



EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAM

FOOD PANTRY & SOUP KITCHEN MANUAL

July 2010 – June 2011

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EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAM

A No-Cost Way to Increase Your Food Supplies

The Emergency Food Program (EFP) allows you to significantly increase the amount and variety of food you have to offer clients, at no cost to your organization. Organizations participating in EFP add about \$67,000 in free food to the food they provide clients, based on the number of clients served.

This free food program was created by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to protect American farmers from economic collapse. The USDA purchases food through subsidy and price-support programs and distributes the food to states. The USDA designates a State agency to distribute USDA food. In Illinois, the Department of Human Services (DHS) administers distribution of USDA food. USDA food is also referred to as “commodities”.

DHS contracts with foodbanks to distribute USDA commodities throughout Illinois using a fair-share system. Foodbanks, in turn, contract with member pantries, soup kitchens and shelters that want to increase their food resources and who agree to serve their communities.

EFP is an optional service. You are not required to participate. If you do choose to participate in this no-cost program, you agree to conduct your food service according to the rules and regulations established by the USDA, the DHS and the foodbank.

EFP rules closely resemble the rules foodbank members already follow.

EFP REQUIREMENTS FOR FOOD PANTRIES

Client Service

- Most foodbanks require pantries to be open once a week. EFP pantries must be open at least 2 hours a week.
- EFP pantries must serve any eligible client regardless of race, religion, national origin or citizenship status. Eligible clients are persons or families below 130% of poverty and residents of Illinois. Eligible clients are entitled to service at least once every 30 days.
- EFP pantries must distribute EFP in combination with other foods distributed. EFP commodities may not be distributed separately.
- EFP pantries must be open to clients during established distribution times. Pantries may not require clients to make appointments for service.
- Pantries must display their operating days and times. The schedule must be in clear view of the general public at all times. DHS offers a sign pantries may use.

Verifying Client Eligibility

USDA and the State of Illinois hold the client responsible for the accuracy of Signature Sheet entries. Pantries are not responsible or liable for accuracy of client entries. Pantries may ask for proof of identity and residency.

1) IDENTITY AND RESIDENCY

Food Pantry staff may request proof of identity and residency to verify that the recipient resides in the designated area served by the distribution site. The types of documentation include: driver's license, state identification card, piece of mail or utility bill showing the recipient name and address, or a letter from a landlord verifying identity and residency. All recipients must be residents of Illinois. A minimum length of stay is not required.

Distribution sites are not allowed to ask for social security cards, pay stubs or income data to verify identity or residency.

2) INCOME

Self-attestation is the accepted means of documenting income eligibility. The signatory for the household receiving USDA commodities must attest by signing the signature sheet that the monthly income of the household is equal to or less than 130% of the federal poverty level for the household. Income levels for various size households are pre-printed on the signature sheets used for self-declaration. **Distribution sites are prohibited from verifying income. Distribution sites are NOT ALLOWED to ask for social security cards, pay stubs or income data.**

3) SERVING HOMELESS RECIPIENTS

Self-declaration by homeless recipients must be accepted. Homeless persons or persons with disabilities may lack documentation to verify their identity or residence. In case of lack of documentation the distribution site may indicate "NONE" in the address section of the signature sheet. The site must strive to serve the homeless recipient and use their discretion in providing the types of foods that are appropriate and easy to use and prepare. EFP Pantry staff are encouraged to work with homeless persons by referring the homeless person to social service agencies which may provide assistance in obtaining documentation and other services.

PLEASE NOTE: Pantries may not require clients to be referred from another agency. A referral suggests that eligibility standards other than EFP eligibility standards determine a client's entitlement to service. **Requiring a referral is prohibited.**

Documenting Client Service

EFP pantries must document all food distribution. DHS provides a form for this purpose, the DHS Signature Sheet. Every client must sign the Signature Sheet. The Signature Sheet must also record the client's full address and number of

persons in the household. Homeless clients may use the address of the nearest DHS office or 'NONE' in the address section of the signature sheet. Every Signature Sheet shows a table with income ceilings for various household sizes. It also includes a warning that misuse of EFP foods subjects the client to federal and state prosecution. When a client signs the Signature Sheet they are certifying that their information entered on the Signature Sheet is accurate and in compliance with EFP regulations. Therefore, clients certify that they agree to follow EFP regulations.

All Signature Sheets include a question regarding whether or not someone in the household is receiving food stamps. Distribution sites are encouraged to ask program recipients to complete the section requesting food stamp information.

Documenting Special Food Distribution: TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Households) Food Grant

In addition to donated food distributed to all eligible EFP households, some EFP households are eligible for additional food purchased with the TANF food grant. The foodbank will notify you when TANF food grant products are provided to EFP Pantries for distribution.

Households with at least one member 18 years of age or younger are TANF-eligible and may also receive the commodities specifically designated for TANF households when those products are available.

TANF households that receive both donated foods (USDA Commodities and other donated foods) and TANF products must sign both the EFP signature sheet and the TANF Food Grant signature sheet. Please make sure TANF-eligible households receiving donated food, USDA commodities and TANF product sign both signature sheets.

If the TANF-eligible household only receives TANF product, only the TANF signature sheet should be signed.

Reporting Distribution Activity

Each month pantries must submit Signature Sheets to the foodbank. Typically, foodbanks ask for signature sheets within 5 to 10 days after the end of the month. You must turn in original signature sheets. **Photocopies, or faxed copies, will not be accepted.** You are encouraged to keep copies.

Posters

USDA requires EFP pantries to display **5 posters** in clear view of clients.

Hours of Operation

A sign displaying the hours of operation that is visible to the general public at non-operating hours as well as operating hours.

Income Eligibility Guidelines

This poster lists income ceilings for various household sizes. It duplicates the income table found on the signature sheet. As income guidelines changes, pantries will get a new poster.

Notice to Program Participants

This poster states regulations clients agree to follow when they sign the signature sheet.

“And Justice For All”

This poster states clearly that all clients must be treated equally. It tells clients how to report discrimination complaints.

Prohibited Activities

This poster states that:

- Clients will not be asked to pay for food or to exchange services for food.
- Clients do not have to join any organization as a pre-condition to service.
- Political activity in any form is prohibited during distributions. Pantry staff may not wear campaign buttons or politically related apparel. Candidates must not make appearances at distribution sites. Campaign literature and signage may not be on display. Pantries may not provide bags or boxes advertising candidates or political causes.
- Food received is for in-home use only and may not be sold.
- Clients must receive food in their original packages.

Food Storage

- EFP agencies must follow accepted storage standards. EFP rules for storing food are no different than the rules your foodbank applies to its members.
- Food must be at least 6 inches off the floor and elevated high enough to allow for proper pest control and ventilation.
- A pest control system must be in place. Sites must have a qualified person on staff or contract with a professional exterminator.
- Refrigerated foods must be kept between 35 and 40 degrees.
- Frozen foods must be stored at a temperature below 0 degrees.
- Refrigerators and freezers must have working thermometers to verify temperatures.

Serving People Who Are Unable to Visit the Pantry

Handicapped, aged or infirm, or persons who work when your pantry is open still may be served. Pantries may deliver food to homebound recipients. Delivery is an acceptable method of distribution provided that designated pantry personnel make the delivery and DHS signature sheets document each delivery. Signature sheet entries must meet EFP requirements. Another method allows recipients to authorize someone else, a proxy, to pick up food for them. Pantries must document each distribution to recipients unable to come in for service. The document required is the DHS Proxy Form.

Rules for use of the Proxy Form are as follows:

1. Clients must complete a new proxy form for each service. Each client must fill in his/her name, address and enter the number of persons in the household.
2. Clients must enter the name of the person designated to pick up food for the client.
3. Clients must sign the Proxy Form.
4. The person designated to pick up is the "proxy." The proxy must bring the proxy form in to the pantry. The proxy then must sign the proxy form in the presence of pantry personnel when he/she picks up food for the client.
5. The proxy form must identify the pantry by name and address.
6. At the end of each month, proxy forms must be turned in to the foodbank. Proxy forms and Signature Sheets must be submitted together. Like Signature Sheets, submitted proxy forms must be originals.

EFP REQUIREMENTS FOR SOUP KITCHENS AND HOMELESS SHELTERS

Soup Kitchens and Shelters that prepare and serve meals on site can supplement their food supplies with Emergency Food Program commodities.

Service Schedule

Soup Kitchens must serve meals at least two hours a week. Meal schedules must be posted in clear view of clients. Typically, shelters serve only residents. Meal schedules for shelters need not be posted. However, shelters that also serve meals to community residents must post the community meal service schedule.

Eligibility

Anyone eating at a soup kitchen or shelter is assumed to be eligible for service. Clients must not be asked to prove eligibility.

Reporting Meals Served

Soup Kitchens and Shelters must send the foodbank monthly reports of total meals served. Reports are used to determine the fair share of commodities due the shelter or soup kitchen the next month.

It is important to count every meal served. Second, third helpings should be counted as individual meals and added to the total number of meals reported. Not reporting all meals served could reduce the fair share of commodities an agency otherwise would receive.

Agencies must show how they computed the total meals reported each month. Some agencies ask clients to sign in at each meal. Others count the number of

plates used at each meal. Agencies should use the method most likely to give a true picture of the actual number of meals served.

Rules for Food Preparation and Service

Agencies must abide by rules and standards set forth by local health departments and by the foodbank, USDA and DHS. The foodbank can provide details.

Posters

Unlike pantries, soup kitchens and shelters need display only one poster: **“And Justice For All.”** Soup kitchens open to the general public, of course, must also display their meal-service schedules.

Rules for Food Storage

The same rules applied to pantries also apply to soup kitchens and shelters.

EFP SITE MONITORING

USDA requires DHS to conduct regular performance reviews of EFP sites. DHS monitoring is like foodbank monitoring but with specific focus on EFP regulations. Monitoring results are given to the EFP site’s foodbank, which will review the results with the EFP site. The forms used by the DHS monitors are provided as an attachment to this document. Please review the forms so that you will be familiar with the items to be reviewed during your next DHS monitoring visit. Expect to be monitored by DHS about once a year. A monitor will visit your agency during service hours. DHS monitors do not announce their visits ahead of time. You must provide DHS monitors with access to all records and parts of your facility that concern food distribution/service. Agencies that refuse access to DHS monitors or are unable to supply pertinent information may have their EFP contracts canceled.



Findings	<input type="checkbox"/>
No Findings	<input type="checkbox"/>

FOOD PANTRY OBSERVATION FORM

A. Food Bank Affiliation: _____

- 1. Food Pantry Name: _____
- 2. Food Pantry Address: _____
- 3. City: _____
- 4. Person Interviewed: _____
- 5. DHS Observer's Name: _____ Date: _____
- 6. Observer's arrival time: _____ Departure time: _____

B. General Information:

1. At what times and on which days is this Food Pantry open?

	Days	Hours
Monday	_____	_____
Tuesday	_____	_____
Wednesday	_____	_____
Thursday	_____	_____
Friday	_____	_____
Saturday	_____	_____
Sunday	_____	_____

2. How many individuals are served each month by this food pantry? _____

3. Does this pantry operate under the rural exemption?..... Yes No

4. What is the service area of this food pantry? _____

5. Did the Foodbank establish the service area?..... Yes No

6. Do you serve clients outside this service area?..... Yes No

7. If yes, how many, and from where do the clients travel? _____

8. Do you have the EFP Site Manual accessible to pantry staff? Yes No

C. Food Receipt & Storage

1. Is food kept 6" off the floor and stored on pallets or shelves? Yes No

2. Is food kept far enough away from walls and the floor to permit good air circulation and to allow for proper pest control? Yes No

3. Are non-food items kept separated from food? Are toxic items (i.e. soap, bleach, cleaning supplies) kept away from food items? Yes No

4. Are floors, pallets and shelving clean?..... Yes No

5. Are doors, windows and roofs well sealed to prevent pest entry and water damage?..... Yes No

6. Is a good pest control system maintained by a qualified person on staff or contracted with a licensed firm to handle pest control management? Yes No

7. Is the equipment well maintained?..... Yes No

8. Are the proper temperatures for dry food storage maintained? Yes No

9. Are refrigerated items kept at temperatures between 35 and 40 degrees F.?..... Yes No

10. Are frozen food items maintained at a temperature below 0 degrees? Yes No

11. Is the food stored in a secure location with adequate space?..... Yes No

If no, explain: _____

12. Does the site pick up donated food from the Food Bank or does the Foodbank deliver it? _____

13. What is the number of pickups or deliveries per month? _____

D. Pantry Inventory

1. How many cases of food are currently in inventory? _____

2. Does the inventory seem appropriate?..... Yes No

3. Does the pantry have other foods to distribute with government commodities?..... Yes No

E. Commodity Information

- 1. Does this food pantry also operate a Soup Kitchen?..... Yes No
- 2. If yes, is the food properly separated and tracked for the two programs? Yes No

F. Public Awareness

- 1. What types of public outreach and networking does the pantry use to make individuals aware of their services? (Does not apply to homeless shelters.)

- 2. Are signs posted appropriately announcing the days and hours of operation and are signs clearly visible to the general public? Yes No
- 3. Are Income Eligibility, Notice to Program Participants and Prohibited Activities posters accessible to the clients? Yes No
- 4. Is the “And Justice For All” poster accessible to the clients? Yes No

G. Signature Documents

- 1. Are DHS signature documents used?..... Yes No
- 2. Does the recipient sign his/her name upon receipt?..... Yes No
- 3. Is the address recorded upon receipt?..... Yes No
- 4. Is the household size recorded upon receipt?..... Yes No
- 5. Does the pantry have the client sign the signature sheet even if only privately donated food is received?..... Yes No

Complete Questions 6 – 8 if proxy forms are used.

- 6. Does the proxy form contain the original signature of recipient? Yes No
- 7. Does the designated proxy sign the proxy form while in the presence of pantry personnel? Yes No
- 8. Do pantry personnel sign the proxy form at the time of distribution to the designated proxy? Yes No

Complete Questions 9 – 14 if TANF products are being distributed.

- 9. Do clients sign both the DHS signature sheet and the TANF sheet? .. Yes No
- 10. Are clients without children in the household signing the TANF sheet? Yes No
- 11. Are original TANF signature sheets being submitted to the foodbank monthly while TANF products are being distributed? Yes No
- 12. Does the recipient sign his/her name upon receipt?..... Yes No
- 13. Is the address recorded upon receipt?..... Yes No
- 14. Is the household size recorded upon receipt?..... Yes No

H. Program Integrity

- 1. Are fees / donations / memberships required of the clients?..... Yes No
- 2. Do all distribution activities appear to be appropriate?..... Yes No

Comments: _____

I. Program Procedures

- 1. Does the pantry require any documents from clients? Yes No

(Pantries are prohibited from asking for social security cards, pay stubs and income data). Describe the types of documentation requested: _____

- 2. Describe the purpose for requesting documentation: (Only allowed to verify residency and identity)._____

- 3. How often can a household receive food from the pantry? _____

- 4. Does the pantry allow households to receive food at least once every 30 days? Yes No

- 5. Does the pantry require that clients obtain referral from an outside agency in order to receive food? Yes No

- 6. Are clients required to have an appointment to receive food? Yes No

- 7. Are clients allowed to choose among available food items? Yes No

Comments: _____

J. Complaints and Problems

- 1. Have there been any discrimination complaints at the Food Pantry in the past year?..... Yes No
- 2. Do you know what to do if there is a discrimination complaint? ... Yes No
- 3. If there have been any discrimination complaints, have they been forwarded to the Foodbank?..... Yes No
- 4. If you have questions or problems, what is the name and phone number of your Foodbank contact person? _____

K. Volunteers

- 1. How does the distribution site recruit volunteers?

L. Distribution Site Staff Comments:

M. DHS Comments:



Findings	<input type="checkbox"/>
No Findings	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SOUP KITCHEN / HOMELESS SHELTER
OBSERVATION FORM**

A. Foodbank Affiliation:

1. Site Name: _____

2. Site Address: _____

3. City: _____

4. Person Interviewed: _____

5. DHS Observer's Name: _____ Date: _____

6. Observer's arrival time: _____ Departure time: _____

B. General Information:

1. At what times and on which days is this Soup Kitchen open?

	Days	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

2. How many meals are served each month by this soup kitchen? _____

Complete questions 3 – 6 in addition if this is a homeless shelter.

3. How long do clients remain in the shelter? _____

4. Is the facility restricted to a specific service population such as elderly, children or drug or alcohol treatment clients?..... _____

5. How do you count the number of meals served as reported to the Foodbank?

6. Does this shelter receive funding from the DHS Emergency Food & Shelter Program? Yes No

C. Food Receipt Storage

1. Is food kept far enough from the floor to provide adequate space for proper pest control and ventilation? Yes No

2. Are non-food items kept separated from food? Are toxic items (i.e. soap, bleach, cleaning supplies) kept away from food items? Yes No

3. Are floors, pallets and shelving clean?..... Yes No

4. Are doors, windows and roofs well sealed to prevent pest entry and water damage?..... Yes No

5. Is a good pest control system maintained by a qualified person on staff or contracted with a licensed firm to handle pest control management? Yes No

6. Is the equipment well maintained?..... Yes No

7. Are the proper temperatures for dry food storage maintained? Yes No

8. Are refrigerated items kept at temperatures between 35 and 40 degrees F.?..... Yes No

9. Are frozen food items maintained at a temperature below 0 degrees? Yes No

10. Is the food stored in a secure location with adequate space?..... Yes No

If no, explain: _____

11. Does the site pick up donated food from the Food Bank or does the Foodbank deliver it? _____

12. What is the number of pickups or deliveries per month? _____

D. Food Handling and Service

1. Does the Soup Kitchen use non-porous counter tops?..... Yes No

2. Does the soup kitchen disinfect all counter tops and utensils? Yes No

3. Does the soup kitchen use new or properly sanitized reusable food storage containers? Plastic bags may not be reused. Yes No

4. Are workers required to wash their hands after returning from the bathroom or a smoking break? Yes No

- 5. Are workers required to empty their shirt pockets and remove jewelry to prevent objects from falling into food?..... Yes No
- 6. Is the preparation area free of any type of insect, dust or other foreign matter that could contaminate the food? Yes No
- 7. Is smoking prohibited in the food preparation area?..... Yes No
- 8. Is the eating area clean and well maintained?..... Yes No

E. Commodity Information

- 1. Does this Soup Kitchen also operate a Food Pantry?..... Yes No
- 2. If yes, is the food separated and tracked for the two programs? Yes No

F. Public Awareness

- 1. What types of public outreach and networking does the soup kitchen use to make individuals aware of their services? (Does not apply to homeless shelters.)

- 2. Is the “And Justice For All” poster in an area that the clients are able to read it?..... Yes No

G. Program Integrity

- 1. Are fees / donations / memberships required of the clients?..... Yes No
 - 2. Do all distribution activities appear to be appropriate?..... Yes No
- Comments: _____

H. Complaints and Problems

- 1. Have there been any discrimination complaints at the soup kitchen in the past year?..... Yes No
- 2. Do you know what to do if there is a discrimination complaint? ... Yes No
- 3. If there have been any discrimination complaints, have they been forwarded to the Foodbank?..... Yes No

4. If you have questions or problems, what is the name and phone number of your Foodbank contact person? _____

I. Distribution Site Staff Comments:

J. DHS Comments:
