

Partner Agency Policies and Procedures Manual



Updated: October 21, 2021

3201 Robertson Rd. | Tyler, TX 75701 | 903.597.3663 | www.easttexasfoodbank.org

Contents

- Mission and Impact..... 3
- Contact Information..... 4
- General Partner Agency Requirements 4
- Food Bank Food Sourcing..... 5
- Partner Agency Food Sourcing..... 6
- Shared Maintenance Fees and Payments..... 7
- Monthly Reporting..... 8
- Civil Rights 8
- Agency Operations..... 11
- Eligibility and Application..... 13
- Partner Agency Record Keeping 16
- Food Bank Record Keeping 17
- Food Storage & Handling 19
- Ordering and Pickup Procedures 21
- Warehouse Procedures..... 24
- Grievances..... 24
- Holds, Suspensions, Terminations, and Appeals Processes..... 25
- Programs and Resources..... 26

Mission and Impact

The mission of the East Texas Food Bank is to fight hunger and feed hope in East Texas.

Since October 1988, the East Texas Food Bank, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, has provided food to over 200 partner agencies and food programs, in an effort to feed children, the working poor and seniors throughout 26 counties in East Texas. A member of Feeding America, The East Texas Food Bank is one of four food banks that serves the Gulf Coast Region who are pre-staged with food products from Feeding America, to respond to disasters.

Through our Feeding America affiliation, the East Texas Food Bank is also accountable for providing the highest standards of food storage and handling, record keeping, and accurate donation tracking.

The Food Bank appreciates that our Partner Agencies demonstrate a commitment to serving those who are at risk of food in securing and are additionally dedicated to adhering to all Food Bank policies and procedures explained in this policy manual.

Service Area



Contact Information

Physical Address: 3201 Robertson Rd. Tyler, TX 75701

Telephone Number: (903) 597.3663

Fax: (903) 597.7659

www.easttexasfoodbank.org

Kim Morris	Chief Impact Officer	(903) 617-2031	kmorris@easttexasfoodbank.org
Charles Parkes	Agency Services Manager	(903) 617-2060	cparkes@easttexasfoodbank.org
Adam Jimenez	Agency Services Specialist	(903) 617-2023	ajimenez@easttexasfoodbank.org
Tyrone Ash	Agency Services Specialist	(903) 617-2030	tash@easttexasfoodbank.org
Kinsey Thompson	Nutrition Education Program Manager	(903) 617-2013	kthompson@easttexasfoodbank.org
Michelle Rodriguez	Senior Box Program Manager	(903) 617-2017	mrodriguez@easttexasfoodbank.org
Anita Bangle	Agency Retail Donation Coordinator	(903) 617-2019	abangle@easttexasfoodbank.org
Mary Lloyd	Client Benefits Manager	(903) 617-2044	benefits1@easttexasfoodbank.org

General Partner Agency Requirements

Partner Agencies must be good stewards of the donated commodities entrusted to them from the Food Bank. Please read this section carefully to fully understand the Food Bank’s expectations of Partner Agencies.

General Requirements

- The safe and proper handling of food product, which conforms to all local, state, and Federal guidelines
- Willingness to abide by East Texas Food Bank and USDA policies, procedures, and record keeping requirements
- Staff and volunteers of the program will not engage in discrimination against any person because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.
- Staff and volunteers of the program must show respect to all clients. Inferior, degrading or otherwise disrespectful communication to clients will not be tolerated.
- Partner Agencies must allow the Food Bank to monitor their food distributions.

- Partner Agencies must have access to the internet for logging client data and assistance records and placing food orders.
- Partner Agencies must have at least two (2) representatives with access to a functioning email account.
- Partner Agencies must inform the Food Bank of any staff or volunteer turn-over, ensuring the Food Bank always has accurate contact information of Agency leaders.

Annual Monitor Visits (Inspections)

The purpose of the annual monitor visit is to ensure Partner Agencies are adhering to all Food Bank requirements. Feeding America requires Food Bank Partner Agencies to be monitored a minimum of every two years. The Food Bank chooses to conduct these monitors annually and reserves the right to monitor any Partner Agency unannounced.

Training

The East Texas Food Bank provides regular training opportunities to Partner Agencies. Agency Orientation is offered to new Partner Agencies as well as Agencies with new leaders or volunteers or representatives that are in need of re-training.

- Agency Orientation training is required by at least one of the Agency's Leaders (typically the Director/Pastor, Food Program Contact/Primary Contact, or the Secondary Contact).
 - If the Agency should gain a new Agency Leader, that person is required to attend Agency Orientation.
- It is highly recommended that the Agency representative responsible for pantry intake procedures, and/or responsible for training other intake volunteers, attends Agency Orientation at least once.
- Agency representatives responsible for placing food orders through Agency Express is required to attend Agency Orientation.

The Food Bank reserves the right to require specific Agency representatives to attend Agency Orientation, should they determine it necessary during a monitor visit.

Agency Conference

The East Texas Food Bank hosts an annual Agency Conference to provide additional training opportunities, build Agency capacity, and bring our partner network together. Agencies are required to send at least one representative of the Agency to the annual Agency Conference.

Food Bank Food Sourcing

Feeding America and Feeding Texas

The Food Bank works with the Feeding America and Feeding Texas networks to receive donated or low cost loads of food, which typically have a cost associated to them for freight and value-added processing (VAP). These loads are typically the result of a large surplus that one Food Bank could not distribute alone. A large amount of produce is sourced through these networks. Items received through this channel are distributed to Partner Agencies and programs at either no cost or up to a \$0.19 per pound handling fee.

USDA TEFAP Commodities

The Food Bank receives staple food items, such as shelf-stable milk, rice, beans, cereal, and canned goods through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which is a federal emergency food program administered through the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), and through the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) in the state of Texas. Agencies operating as food pantries have a signed TEFAP Agreement on-file with the Food Bank, and must document client eligibility on the Household Application for USDA Foods/Pantry Intake Form. Completed Pantry Intake Forms must be made available to Food Bank staff when monitored.

Purchased Foods- Subsidized and Co-Op

The Food Bank budgets funding for shelf-stable food items for Partner Agencies and programs. This money is typically used to fill the gaps on the staple items we receive through USDA-TEFAP. For example, if we know we will not be receiving any canned vegetables in a given month through TEFAP, we may choose to purchase a truckload of canned vegetables. We work with vendors to ensure the lowest prices, and then these items are passed on to Partner Agencies and programs at no more than the Food Bank's purchase price plus shared maintenance fees.

Purchased Foods- Produce

The Food Bank purchases loads of fresh produce at discounted rates, which are then distributed to Partner Agencies and program at no cost. Often times, these loads are offered at a lower cost to us because they are imperfect, but still good to eat, such as "seconds" or loads with a small percentage of decay. Agencies should expect up to 20% decay of produce loads.

Food Rescue

The Food Bank receives donations from local grocery stores, distributors, manufacturers, farms and other food industry companies. These donations are no longer valuable to the donor due to short dates, surplus, cosmetic damage, or other reasons, but are still good and safe for people to eat. Agency Retail Pickup food rescue is the same concept, but with authorized Partner Agencies picking up directly from the donor and reporting pounds back to the Food Bank.

Food Drives and Events

The Food Bank receives many shelf-stable, dry grocery donations through a variety of community food drives and events.

Partner Agency Food Sourcing

Partner Agencies are encouraged to source food from local donors in their communities. However, food donations should only be accepted from donors that adhere to all local and state food safety guidelines.

Prepared Food Guidelines

Examples of prepared foods are items made at the donor site, such as fresh bagels, whole pizzas, and trays of catered food.

Acceptable Donations:

- Completely wrapped in approved food grade packaging
- Proper labeling
- Cooled quickly if previously held hot

- At 41°F or below, fully frozen is preferred

Unacceptable Donations:

- Previously served or put on a buffet table
- Previously reheated items
- Kept in the danger temperature zone for more than 2 hours
- Not completely wrapped
- Not in approved food grade packaging
- Unlabeled/ no ingredient statement or allergen disclaimer as required
- Over 41°F
- Not cooled down to 41°F if previously held hot

Labels must contain the following components:

- The name and location of the Food Bank (3201 Robertson Rd. Tyler, TX 75701)
- The name and location of the donor
- The food description
- The date of donation
- Allergen disclaimer statement or a list of ingredients (Example of disclaimer: *Warning! This container holds rescued food. This food may contain, have come in contact with, or have been produced in a facility which also produces milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, wheat, soybeans, and/or sesame seeds.*)

Donated Meat

Partner Agencies may not accept donated meat unless it has been processed at a state or federal certified meat processor (i.e. Sanderson Farms, Tyson, etc.).

Shared Maintenance Fees and Payments

Shared Maintenance Fees

Partner Agencies pay a handling fee to help defray miscellaneous operational costs (warehouse, freight, administrative expenses). This is not a charge for food. The fee is assessed on the gross weight of products received. The Food bank has a maximum of \$0.19 cents per pound of food. The Food Bank may reduce or eliminate this fee on certain products at its discretion. The Food bank may pass on “value-added processing” (VAP) costs related to packaging or processing certain highly desirable products.

Invoices

Partner Agencies will receive an electronic invoice each month if there is a balance due. All payments are due within 30 days of the invoice date or it will be considered past due. After 60 days, the unpaid invoice is considered delinquent and all Partner Agency privileges are suspended until paid in full. Partner Agencies may contact the Food Bank Finance Director at (903) 617-2011 to arrange for payments of past due invoices.

Payment Methods

Partner Agencies must pay invoices with an Agency business check. Payments are NOT accepted through personal checking accounts or, cash, or money orders. The Partner Agency number and invoice

number(s) must be included with the payment, either by writing these numbers on the check or by enclosing a copy of the invoice.

Payment of Receipt (POR)

New Partner Agencies will be placed on POR status for a 3 month period. Agencies that are delinquent in paying their invoices twice in a 12 month period will be placed on POR status, whereby payment by business check must be made at the time the order is picked-up or delivered.

Free Product/ Pick & Weigh

Partner Agencies may take advantage of the many free items available in Agency Express and the Pick & Weigh area of the Food Bank warehouse. These free items could include fresh produce, dairy, bread, and non-food items. Partner Agencies are able to take advantage of Pick & Weigh at the Food Bank without an appointment Monday-Thursday 10:00am-11:30am and 1:30pm-3:00pm. However, Partner Agencies must accrue a minimum of \$30 Shared Maintenance Fee per month. Otherwise, a \$30 per month administrative fee will be charged to the Agency's account.

Monthly Reporting

Partner Agencies are required to submit client assistance records monthly.

- Food Pantries are required to submit all client assistance records through Oasis Insight or an ETFB-approved method.
- Onsite meal kitchens and residential facilities are required to submit an Onsite Meal Monthly Report via fax or email.
- Produce Drop Program Partners are required to submit a Produce Report via the Food Bank's website.
- Agencies that hold "retail store-only" distributions outside of their regular pantry hours must submit a Retail Store-Only Distribution Report via fax or email.

All client assistance records and monthly reports are due by close of business on the 3rd day of each month. For example, client assistance records for October must be entered into Oasis Insight by the 3rd day of November. If assistance records and/or monthly reports are not submitted by that time, Partner Agency privileges **are subject to be suspended** until the assistance records and/or reports have been submitted. Suspension is determined based on the number of missing and late reports or records.

The Food Bank provides cumulative information for the Texas Department of Agriculture, which reports consolidated statewide numbers to the UDSDA and Feeding America. Partner Agencies may not anticipate the number of clients that will be served. Reports submitted ahead of schedule will not be accepted. Partner Agencies that did not serve food must still report zero totals in the monthly report.

Civil Rights

The East Texas Food Bank embraces a philosophy that recognizes and values diversity. We are committed to the inclusion and participation of all people. Partner Agency Staff and Volunteers must not engage in discrimination against any person because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

The Texas Department of Agriculture requires every Partner Agency staff and/or volunteer that interacts with clients or client eligibility information (Pantry Intake Forms) obtain Civil Rights Training annually. Civil Rights Training can be obtained through the East Texas Food Bank website. The training PowerPoint takes approximately 30 minutes to go through as a group, less on your own. Certification requires

completion of a 10-question quiz also found on our website (online or a paper test), which must be passed at a rate of 80%. Partner Agencies with limited access to the internet may submit a scanned copy of a completed paper test sent via email.

It is the Partner Agency’s responsibility to maintain valid Civil Rights Training Certifications from every staff and/or volunteer that interacts with clients and/or client eligibility data. These documents must be made available to ETFB staff during monitor visits.

Sites Housed Within Religious Organizations

Federal civil rights laws address explicitly religious activities at religious organization TEFAP Sites:

1. Organizations must not engage in explicitly religious activities as a part of TEFAP, including overt religious contact such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization.
2. An explicitly religious activity at a site must be separated in time or location from TEFAP services.
3. Organizations must not require participants or applicants to participate in explicitly religious activities to receive TEFAP.

TEFAP and Explicitly Religious Activities

The following table provides examples to guide explicitly religious activities at TEFAP sites.

It is acceptable to...	It is not acceptable to...
Hang a cross on a wall at the TEFAP site.	Require participants to stand by a cross and recite a prayer prior to TEFAP distribution.
Place a menorah on a table at the site during the holiday season.	Refuse USDA Foods to participants who do not practice the Jewish faith.
Display faith-based pamphlets at the front or back of the site for interested people.	Insert faith-based pamphlets into TEFAP bags or boxes that will be distributed to participants.
Have a religious official, such as a pastor, assist with TEFAP distribution.	Require or encourage participants to have a religious conversation prior or during TEFAP distribution.
Hold a prayer service on the second level of a church building while TEFAP distribution occurs on the lower level.	Hold a prayer service in the same room and at the same time as TEFAP distribution.
Invite participants or applicants to participate in a voluntary- and clearly separate- prayer before TEFAP distribution.	Lead participants in prayer at the beginning of TEFAP distribution.

Written Notice of Beneficiary Rights

Sites located at faith-based or religious organizations must protect applicants’ and participants’ rights regarding participation in religious activities. (Applicants and participants are referred to here as “participants”.)

Sites must display the TEFAP Written Notice of Beneficiary Rights near the “And Justice for All” poster to inform participants of the following information:

- The Agency may not discriminate against participants on the basis of religion or religious belief; a refusal to hold a religious belief; or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice.
- The Agency may not require participants to attend or participate in any explicitly religious activities that they offer. Participants’ participation in these activities must be purely voluntary.
- The Agency must separate, in time or location, any privately funded, explicitly religious activities from activities supported with USDA direct assistance.
- If the participant objects to the religious character of our organization, the Agency must make reasonable efforts to identify and refer the participant to an alternate provider to which you have no objection. The Agency cannot guarantee, however, that in every instance, an alternate provider will be available.
- Applicants and participants may report violations of these protections (including denials of services or benefits) to TDA at www.Squaremeals.org.

Upon the request of a participant, the Agency must provide a copy of the written notice. The Written Notice of Beneficiary Rights can be found on the Food Bank’s website.

Beneficiary Referral Request

If an applicant or participant objects to the religious character of a Partner Agency, The Agency must make reasonable efforts to refer them to an alternative site. “Reasonable efforts” depend on the situation. At a minimum, The Partner Agency must 1) attempt to identify an alternative provider and 2) determine the service that the provider offers. A referral may be made to non-USDA funded providers if necessary and if the provider has the capacity to accept the beneficiary.

The TEFAP and CSFP Beneficiary Referral Request form documents the referral efforts. Copies of the form must be easily available at each site. The Partner Agency must keep the Referral Request onsite for 3 years. Upon request, referral records must be made available to TDA and the East Texas Food Bank.

Disability Accommodations

The Food Bank requires all Partner Agencies to provide reasonable accommodations to clients with disabilities during food distributions. If distribution locations are inaccessible for individuals with disabilities, all services must still be provided to the client (i.e. deliver boxes to the client’s car, etc.).

Civil Rights Poster and USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

The Food Bank requires all Partner Agencies to post the provided “And Justice for All” poster in an unobstructed location visible to clients. All older versions of this poster should be removed. The current poster is green.

The “And Justice for All” poster displays the USDA Nondiscrimination Statement, which reads: *“In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-*

8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by : U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistance Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410: 2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or 3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.”

TEFAP Participant Rights and Responsibilities Form

TEFAP applicants and participants have rights and responsibilities that are listed in the TEFAP Participant Rights and Responsibilities form. Partner Agencies must make the form available during the application and recertification process. The form may be posted near the “And Justice for All” poster. Partner Agencies may read the form to applicants if necessary, or applicants may read it themselves.

For example: Some Agencies present a laminated copy of the TEFAP Participant Rights and Responsibilities form to each applicant as a part of the Pantry Intake process.

Agency Operations

All products (food or otherwise) donated to the Food Bank must be considered as having been donated under the provisions of Section 170(e)(3) of the USD Internal Revenue Code. The Food Bank requires Partner Agencies to follow IRS Code 170(e)(3) requirements at all times and mandates donated products shall be indeed only for the ill, needy, or infants.

The following applies to all donated goods regardless of the source of donation.

- Donated product may not lawfully be used to “pay” staff or volunteers.
- Donated product may not be “sold” or “traded” for any reason.
- Partner Agency volunteers may not glean through donated product before their advertised distribution to the public. Any partner agency volunteers or staff in need of assistance must receive food (or non-food) through the same process as the general public. Preferential treatment cannot be given to these individuals.
- If a staff member or volunteer are found in breach of these guidelines, the East Texas Food Bank will request a corrective action plan from the Partner Agency.
- Donated products may not be used for the purpose of fundraising, either as prepared food (such as spaghetti dinners or bake sales) or as "prizes". The ETFB or its member agencies may specifically solicit donations of product for use in raising funds, or a refreshment for volunteer participants in special events, as long as the solicitation, receipting, and use is carefully documented and conveyed to the donor that the product does not qualify under 170(e)(3).

Partner Agencies may only distribute donated products to clients, regardless of how they receive the donation (i.e. directly from Food Bank or retail pick-up program, etc.). Agencies may not distribute donated products to non-Food Bank Partner Agencies. In addition, Food Bank Partners must follow these guidelines.

Distribution Requirements

- All Partner Agencies operating a food pantry must be open at least once a month for a minimum of two hours. New pantries (as of 2020) must be open at least twice a month for a minimum of

two hours each distribution, or be open at least once a month for a minimum of two hours during the weekend.

- Partner Agencies operating an onsite meal kitchen must serve meals to any individual seeking a meal each time the kitchen is open for service.
- Partner Agency hours of operation must be made public and signage stating the hours of operation must be posted at the Agency location. The Agency must inform the Food Bank of any changes to distribution hours of operation.
- The “And Justice for All” poster must be posted in an unobstructed location that is visible to clients. The TEFAP Written Notice of Beneficiary Rights document must also be posted if the Agency is affiliated with a religious organization.
- Food Pantries are required to determine TEFAP Program Eligibility of any applicant who wishes to receive foods from the pantry.
- Partner Agencies may not accept monetary donations from clients during a food distribution.
- Partner agencies may not sell or use donated product in exchange for money, other property, or services.
- Partner Agency distributions that are open to the public may not exclude the participation of any protected class. Food Pantry distributions must be open to the public.
- Partner Agencies must serve each household a minimum of once every 30 days, if requested.

Public Notice

Partner Agencies must give notice to the public of distributions of USDA foods. Public notices must meet the following requirements:

- Target eligible households whose members are unemployed or have low incomes and households that include elderly or disabled people.
- Include the locations of the Agency.
- Provide the days and hours of distributions.
- If applicable, the Agency should post a public notice to explain why a distribution is cancelled.

TDA encourages Partner Agencies to inform the public of all USDA food distributions through their own established and customary communications methods. Suggested methods to advertise the availability of USDA foods include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The media (TV, radio, newspaper)
- Civic and religious organizations
- City and county governments
- Social service organizations, upon request

Volunteer Use of Donated Products

Partner Agencies must use extreme caution not to give the perception that volunteerism is rewarded or compensated with donated product. This would appear that the Agency is paying volunteers with donated products which is a direct violation of IRS codes. The Food Bank understands that some clients volunteer and some volunteers may find themselves in need of food, so Partners should implement internal volunteer procedures that address these situations. If the only volunteers of the Agency are also clients, Partner Agencies must ensure the following:

- The client/volunteer must receive the same items and amount as all other clients.
- The client/volunteer may not receive any preferential treatment.

- The client/volunteer may not “cherry pick” products.
- The client/volunteer is recorded as receiving assistance and required to complete the Pantry Intake Form.

Media and Usage of the East Texas Food Bank Name and Logo

No Partner Agency employee, board member, volunteer or other Agency representative may comment about the Food Bank to members of the media without specific written authorization from the ETFB Chief Executive Officer or Communications Director. All statements to the media about the Food Bank and its services and the use of the Food Bank logo and images of its personnel and vehicles must be approved and coordinated in advance.

Eligibility and Application

The Household Application for USDA Foods/ Pantry Intake Form is the application used to qualify households to receive United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foods through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) administers TEFAP in Texas, and contracts with the East Texas Food Bank (ETFb) for distribution of USDA Foods.

Partner Agencies must complete the Household Application for USDA Foods/ Pantry Intake Form when a household visits the Partner Agency for the first time (i.e. when the household initially requests distribution of USDA Foods through TEFAP). Thereafter, the Partner Agency should complete this form every 12 months if the household continues to visit the partner agency (i.e. if the household requests to continue TEFAP benefits).

Note:

- The Partner Agency (Food Pantry Partner) **may request but must not require proof of information** on this form. Including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Identification
 - Address
 - Income

“Participants and applicants have the right to refuse to provide proof of application information. Nevertheless, sites must provide USDA Foods to eligible participants who refuse to provide proof- in other words, refusal to provide proof of ID or address must not be perceived as a barrier to participation.” *TEFAP Handbook, Section 3, page 14*
- Complete one original Pantry Intake Form per household.
- Keep the original on file for three years.
- Maintain separate records for each household.
- Retain the applications and distribution records of households for three years following the end of the certification periods corresponding to the documents.
 - Exception: If audit findings, claims, or litigation have not been resolved by the end of the retention period, keep all forms and records until all issues are resolved.
- Retain records of household denials for three years following the decision date.
- The Partner Agency can use an alternate form as long as it contains all the information that appears on the Pantry Intake Form and does not ask for additional information that the USDA does not require for participation in The Emergency Food Assistance Program.

- If the Partner Agency desires to use an alternate form, the form must be approved by ETFB staff.
- Fields denoted on the pantry intake form with ****x**** are not required pieces of information, but valuable information for the Food Bank and our partners. The applicant can decline to complete these fields if desired.
 - Please note that the Release of Information (ROI) is an optional field for the participant.
- The collection of additional data must not be a real or perceived barrier to participation in USDA TEFAP.

Oasis Insight

The Food Bank tracks client assistance records through Oasis Insight, an online data tracking system. All households served by Partner Agencies should be represented by a case number in Oasis Insight. However, USDA participants must give their written consent in order for the Agency to put their personal data into Oasis Insight.

If a TEFAP participant does not give written consent to put their data into Oasis Insight (if they do not sign the Release of Information) on the Pantry Intake Form, the Agency must not put the household's data into Oasis Insight. The participant may not be turned away if they do not sign the ROI, and must be served USDA TEFAP foods the same as every other client.

If a participant does not sign the ROI, the Agency must report the client assistance in Oasis Insight as an anonymous distribution.

Partners may give multiple staff or volunteers access to Oasis Insight for data entry. However, each of these volunteers must complete the online Civil Rights exam and the Oasis Insight User Confidentiality Agreement and return them to the Agency Services team before access is granted. Both of these forms can be found at www.easttexasfoodbank.org, under the partner agencies tab.

Eligibility Guidelines

Clients in need of emergency food assistance are made eligible for TEFAP in one of three ways

1. Categorical Eligibility: A Household is automatically (or categorically) eligible for USDA Foods if it currently receives assistance from one of the following programs:
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
 - National School Lunch Program (NSLP) free or reduced-price school meals
 - Medicaid

Categorical Eligibility qualifies the household to receive USDA foods for up to 12 months.

2. Income Eligibility: A Household is eligible for USDA foods if its annual household income is at or below 185% of federal poverty guidelines. A handout of TEFAP Income Eligibility Guidelines based on the number of people in each household is made available to Agencies annually and on the Food Bank's website. Partner Agencies may not impose their own eligibility criteria.

Income Eligibility qualifies the household to receive USDA foods for up to 12 months

3. Household Crisis Eligibility: Households that do not meet Categorical or Income Eligibility are able to qualify for Household Crisis Eligibility if the household indicates that they have an emergency need for food on the Pantry Intake Form.

Characteristics of a Household Crisis

1. Unexpected
2. Temporary
3. Beyond the household's control

Unexpected Costs of a Household in Crisis

1. Necessary medical treatment of a household member
2. Burial expenses of a household member
3. Uncontrolled loss of employment
4. The repair or replacement, because of a household disaster, of the household's
 - Home
 - Home contents, or
 - Vehicle

Household Crisis Eligibility qualifies the household to receive USDA foods for up to 6 months.

The Proxy

A proxy is a person designated by a participant to act for the participant as necessary throughout every process of TEFAP. For example, proxies can provide a signature on forms. Proxies may also act for the participant at application, certification, food distribution, and recertification. A proxy must provide proof of identification prior to picking up a food package. Agencies must collect the following information:

- Participant's name
- Designated Proxy's name
- Address of the Proxy
- A written note from the participant.

Participants may change their proxy at any time by:

- Submitting a written statement indicating the removal and/or change of proxy, or
- Completing a new Pantry Intake form in person at the Agency

We recommend that you encourage a proxy to only pick-up for up to 4 households unless there is a written understanding in place.

Citizenship

There are no citizenship requirements. Partner Agencies must not request or require any applicant or participant to prove citizenship through any means whatsoever.

Residency

If a client does not live in your Agency's service area, the client must be referred to a different site in their service area. The Food Bank suggests providing emergency food assistance to individuals before referring them elsewhere.

If your Agency has a designated service area, the service area must be publicly stated, drawing service area on a map if determined necessary by the Agency Service Team

Residency Outside of the State of Texas

Due to the Food Bank's service area, many of our Partner Agencies are located near the Texas state boarder. USDA TEFAP foods and other foods distributed by the East Texas Food Bank are intended for distribution to residents of the State of Texas. USDA TEFAP Foods may not be distributed to households that do not live in the State of Texas. *However, non-USDA TEFAP foods may be distributed to households living outside of the state of Texas.* Below are some helpful guidelines for Agencies affected by this policy:

- Inform the clients you serve that the food pantry is primarily intended for Texas Residents-remember, proof of residency is not required.
- Refer non-Texas residents to nearby pantries in their state of residency.
 - ETFB can provide referral information if necessary.
- Allow the client to complete their own pantry intake form.
- If a client tries to show you their ID, inform them that it is not required.
- At the time of application, households must reside within the State of Texas, *but not for any specific length of time.*
- Remember: proof of residency is not required.

Inventory Organization

- Store USDA or TM (Trade Mitigation) items separately from non-USDA or TM items. In the case a client lists an address outside of the state of Texas on their intake form, it is acceptable to serve the client **non-USDA/ non-TM items only**.
- If your organization partners with both the East Texas Food Bank and another Food Bank outside of the state of Texas, the pantry must store items received from ETFB separately from items received from the other Food Bank.
 - i.e. If your pantry partners with Harvest Texarkana Regional Food Bank, store items received from them separately and distribute them only to clients who list a Bowie County or Arkansas address.

Onsite Meals

There are no eligibility requirements for congregate onsite meals; individuals are presumed eligible because they seek meals at an onsite meal site. Partner Agencies that operate as onsite meal sites do not have to conduct Pantry Intake or have their participants complete a Pantry Intake Form.

Partner Agency Record Keeping

Partner Agencies are required to keep the following records onsite and make them available to the Food Bank, Feeding America, USDA, and TDA staff when requested:

Order Invoices

All Partner Agency invoices must be kept onsite for three (3) years. These records should be made available during monitor visits and audits. All invoices are required to be reviewed for accuracy and signed by the partner agency at the time of order pick-up or delivery.

Pest Control Records

Food storage areas are particularly susceptible to rodent and insect infestation. A visual inspection of the Partner Agency's facilities should be done at least monthly, with prevention and treatment recommended quarterly as needed. Pest control treatment must be done a minimum of one time per year. Proof of pest control must be submitted with the Annual Agency Update packet.

- If the Partner Agency uses a professional pest control company, copies of service reports, including chemicals used, should be made available to the Food Bank representative during monitoring visits and records must be kept onsite for one year.
- If the Partner Agency performs self-pest control, the Agency must keep a log of the of products and chemicals used, and dates and areas applied, should be made available to the Food Bank representative during monitoring visits and records must be kept onsite for one year.
- The exterior perimeter of the storage location should be kept free of tall grass, untended shrubbery, or debris to reduce the possibility of harboring pests.
- The Food Bank reserves the right to require an agency to use a professional pest control service if deemed necessary during a monitor visit.

Temperature Logs

All cold storage units are required to have a thermometer that is readily accessible (cold storage units with external digital thermometers must also have a physical internal thermometer present). Refrigerator temperatures should be held at or below 40°F, and freezer temperatures should be held at or below 0°F. Three years of temperature logs should be made available to the Food Bank representative during monitor visits. Cooler and freezer temperatures must be checked and recorded during regular business hours, and during shut-down of vacation periods:

- A minimum of every other day
- Immediately after a power loss is known or suspected
- Late each Friday afternoon and early each Monday morning (if operations are suspended during the weekends)

The Agency Services Team will provide thermometers to Partner Agencies as needed, once per year.

Food Safety

Feeding America requires all Food Bank Partner Agencies to be trained in Food Safety. Onsite Meal Kitchen Agencies must maintain at least one Certified Food Manager. Food Pantries must maintain at least two Certified Food Handlers. Certifications must be obtained from an accredited school, online program, or the local health department while adhering to all local and state food safety guidelines. Most commonly, Partner Agencies obtain their Food Safety Certifications online through either www.servsafe.com or www.Learn2serve.com.

Health Department Inspections (for Onsite Meal Kitchens)

If the Partner Agency is an onsite meal provider, the facility must have a valid Health Department Inspection. A copy must be posted and visible during monitoring visits, and must be submitted to the Food Bank with the Annual Agency Update packet.

Intake Forms and Sign-In Sheets

Pantry Intake forms and sign-in sheets must be kept onsite for three (3) years. Electronic data tracking systems (i.e. Oasis Insight) may be used to maintain client records, however, the hard copy of Pantry Intake Forms and sign-in sheets must also be kept onsite.

Food Bank Record Keeping

The Food bank is required to keep the following Partner Agency records and make them available to Feeding America, USDA, and TDA staff when requested:

Partner Agency Application

All Partner Agencies must complete a Partner Agency Application prior to partnership with the Food Bank.

Partner Agency Contact Information

The Food Bank will maintain a current list of key points of contact for the Partner Agency, including the Director or Pastor, Food Program Contact, and Secondary Contact. These points of contact must have a valid phone number and email address. The Food Bank will also maintain Agency location, days and hours of operation, and billing information.

Nonprofit 501(c)(3) Status

All Partner agencies receiving donated products from the Food Bank must be federally exempt 501(c)(3) organizations or be a 501(c)(3) equivalent (a religious church organization meeting the IRS 14 points). The Agency must adhere to all requirements under IRS Code 170(e)(3). All Partner Agencies must show clear, complete, and current documentation of their agency's exemption under section 501(c)(3) exemption of the Code or Church status. The following are examples of complete information:

- Current IRS determination letter where the address matches the address of the organization listed on the Agency Agreement; or
- Current group exemption letter with a listing of the local agency in the group exemption directory, a list of active local sites from the national/regional headquarters website, or a letter from the group exemption's headquarters or regional office attesting that the local organization is covered under their group exemption; or
- Currently listing of the organization on the IRS website section under Exempt Organizations Selection Check (Publication 78 data) indicating they are a Public Charity ("PC"); or
- Faith Based Organization eligibility form that includes documentation of the organization's ability to meet at least (9) of the (14 possible criteria established by the IRS to be considered a church (i.e. "14-point criteria"), along with a letter from the faith based organization stating they have never been denied or revoked 501(c)(3) status and their program will serve the "ill, needy, infants"; or
- A letter from the CEO or Board Chair of a qualified Agency indicating that it is the Agency sponsoring such program and assuming all responsibilities (fiscal and legal) for the sponsored organization. The Member will need both the sponsorship letter as well as clear, complete and current evidence of the sponsoring organization's exemption or church status following criteria listed above.

Board of Directors

All Partner Agencies must have a current list of directors, board members, or the equivalent that contains contact information for those listed.

TEFAP Agreement

The Emergency Food Assistance Program created this agreement to bind both the East Texas Food Bank (the Contracting Entity, or CE) and the Partner Agency (site) to its terms and conditions.

Agency Agreement

This agreement serves as the confirmation that the Partner Agency adheres to all guidelines set in the Partner Agency Policies and Procedures Manual and follows the basic qualifications for being a Partner Agency. Agency Agreements must be signed by a current authorized representative of the Agency.

Financial Documents

The East Texas Food Bank will collect annual financial documentation from the Partner Agency. Registered 501(c)(3) Agencies will submit their most recent IRS 990 Statement. Church affiliated Agencies may submit either their most recent Bank Statement or Line Item Budget.

Proof of Pest Control

The Food Bank will collect annual proof of pest control. The Agency will submit an invoice of service, or proof of purchase and pest control log if self-applied.

Food Safety Documents

The Food Bank will maintain proof of two valid Food Handler's certificates (for pantries) or one valid Food Manager's certificate (for onsite meal kitchens). Onsite meal kitchens will also submit a valid copy of their Health Department Inspection.

Civil Rights Certifications

The Food Bank will collect required Civil Rights Certifications annually from each Agency's Director or Pastor, Food Program Contact, and Secondary contact. The Agency will be responsible for collecting all other staff and volunteers' Civil Rights Certifications.

Food Storage & Handling

All Food Bank food storage and handling regulations must be followed to ensure client safety. It is imperative that Partner Agencies take the appropriate steps to ensure produce quality and know the procedures for accepting donations from sources other than the Food Bank.

Facility Evaluation

- Outside is free of debris/contaminants.
- There should be no holes or gaps in the pipe conduits, screens, floor, ceiling, or doors to allow insects or rodents access to the food.
- Food must be prepared, stored, and distributed in a Food Bank approved facility. Food Bank food may never be stored or distributed at an alternate location temporarily without prior notice and approval.

Dry Storage Area

- The food storage area should be locked when not supervised to prevent possible theft
- Food items must be stored at least four (4) inches from the floor and four (4) inches from the walls, with two (2) feet of clearance from the ceiling.
- Maintain a clean and dry storage area (climate controlled). The shelves should remain clean with no debris on the floor.
- Garbage cans must be covered and emptied frequently to prevent unwanted pests.

- Cleaning or toxic supplies must be stored lower than food items or in a separate storage area. Paper goods, diapers and feminine hygiene products should also be isolated from chemicals and foods.
- Partner Agencies may never re-package food products unless they have proper licensure from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS).
- The Partner Agency must take adequate steps to ensure that food items obtained from sources other than the Food Bank have adequate labeling and are free of serious defects that may post a health hazard to clients.
- No severely dented or rusted cans.
- Personal or volunteer food should be kept in a separate area to avoid confusion.
- Baby food must be discarded after the expiration date.
- The Agency may not distribute items that have been home-canned.
- The Partner agency should rotate, label or take periodic inventory of the food items to ensure freshness. Remember first in, first out (FIFO).
- Food items must meet local and federal health standards.
- Refer to the USDA Food Product Dating document on the Food Bank's website for information on best practices for serving items after their expiration dates.

Refrigerator/Freezer Areas

- Refrigerators and freezers should either be in a locked area, or they must be lockable.
- Units should be clean and odor-free.
- Items stored in walk-in cooler or freezer units must be at least six (6) inches off of the floor.
- There must be a thermometer in or accessible to all cold storage units. Refrigerators must be kept at or below 40°F, while freezers must be kept at or below 0°F (exception: temperatures may vary for designated produce-specific cold storage).
- No sources of contamination.
- Personal or volunteer food should be kept in a separate area to avoid confusion.
- Food must be clearly labeled with the item name, ingredients, date, and/or a food allergen statement.
- The Partner Agency must take adequate steps to ensure that food items obtained from sources other than the Food Bank have adequate labeling and are free of serious defects that may post a health hazard to clients. All protein products must be frozen before the sell by date. Only properly refrigerated or frozen items may be accepted.
- The Partner agency should rotate, label or take periodic inventory of the food items to ensure freshness. Remember first in, first out (FIFO).
- Food items must meet local and federal health standards.
- Food items obtained from another source must maintain the same health standards as product obtained from the Food Bank.

Perishable Foods

Perishable foods are defined as any food that requires refrigeration or that is frozen. If a Partner Agency wishes to receive perishable foods from the Food Bank, they must meet the following criteria:

- The Agency must have an adequate number of appropriately insulated containers to transport refrigerated or frozen products from the Food bank or regional distribution site.
- Refrigerated products must be stored at or below 40°F, frozen products must be stored at or below 0°F.

- Thawed perishables must be cooked or eaten immediately after thawing and never refrozen unless cooked first.
- Eggs should be stored on the bottom shelf in the refrigerator to avoid cross contamination in case of breakage.

Prepared Foods

Partner Agencies must meet the following criteria when preparing and distributing food products:

- Onsite kitchens must meet all state and local health department regulations and hold all applicable licenses.
- There must be a designated hand washing sink for all staff and volunteers handling food. This sink cannot be a food preparation sink and must be clearly labeled with a sign instructing staff and volunteers to wash their hands.
- Prepared foods must be cooked, reheated and held for serving at safe temperatures: 160°F or higher for cooking, 140°F or higher for holding, and 165°F or higher when re-heating. A probing thermometer should be used to accurately monitor the temperature of the food.
- All frozen foods must be thawed in the refrigerator at temperatures between 35°F and 40°F and cannot be re-frozen unless it is first cooked at the appropriate temperatures. Food should be placed in a pan to catch drips when thawing.
- Repackaged or opened foods must be stored in rodent and insect-proof containers. All non-produce food must be labeled with the name of the item and the date the package was opened or prepared.

Ordering and Pickup Procedures

Ordering Requirements

All Partner Agencies are assigned a specific day and time for food pick-ups or delivery. Partner Agencies are required to routinely order food from the Food Bank. Agencies operating food pantries should place a minimum of one food order per month. Agencies operating onsite meal kitchens should place a minimum of one food order per quarter. Partners with a 6 month ordering absence will forfeit partnership with the Food Bank. To regain access to food and other Food Bank resources, the organization will need to reapply as a new Partner Agency.

Agency Express

Agency Express is a web-based tool sponsored by Feeding America that allows Partner Agencies to process and manage Food Bank food orders online. Agencies can search for food items, view item details, submit orders and review the status of orders through this system.

- Ordering limits may be placed on some items. Limits are determined by both the quantity available in inventory and the number of families and individuals served by the Partner Agency.
- Agencies are given a 2-week window to place their food orders. The ordering window opens exactly 2 weeks prior to their order pickup or delivery date, and closes 5 business days prior to the pickup or delivery date, at 10:30am.
 - Please note: Days the Food Bank is closed for business (holidays and weekends) are not considered a business day. If a holiday or weekend falls within the 5-day period prior to the order pickup/delivery date, those days should not be counted.

Pickup/Delivery Day	Order Due before 10:30on
Monday	Monday (the previous week)
Tuesday	Tuesday (the previous week)
Wednesday	Wednesday (the previous week)
Thursday	Thursday (the previous week)
Friday (delivery only)	Friday (the previous week)

Holidays

If the Agency's normal order pickup or delivery date falls on a Holiday, the Agency Services Team will work with the Agency to provide an alternative order date.

- Agencies that pickup their orders from the Food Bank can coordinate with the Agency Services Team to pick up their order on any day the warehouse is open for pickups.
- Agencies that receive their order on delivery or pick-up from a regional hub will be offered an alternative delivery date, or have the option to pick up their order on any day the warehouse is open for pickups.
- ***All rescheduled orders for pickup or delivery must be coordinated with the Agency Services Team, as order will have to be placed manually.***

Food Bank Holiday Closures

Holiday
New Year's Day
MLK Day
Good Friday
Memorial Day
Juneteenth
Independence Day
Labor Day
Thanksgiving Holiday
Christmas Holiday

Pickup Procedures

The Food Bank's warehouse can be dangerous if guidelines and regulations are not followed by the representatives who come to pick up their Agency's order. Please follow the guidelines below, and any posted or verbal instruction from Food Bank staff.

- Partner Agencies must sign-in at the Agency Fulfillment desk prior to all order and Pick & Weigh pickups. All Agency representatives will need to be knowledgeable of the Agency name and Agency number.
- Partner Agencies may back up their vehicle to an empty dock. Only one vehicle per Agency may be docked at a time.
- Partner Agencies must adhere to all posted and verbal instructions given by Food Bank warehouse staff and regional drivers.
- Partner Agencies have a maximum of 30 minutes to load their orders and participate in Pick & Weigh.
- Partner Agencies that do not pick up their orders on or during their designated pickup time may be subject to a \$25 - \$100 re-stocking fee, depending the size of the order.
- The Agency representative is responsible for checking the Food Bank invoice against their pulled food orders. Shortages or overages on food orders must be reported to a Food Bank warehouse staff prior to leaving or no more than 24 hours after picking up an order. It is recommended that each case or box be checked by an Agency representative as it is loaded into the vehicle.
- After all food is loaded, the Partner Agency must sign the Food Bank copy of the invoice, return it to the Agency Fulfillment Desk, and retain your signed copy for three years.
- Partner Agencies are responsible and liable for loading food orders and Pick & Weigh items into their vehicles.
- Partner Agencies should return all banana boxes to the Food Bank or to regional delivery sites.
- The Agency should provide a vehicle(s) large enough to safely transport food orders.
- Pick & Weigh and produce must be weighed separately by product type before loading.

Delivery Procedures

The Food Bank is able to provide order delivery services to Partner Agencies outside of Smith County that meet certain criteria set by the Food Bank's Transportation Department. Space on delivery trucks is limited and some delivery routes maintain a wait-list of Agencies wanting to receive delivery. For Agencies that meet specific dock and order guidelines, the Transportation Department may be able to deliver food orders directly to the Agency. Most Agencies on delivery pickup their order at a designated regional delivery (hub) location. Agencies on delivery should follow the guidelines below:

- Agencies should arrive at the hub location before the scheduled delivery time and must be knowledgeable of their Agency name and number. The Food Bank driver is not obligated to wait for a late arrival. The delivery driver will call the Agency representative on the morning of their scheduled delivery to indicate the estimated arrival time of the Food Bank truck.
- Agency representatives should never enter the Food Bank truck. Only Food Bank staff are authorized to operate Food Bank equipment.
- If receiving from a hub location, the Agency should provide a vehicle(s) large enough to safely transport food orders.
- The Agency representative is responsible for checking the Food Bank invoice against their pulled food orders. Shortages or overages on food orders must be reported via the Order Error Report found under "ETFB Reports" on the Partner Agency tab. This must be done no more than 2

business days after receiving an order. It is recommended that each case or box be checked by an Agency representative the day of receipt.

- After all food is loaded, the Partner Agency must sign the Food Bank copy of the invoice and return it to the regional delivery driver plus sign and maintain the pantry copy for three years.

Warehouse Procedures

Warehouse Regulations

- Arrive at the Agency's assigned pickup time.
- Do not smoke or chew tobacco while in the building or on the dock.
- No food or drink in the warehouse.
- Electronic devices are prohibited.
- Only individuals 18 and older are allowed in the warehouse.
- Use the side door to enter the warehouse, do not jump or climb through the dock.
- Do not operate warehouse equipment.
- Be aware of special notices posted in and around the warehouse.
- Notify the warehouse staff of any irregularities or potentially hazardous conditions (spills, etc.).
- Warehouse hours are subject to change at the discretion of the Food Bank.
- Closed-toed shoes must be worn at all times (no sandals or flip flops).

Return Policies

Food product may be processed as a return for credit only if it was received by the Agency in error, or if conditions are unsafe for use or consumption. Such condition includes excessive rust, dents or infestation. The final decision as to the safety of the item will be made by Food Bank staff who are trained to make such determinations.

- Partner Agencies should complete an Order Report Form at <https://www.easttexasfoodbank.org/partner-agencies/order-report-form/> within 24 hours.
- Credit will be issued on the Agency's next monthly statement.

Grievances

General Complaints

- The Food Bank Agency Services Team must respond to all public complaints against the Partner Agency or complaints submitted to the Food Bank.
- The Agency Services Team may notify the Partner Agency and/or board of directors about the complaint, and if action is required, will initiate investigation procedures.
- The Food Bank reserves the right to visit any Partner agency unannounced to investigate complaints made by the public.
- Investigation results will be documented in the Partner Agency's file, and the Partner Agency will be notified in writing if any action needs to be taken.

Civil Rights Complaints

Should a client report a Civil Rights complaint, the Food Bank will conduct the following procedure.

1. Civil Rights complaint received by staff or volunteers (verbal or written)

2. Site staff gives complainant a Civil Rights Complaint form (Form AD-3027, found at https://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and directs Complainant to return the form to the Sponsor (East Texas Food Bank), call the number below, or email the form to:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistance Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

(202) 260-1026

(Found on the And Justice for All poster)

3. If the form is return to the Sponsor, it is mailed to the following address within 5 working days:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistance Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

Holds, Suspensions, Terminations, and Appeals Processes

If a Partner Agency violates Food Bank policies and procedures, there are three possible actions: Account Hold, Suspension, or Termination

Holds

Partner Agency accounts may be placed on a “Hold” status for the following reasons:

- Accounting Hold- the Agency has past due invoices owed to the Food Bank.
- Document Hold- the Agency has been prompted to submit documentation (training certificates, board of directors list, etc.) and is not responding to or communicated with the Agency Services Team in a timely manner.
- Compliance Hold- the Agency has violated USDA or Food Bank policies and must implement a corrective action plan.
- Report Hold- the Agency has outstanding monthly reports or client assistance records that have not been submitted in 3 consecutive months.

Suspension

The purpose of a suspension is to discontinue a Partner agency’s Food Bank use for a specific amount of time due to a major violation. A suspended Agency loses all the rights and privileges of a Partner agency as well as its status as such.

- A Partner Agency may be suspended without first being placed on Hold for serious violations.
- A suspension shall not last more than six months.
- The suspension and corrective action plan must be communicated in writing to the Partner Agency.
- A suspended Partner Agency may regain its status if the Agency Services Manager approves and if the Agency has completed its corrective action plan.

Suspension: Excessive Late and Missing Monthly Report

- Once an Agency has accrued a total of 6 late and missing reports in a calendar year, the account will automatically be suspended until the 1st of the following month. The suspension will not be removed until the 1st of the following month, even after any missing reports are received.
- Every late monthly report received after the Agency has incurred a report hold in a calendar year will automatically be suspended until the 1st of the following month. The suspension will not be removed until the 1st of the following month, even after the late report is received.

Termination

The purpose of a termination is to discontinue a Partner Agency's access to the Food Bank due to a violation or Agency/ Food Bank request. Termination means that an Agency loses all rights and privileges of a Partner Agency as well as its status.

- A Partner Agency may be terminated without having first been put on hold or suspension for serious violations.
- The termination notification must be communicated in writing to the Partner Agency.
- A terminated Partner Agency may reapply to become a Food Bank Partner Agency no sooner than one year after termination.

Appeals Process

- A Partner Agency may appeal a suspension or termination, but not a Hold.
- A Partner Agency must submit a written appeal to the Agency Services Manager within two working days of their suspension/termination notice. If the appeal is not received within 10 working days, an appeal hearing will be denied.
- An appeal hearing of the Food Bank CIO and Agency Services Manager will convene to address the appeal. The Food Bank partnership privileges may be suspended pending the decision of the hearing.
- A notification of the appeal decision will be sent to the Partner agency within seven working days.
- If a terminated Partner agency is reactivated as a Food Bank Partner agency, it will be placed on a 90-day evaluation period. At the end of the 90 days, the partnership will be assessed by the Agency Services Manager to ensure that all minimum requirements are being met. If the Agency has failed to meet these standards the partnership will be terminated with no appeals process.

Programs and Resources

Agency Retail Pickup

Agency retail pickup is one of the many ways we're working to reduce food waste and ensure the families we serve have access to the fresh, healthy foods they need to thrive. This initiative saves time and resources by empowering Partner Agencies to pick up food donations directly from retailers near them. Agencies participating in the Agency Retail Pickup program are subject to all regulations set by the program agreement and Agency Retail Pickup Coordinator. Violations of the Agency Retail Pickup program agreement may result in a Hold being placed on the Agency. Participation in the Agency Retail Pickup program is limited and subject to available space and approval by the Agency Retail Pickup Coordinator. Contact the Agency Retail Donation Coordinator for more information.

Produce Drop Program

The Food Bank partners with community-based and Partner Agencies to distribute free, fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income families on a monthly basis. Produce Drop distributions are held separately from regular food pantry distributions. Participation in the Produce Drop Program is limited. Contact the Agency Services Team.

Senior Box Program

The Senior Box Program is designed to improve the health and nutrition of senior citizens. In East Texas, some seniors are forced to make tough choices between paying their utilities, buying life-saving medications or purchasing food. The goal of the Senior Box Program is to provide a free box of nutritious food to approximately 4,000 seniors each month in identified communities within the East Texas Food Bank's service area where they may have little or no access to food assistance. Participation in the Senior Box Program is limited. Contact the Senior Box Program Manager for more information.

Child Hunger Programs

The mission of the Food Bank's Child Hunger Programs is to help alleviate child hunger by providing hungry children with nutritious meals at times when other resources are not available, such as afterschool, during the summer, and on weekends. The Food Bank partners with child service providers to serve afterschool and summer meals, as well as weekend backpacks to kids in need. Participation in Child Hunger Programs is limited. Contact the Child Hunger Program Manager for more information.

Nutrition Education

The East Texas Food Bank's Nutrition Education program offers nutrition education classes and information to low-income community members by partnering with community organizations and social service agencies serving limited- resource clients. Classes are based on the USDA Guidelines and teach participants about eating nutritiously, shopping on a budget, food safety, cooking, meal planning, eating out, exercise, weight control, and disease prevention. Participation in Nutrition Education Program is limited. Contact the Nutrition Education Manager for more information.

Benefits Assistance

The East Texas Food Bank helps connect people with apply for benefits they may be eligible for, including SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), formerly known as Food Stamps. Contact the Benefits Assistance Manager for more information.