those in line. At least one volunteer should ensure that vehicles are lined up in a safe way that ensures an easy flow of traffic that does not cause other streets to be blocked. This person should also help move the line of vehicles along once the distribution begins and neighbors receive their items. As the distribution begins, this is the time when your Intake Coordinator should be checking in neighbors on forms or through Link2Feed. For TEFAP/USDA agencies, this is the stage of the distribution to determine whether the household is eligible for TEFAP commodities. A volunteer should also be tasked with asking those in the vehicles to open the vehicle's trucks and unlock doors for ease of loading. Other volunteers should stage food along the path of the drive-thru for quick and safe delivery into the neighbor's vehicles. It is important that volunteers mind their surroundings to not be injured by moving vehicles. These volunteers will have face-to-face interaction with their neighbors, so it is important that these individuals have good customer service skills.

Facility Management: The building or space that a food program occupies needs to be safe, secure, and pest free. The person who oversees facility management ensures this by conducting thorough and regular maintenance inspections and checks for trip/slip hazards and building accessibility. Pests tend to find food wherever it is stored. This person is also in charge of pest control and ensures that a licensed pest control company inspects and treats the premises where the food program is located or ensures that regular pest control services are completed if done in-house.

Financial Management and Accounting: There are many costs associated with operating a food program. A food program must be financially responsible. All food programs should keep written budgets to account for purchases, donations, services, and other expenses. Accurate budget keeping enables agencies to make more cost-effective decisions about food resources and related purchases. This person is responsible for making sure that the monthly statements for products received from the food bank are paid for. Record keeping is a very important part of operating a food program. It will help your program manage patrons, donations and the amount of food that goes out the door. Your program will need to keep records of patron intake forms, inventory, donations, volunteer hours and finances. All programs should keep copies of their invoices, all patron intake forms, and temperature control logs for three years.





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Food Resource Management: Managing the food that a program distributes or prepares for your neighbors is a big task! The person who manages food resources should always know how much and what kind of food the program needs. This includes securing as many food resources for the program as possible and ensuring that food is picked up and arrives at your pantry. This person will also be responsible for maintaining an inventory of products so that they may be able to pull food that has been recalled by manufacturers and cycle food using the FEFO (First Expired First Out) method. This person will also be your food safety and product quality expert.

Fundraising: Pantries of all sizes need to raise money to cover operating expenses and to obtain food for distribution. It is necessary to decide what portions of the budget will be raised through private donations, fundraising events, and grants. This person will plan and coordinate all funding efforts for your program.

Intake and Customer Service Coordinator: Some neighbors may be intimidated or uncomfortable with the thought of going to a pantry for assistance. The person who coordinates the intake process for the food program greets new and returning patrons and explains how the pantry works. The Intake Coordinator assists neighbors with completing either the Link2Feed or other intake process. This person also ensures that all patrons are treated with dignity and respect and that they have good experiences at the agency. The person who coordinates patron services works with neighbors and the community to determine how the pantry should more effectively address patron concerns and improve its services. If patrons have other needs not directly related to food, the Customer Service Coordinator should do his/her best to refer them to the appropriate resource.

Order Placement and/or Shoppers: Depending on which Lowcountry Food Bank facility you use, your agency may be subject to different guidelines while ordering food. However, all Lowcountry Food Bank facilities utilize online ordering. This person will regularly review the online shopping lists to build the agency's orders. Additionally, the person in this role will be in regular communication with their respective shopping floor about the status of orders and help coordinate pickups/deliveries.

Shopping Assistants: This role is most important in a choice pantry. These volunteers should be staged around the pantry or distribution area to guide neighbors through the shopping experience. They will help ensure the neighbors abide by any limitations that the pantry sets for its inventory. Shopping assistants will help move neighbors along the line so they will have the dignity of selecting the items that they want while ensuring that traffic jams are avoided. These volunteers are responsible for ensuring that shelves/tables/refrigeration units are reloaded and restocked during the distribution using First Expired First Out procedures while abiding by other food safety standards.

Transportation Management: This person coordinates the transportation of food products to the food program. The Transportation Manager will be the main contact for all deliveries and pickups for the food program.

Volunteer Recruitment and Management: Almost every food program is operated by volunteers from the community. The person in charge of volunteer recruitment finds volunteers to assist the food program with tasks such as unloading from food trucks, stocking shelves with food, assisting patrons with their food choices and many other roles. The person who manages the volunteers keeps their contact information on file and schedules them for specific shifts and tasks. The volunteer manager also logs volunteer hours and accomplishments so that the food program remains aware of volunteer contributions. It is also important to plan volunteer appreciation events to encourage volunteer commitment for a longer time. This role should, from time to time, hold volunteer appreciation events to keep morale up among your hard-working volunteers.

In addition to the above tasks, there may be opportunities to involve other skilled volunteers on an as needed basis such as grant researcher and writer, a website designer, a social media coordinator, and/or a graphic designer to create a logo, brochure, or flyer for your agency. The more community buy in you have, the greater reach and successes you will achieve.

