

The Master's Mandate

A Local Church Handbook on Humanitarian Relief

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Feeding the Hungry...An Introduction

Once infrequent, requests for emergency food assistance have risen sharply in recent years. Throughout the United States, communities are realizing that derelicts and transients are no longer the only people suffering from hunger. Nor are sudden unemployment, personal crises and natural disasters the only causes of hunger. Families enduring prolonged unemployment, catastrophic illness, the working poor, and elderly persons living on fixed incomes are now seeking emergency food assistance in record numbers.

Some of these people have fallen through the cracks and do not qualify for assistance from any of the federal entitlement programs. Others who do receive benefits like food stamps find that they run out of food before the end of the month despite their best efforts to cut corners.

In response to the growing problem of hunger, churches and community groups in an increasing number of communities are becoming actively involved in helping feed the hungry by organizing alternative food distribution programs. These programs provide food to people who do not qualify for federal food assistance or who need additional help to adequately feed themselves and their families. These private-sector efforts range from soup kitchens, which serve prepared meals in a group setting, to the more traditional emergency food box programs (pantries or closets), which give families an assortment of enough nutritious foods to prepare three meals a day for a two to three day period. These alternative programs share a common goal of providing food to those in need with minimal red tape or eligibility criteria.

Because emergency box programs attempt to provide a total food package, they frequently have to limit the number of times a family can return for assistance. Supplemental programs, on the other hand, can assist more people more frequently because they provide only a limited assortment of whatever donated foods are available in large quantities. These supplemental foods can help needy families and individuals stretch their limited food budgets.

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SECTION I

Feeding the Hungry: The Mandate

The faces of the hungry and homeless in America are undergoing a rapid and catastrophic change. Only ten years ago, many of America's poor and destitute were homeless men under the influence of drugs, alcohol and mental illness. The moral decline of America is destroying and ravaging the American family. Women, children and senior adults are being impacted the hardest, often finding themselves hungry, and even at times homeless. What would Jesus do? Where would we find Jesus today if he were housed in his physical body? Ministry to hungry and hurting people is not a **Social Gospel**. It is **The Master's Mandate. It is the priority of Jesus.**

Requests for emergency food assistance have risen sharply in recent years. Throughout the United States churches are realizing that derelicts and transients are no longer the only people suffering from hunger. Sudden unemployment, personal crises and natural disasters are only a few of the causes of hunger. Families enduring prolonged unemployment, the "working poor," single parent homes and elderly persons living on fixed incomes are now seeking emergency food assistance in record numbers.

Some of these people have "fallen through the cracks" and do not qualify for assistance from any of the federal entitlement programs. Others who do receive benefits like food stamps find that they run out of food before the end of the month despite their best efforts to cut corners.

In response to the growing problem of hunger, churches in an increasing number of communities are becoming actively involved in helping feed the hungry by organizing alternative food distribution programs. These programs provide food to people who do not qualify for federal food assistance or who need additional help to adequately feed themselves and their families. These private-sector efforts range from soup kitchens, which serve prepared meals in a group setting, to the more traditional emergency food box programs (pantries or closets), which give families an assortment of enough nutritious foods to prepare food to get them through the emergency. These alternative programs share a common goal of providing food to those in need with minimal "red tape" or eligibility criteria.

The purposes for these kinds of ministries are clearly stated in scriptures:

"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you, or thirsty, and gave you to drink? And when did we see you a stranger, and invite you in, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' Then they themselves also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or

sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’” (Matthew 25:37-40; 44, 45{NAS})

“When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and repayment come to you. But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” (Luke 14:12-14{NAS})

“In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” (Acts 20:35 {NAS})

“If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,’ and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use it that?” (James 2:15, 16 {NAS})

“He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his good deed.” (Proverbs 19:17 {NAS})

The responsibility has been placed with the church to help the weak, the hungry, the poor, the naked, the thirsty, the stranger, the sick and the imprisoned. The importance of this ministry is invested in the use of the personal pronoun ‘I’ for Jesus. Those in need were not unknown faces but in effect were Jesus, Himself. Therefore, ministry is either *done* unto Jesus or is *not done* unto Jesus. Additionally, the person, church or ministry who is gracious to these individuals and families has placed God in the position of a *borrower* by His choice. Therefore, God has obligated Himself to *repay* for those good deeds. Lip service is easy but has no value of warmth or comfort; learning that giving brings greater blessing than receiving yields a higher sense of ministry and calling.

FOOD RESOURCES

Your group may either purchase or seek food donations. Many groups use a combination of both, as this enables them to have a wider range of nutritious foods available. Food can be donated by local merchants or in church and community food drives. It can be bought at low cost wholesale prices or in bulk.

DONATIONS

Businesses are often receptive to requests for support. Your group may have members who run businesses and would be willing to contribute a few cases of food or day-old baked goods. Some groups arrange for businesses to accept special coupons for meat and

milk from people they help. If your group is registered with the federal government as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization, donors can receive tax deductions for their donations following the guidelines set forth by the IRS.

FOOD DRIVES

A great way to kick off your pantry program is with a food drive. This makes people aware of your work and helps everyone feel a part of it. As the pantry begins to serve the needy, the witness of its good work can inspire continued support. A food drive can be connected with a social event or a religious service, in which a donation would be the “entrance fee” or an offering, or it can be directed outward to include the larger community.

A word of caution: be alert for damaged or rusted cans, or cans with bulged ends. They may contain contaminated food. Some people “clean house” for a food drive. For more information identifying potentially hazardous foods, contact your local city or county health department.

PURCHASES

Specifically needed items that are not usually obtainable through donation must sometimes be bought. You can get discounted food from many sources. Co-ops often have a special bulk rate for volume purchases. Farmers markets are a good source for fresh produce. Sometimes grocers or local restaurant owners can be persuaded to order a few extra cases of a needed food item and pass it along to you at cost.

SECTION II

GETTING STARTED: BREAKING IT DOWN INTO BITE-SIZED PIECES

A. Who do we help?

1. Widows
2. Fatherless (Single mothers raising children)
3. Aged (Senior adults on limited fixed incomes)
4. Unemployed
5. Working poor
6. Catastrophic Circumstances

B. How do I find them?

1. Look inside the church family.
2. Ask church members for referrals.
3. Ask nearby smaller churches in low-income areas.
4. Ask nearby community, local government agencies and schools.

C. How often do I help them?

It is best to target specific groups and provide them a box of food the third weekend of every month or divide the group and serve twice monthly depending on size of group and number of available workers.

D. Why?

These six groups of people are usually paid monthly and the last half of the month is extremely difficult, especially five week months.

E. Where do I get the food?

1. A local church food drive
2. Second Harvest Food Bank
3. Contacting local grocery stores and food distribution centers

SECTION III

ORGANIZING A SUCCESSFUL PANTRY

While no food distribution program will ever duplicate another exactly. Successful distribution represents a community's unique response to the problem of hunger as it is felt locally. Whether a distribution serves clients who are predominantly senior citizens or young families; whether it accepts walk-ins, self-referrals, or sends volunteers out to visit homes, the following seven components are crucial to success.

1. A steering committee or organizing committee
2. Paid or volunteer staff
3. A site, materials and transportation
4. Food
5. Clients and referrals
6. Funds
7. Community outreach or public relations

THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Though one person's energy and commitment usually gets the ball rolling, community efforts require broad-based community involvement and support. Not only is there a great deal of work to be done, but there are also a great number of decisions to be made. Involving several churches and/or civic clubs in sponsoring one pantry has the added advantage of greater cost effectiveness. Including representatives from various public and private social service agencies will link your pantry with other members of the assistance network. Think, too, of the kinds of expertise the pantry may need to draw on and try to include people who will bring that knowledge or experience.

The basic functions of a steering committee are planning/policy making and resource raising. Sometimes those tasks are best accomplished by dividing into smaller working groups. Among other things, the steering committee will need to:

1. Conduct a needs assessment to determine who is hungry, what other agencies offer food assistance, and where the pantry should be located.
2. Mobilize the resources to find a location, recruit volunteers, raise seed monies, stock shelves and spread the word.
3. Set policies and operating procedures, determine the hours of operation and draft a budget.
4. Decide whether the pantry will operate under the sponsorship of a church or existing agency or whether it should incorporate and seek its own 501(c)(3) non-profit status.

STAFF

Committed volunteers hold the key to any pantry's success. Even those distribution programs which can afford to hire a pantry manager or coordinator rely heavily on the regular assistance of dependable volunteers to shop and pick up food, stock and maintain the pantry, prepare food boxes, assist with food and fund drives, and when applicable, do client intake and referral. On-site volunteers staff the pantry during regular hours. Home-based volunteers are on call during assigned hours and are prepared to go to the pantry or pay a needy family a visit. Youth groups, civic organizations, churches and senior citizens organizations are good sources of volunteers.

Whether a pantry hires for the position or chooses to remain a totally volunteer effort, having a coordinator is essential. Someone must take responsibility for day-to-day operations, scheduling, training and supervising volunteers, acting as liaison with the community, bookkeeping, compiling monthly reports and maintaining inventory control. The coordinator should be comfortable dealing with people directly and speaking before large groups. Organizing talents are invaluable, as are contacts within the local civic and church communities.

SITE, MATERIALS AND TRANSPORTATION

Most pantries are located in a low-traffic area of a church or neighborhood civic center where the rent and utilities are donated. Refrigeration is not essential, but the room(s) must be safe, sanitary and secure. Regular pest/rodent control is necessary, as is shelving to keep the food off the floor.

When searching for a location, consider its accessibility to the clients or referring agencies the pantry will serve. Consider, too, the need for a vehicle to transport food. Aside from office supplies, the materials most frequently used by pantries are grocery bags and small cardboard boxes. Asking a congregation to save these items can keep a pantry well supplied.

FOOD

Having a food bank located in your area can be invaluable to a pantry, but in order to stock and distribute a variety of well-balanced foods, pantries must also run occasional food drives and purchase foods as well. When several congregations support a single pantry, they frequently take turns passing the collection plate and putting out a receptacle for food donations. Other food drive ideas include raffles, hunger walks, bake sales, or poor man's suppers. Some pantries report that for food purchases they watch the local supermarket sales.

Content guides for food boxes should be posted in the pantry so that the boxes can be tailored to fit a family's size and needs (i.e.; infant formula for a baby), and pre-sorting the foods as they are stocked will save time later.

A simple inventory system which adds food as it goes on the shelves and subtracts it as it goes into emergency boxes will provide a check on the system and ensure that the food is going to those who need it.

For safety's sake, store food off the floor and away from the walls so pests won't have a place to hide and to protect the food from moisture. Segregate edible food from non-food items. Check cans for leaks, bulges, rust and big dents and when in doubt, discard suspicious items. Contact the local health department or food bank for training in food handling and safety.

CLIENTS AND REFERRALS

Pantries that are dependent on volunteer staff may want to have other agencies or churches to do all initial intake and referral work. In this instance, the pantry needs only to obtain basic information about the clients and their food needs for record keeping and statistical purposes. Referring agencies should be kept up to date on the pantry's procedures and hours of operations.

In some communities, the lack of referring agencies may necessitate a pantry's accepting self-referrals, walk-in clients, and/or further screening referrals from other kinds of agencies. In that case, the pantry must develop an intake procedure and determine who will be eligible, under what circumstances, and how frequently individuals can return for food.

It also becomes essential for the pantry to seek training for its volunteers in interviewing techniques, the use of intake forms and making referrals to other assistance agencies. (Because the goal of most pantries is to provide needy families with food for a short period of time, it is important that provisions be made to refer clients to other agencies for more permanent solutions to their needs.) The issue of personal safety should also be addressed in volunteer training sessions.

However it serves its clients, every pantry should keep records of who, why and how many it serves. These figures will document the causes and extent of the local hunger problem and will be invaluable in gathering support. Coordinating with other pantries will minimize abuse by repeat users.

FUNDS

Even an all volunteer pantry housed in a church will have a few bills to pay. Food is expensive, and neither telephone nor utility companies have been known to donate their services to anyone. Many other businesses will donate their services however, and many pantries never have to buy office supplies and equipment or pay for printing. The key to both raising money and getting donated services is simple: ASK! Talk up the pantry. Prepare a brief presentation that describes the people involved with the pantry (steering

committee members, volunteers and clients). Enthusiasm is infectious; tell people about the pantry and ask for their help. Today's "no" could be tomorrow's "yes" so don't give up.

Special events can be good money-raisers as long as they don't take more in the planning, staffing and staging than they add to the cash box. Pantries have made money holding bake sales, auctions, pot-luck dinners and much more.

As ongoing sources of support, however, churches have no equal. A \$6,000 annual budget breaks down to \$500 per month. Five churches taking monthly collections of \$100 each could support a pantry.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Public relations might best be described as an organized and systematic way of keeping a community informed. Before people will volunteer or give money to any program, they have to know about it. Here are a few tips:

1. Use statistics and anecdotes to bring the problem of hunger to life. Print brochures.
2. Provide supporting churches and civic clubs with brief updates for their Sunday bulletins and/or newsletters.
3. Cultivate the local media. Send regular public service announcements to the radio stations and local newspapers or when a special activity is planned.
4. Start a mailing list of the names of supporters, volunteers, donors and contacts.
5. Publish a monthly newsletter – nothing fancy or lengthy, just interesting and informative.
6. Unless they prefer anonymity, thank everyone publicly for anything they do. This can be done in the newsletter or in some special cases, through the local press.
7. Take pictures and put a slide show together.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A SUCCESSFUL LOCAL CHURCH FOOD DRIVE

1. Limit the dates of your Food Drive. Ten days to two weeks will hit most people's pay periods. Seasonal Food Drives can last up to one month. Concentrate community wide Food Drives for 2 days.

2. Announce your plans to conduct the Food Drive no more than one week in advance. Interest wanes if too much time lapses between announcement and collection. Explain the NEED for the Food Drive; i.e., ‘This year the church may experience a food shortage because much of the food usually available to us from distributors will be needed in flood relief efforts. **YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!** Have a direct impact on the lives of the homeless and poor this holiday season by contributing your canned or boxed food items, etc.’
3. Narrow the collection to specific categories, if possible. This eliminates waste and helps bring focus into the Food Drive. For example, soups, canned veggies or fruits, canned meats, etc.
4. Generate healthy competition between groups in your church.
5. Designate persons for pick-up and delivery of food to the drop-off point. Consider storage needs.
6. Know your scheduled delivery date and time. Be sure to deliver your food as scheduled so that it can be used at the time of need.
7. Please know that we appreciate every hour of time and every bit of effort that will go into your project. Without the help of individuals like you we could not begin to do the work of ministering to the homeless, poor and needy. You make all this a reality. **THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING YOUR DEEP INTEREST TO MOTIVATE YOU INTO ACTION!**

Remember the words of Jesus regarding our actions toward those in need: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”
Matthew 25:40

HOW TO ACCESS THE FOOD DEPOSITORY

Many communities have food depositories where food may be obtained on a per pound basis. The advantage to obtaining food from a depository is that your church can purchase more food for less money and have a greater variety of food to offer. For example, a box of cereal may cost a member \$3.00 at a store. If they would donate that money to purchase cereal from a food depository, as many as 25 boxes could be purchased for the same three dollars. That is an extra 24 boxes that could be distributed without any additional cost.

Most food depositories have requirements that must be met in order for your church to successfully gain access to their product. The following is a list of requirements and helpful “Food Language Tips” for your church to follow.

1. Be an established food center for six months.

Most depositories require that all agencies applying for membership be active in food distribution for at least six months. If you have been distributing food at holidays or on a monthly basis, you qualify as “established.” Even if you have only been distributing food during the holidays or as special needs arise, you can say you have an established pantry. When describing your food outreach program, make sure you state what you have done in the past and what you plan to do in the future.

2. Be self-supporting and able to provide your own food, money, and staffing.

- A. Food

Most agencies require that you have other sources of food. Keep outside donations of items coming in. Normally your food site will be inspected before admittance into the depository. Have your shelves filled when they come. There are several ways to obtain food donations.

1. Local food drives. Hand fliers out in your community asking for donations which will be picked up on a set date.
2. Ask your local food store for donations and for permission to set up a donation box in their store.
3. Ask other churches, clubs, organizations, or places of employment to sponsor food drives for the center.

- B. Money

The food from the depository is not free, so they will want to know how you plan to pay for your product. Through your local church budget and donations is an acceptable answer. Many times the depository will also have a program where volunteer hours by your church members or other groups can be applied to paying for up to half of the product you receive.

- C. Staffing

They will want to know who is going to run the program. The pastor or a member can be the coordinator and your members can volunteer their time transporting and sorting food. It can easily take a couple hours a week to sort and stack your product.

3. Distribute food to the community at large.

Most depositories require that service be given regardless of race, ethnic origin, religion, sex, age, or any group membership. That doesn't mean that the church is restricted in sharing the gospel, prayer or special Christian counseling with clients. You will need to establish guidelines of who you serve. (Example: certain part of town.)

4. Have established days and hours you are open to the community.

You need to have established hours of operation for your center. (Example: Monday 10:00 a.m. until noon) You may distribute food at other times of the week by referrals from members, or on an emergency basis.

5. Have written guidelines for accepting or refusing recipients.

- A. This is the time to determine which of the poor in your community will be helped. Set up a screening system that you can live with. Remember there are always people looking to take advantage of the system.

1. Income

Remember you are trying to help the needy, not people trying to stretch their paychecks. It is alright to help a middle-income family on an emergency basis, but a large percentage (above 85%) of the people you help should be low income. Months with five weeks are especially hard on families on food stamps and the elderly on fixed incomes.

2. How often a family may be served

Some people will put you on their list and visit as often as possible. Helping once every month is a good policy.

3. Identification requirements

Know who you are serving. Ask for identification. It may be good to also require two pieces of recently received mail to prove that the client lives in your service area. Most states require picture ID's or Driver's License. This is an excellent source for discovering fraud.

4. Need

It is very unlikely for a person who receives food stamps each month to need food early in the month. Try to identify why the person is in need so you can better assist them. Not all people are getting the government assistance they are entitled to. Sometimes you may need to refer them to a government agency. Keep a list of other agencies available for referral.

6. Have a separate locked storage facility with refrigerator/freezer space.

You need to have a designated dry food room with off the floor storage. Metal shelving units or wall lockers work very well. You need to have a separate refrigerator/freezer unit from the one your church kitchen uses. Thermometers need to be placed in the unit to monitor the temperature. Some depositories have loan programs for cold storage units.

7. Keep accurate records

Most depositories are funded by government programs or grants which require them to report records, such as the number of people served. You may also want these figures available to show what you are doing in your community.

- A. You need to record how many people you serve and their age, Social Security number and current address. (Sample included)
- B. Have an intake form or application. (Sample included)
- C. Establish a filing system.

We keep all our records confidential. We allow the depository to see that we have a filing system, but allow them to view actual records if requested to do so.

8. Food must **NOT** be sold.

- A. You may not charge, solicit dues, fees or donations from recipients of food. If they offer you money, tell them to send it to the church or provide a stamped church envelope for their convenience.
- B. You can ask your community for donations through a mail appeal or other drives.

By implementing these guidelines into your program, you will be well on your way to successfully gaining a valuable resource.

DEALING WITH THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)

Food banks that deal with USDA products usually have more strict guidelines than other food banks. USDA products are given to the food banks for distribution in their area as a supplement to other USDA programs. Since these food products are given for those living under the poverty level, USDA will inspect your distribution program for compliance with their guidelines. While dealing with government agencies can sometimes be confusing and difficult, the USDA has sought to streamline their guidelines and are not difficult to follow.

- 1. Name, address and SS number of principle recipient must be verified and accurate.
- 2. Ages and SS numbers of all members of a household must be verified and accurate.
- 3. Income from all sources (food stamps, SSI, SS, etc., adult or child) must be verified and documented.
- 4. Total income must not exceed USDA approved income/family number ratio brackets (See enclosed chart, page).
- 5. Total amount of USDA product distributed (measured in pounds).

6. Number of monthly visits for distribution.
7. At least once per year each family must be re-certified.

It is **important** to remember that USDA products can be distributed only once a month to any one household. However, if there is enough variety, USDA products can be divided into groups and distributed on different days (green beans, pasta, sauce and dry milk = one distribution day; peanut butter, dry beans, oatmeal, cheese = another distribution day).

Do not let this overwhelm you or your workers. It really is not that difficult and it is worth the USDA product received. Follow the enclosed USDA approved certification card (page) and it will minimize any anxiety in record keeping. This card was developed by Tim Burdshaw, Pastor of Benevolence Ministries, North Cleveland Church of God and approved by the Chief Inspector of USDA Food Distribution Programs, Nashville, Tennessee. Upon his recommendation, Second Harvest, Chattanooga Food Bank has distributed this card to their clients and use it themselves for family distribution.

If USDA products are not available in your area, call your local USDA office, Congressman or Senator and inquire about it. One well placed phone call can make the difference!

OTHER DECISIONS YOU WILL NEED TO MAKE

1. The geographical area your pantry will serve: Where is local need? How far away are other pantries?
2. The number of families you will help monthly: What is realistic in terms of your resources? How much time do committee members have to volunteer?
3. Your referral policy: Can you accept referrals from other hunger related groups? How many each month? What are other referral sources? Will you have enough food? Can we refer to other ministries or agencies?
4. The criteria that will be used to determine whom you serve: How often can someone receive assistance? Will you only help in emergencies or can you assist those with more chronic needs?
5. The method of distributing food: Will you distribute as need occurs or have regular distribution days? Do you want people to come to the pantry? Will you deliver to everyone or only to those without transportation?
6. Your hours of operations: Will there be certain times (for example, three mornings each week, or every afternoon) that someone in your group can be reached with requests to relay to those who distribute food? Will you have a designated distribution day?

7. The types of food you will provide: Will you only distribute dry and canned goods or can you include fresh and/or frozen items or non-foods? What do your facilities and budget allow?
8. If other local organizations will be encouraged to participate in your work: Can you benefit from more hands, more resources? Can you establish workable channels of communication? Can you focus on the work and not on differences?
9. By what means the pantry will be maintained: Are food drives enough? Is there an existing fund or will one be established?

SECTION IV

Operating a Pantry!

Malnutrition and hunger go hand in hand. Encourage the collection of wholesome foods as opposed to highly processed, expensive foods. Also encourage the collection of foods low in sugar or salt and high in nutrients or vitamins.

The following suggestions for stocking a food pantry may be useful as a guide for preparing emergency food boxes. Most pantries post this type of information for the benefit of their volunteers.

Packaging sizes and styles should be specific to the client population. Would you need to stock pop-top or tab-top cans? Are most clients single elderly persons, families, or transients with no cooking facilities? Consider, too, that some non-food items are necessary but expensive to your clients.

HOW TO DETERMINE WHAT GROCERIES TO DISTRIBUTE

The questions you ask the person requesting help will be a good source of information for determining his or her food needs.

Size and composition of family: How many people are in the household? Teenagers eat more than small children.

Special dietary needs: Diabetics should not have sugar-laden food. Elderly people may need some soft foods. Infants may need formula or baby food.

Living situation of person needing help: Is refrigeration available? Are cooking facilities working? Is the person intellectually challenged and only capable of preparing very simple meals?

Logistics: Will the person be walking, traveling by bus or by car? How much can he or she carry?

The kinds and amounts of food that you distribute will vary with your food supply. Make an effort to provide for well-balanced meals. Some groups include an information sheet suggesting recipes and menus that could be made from certain food items. For instance, creamed soup, rice and tuna together with a can of green beans could make a nice casserole.

Foods that are good sources of protein are important to have on hand. These include not only meat, eggs and fish (which generally are perishable), but also dried beans, peas and lentils. You can get a protein value equivalent to that of meat by combining grain products with peas, beans and lentils. Peanut butter is an excellent source of protein.

The best guideline is your own knowledge of meal planning and grocery shopping. Use your good common sense!

SUGGESTED FOODS TO STOCK IN FOOD PANTRIES

The following is a suggested guideline for the types of food to keep on hand in a food pantry:

Baby foods & infant formula	Canned meats or stews
Hot cereals, oats or grits	Milk (dry or evaporated)
Coffee & tea	Pancake mix
Cooking oils or solid shortening	Pasta (macaroni, spaghetti, etc.)
Cornmeal or cornbread mix	Peanut butter
Crackers	Potatoes (fresh, instant or canned)
Diet foods (low in sugar or salt)	Pork & beans
Dried beans, peas or lentils	Rice
Flour	Salt & sugar
Fruits (canned or dehydrated)	Soups (canned or dehydrated)
Honey, syrup or jelly	Spaghetti sauce or tomato sauce
Juices (canned or dehydrated)	Tuna or canned chicken
Mayonnaise, mustard or catsup	Canned vegetables

If refrigeration or freezer space is available, you can add:

Bread	Fresh fruits
Cheese	Fresh vegetables
Eggs	Frozen juices
Margarine	Meats, poultry or fish

Suggested Non-foods to Stock in Food Pantries:

Soap & shampoo	Diapers & sanitary napkins
Toothpaste & denture cleanser	Detergent & cleaning supplies
Toilet paper	Foil or film wrap

Have plenty of grocery bags on hand and some boxes. Bags with handles are better for people who will need to carry them for a distance. Grocery stores will usually donate these for advertisement value.

PREPARING EMERGENCY FOOD BOXES

The following is a suggested guideline for the amount of food to distribute from one person up to four people for a need of three days, using different food choices to show the variety of foods it is possible to use. Also, you should consider each family's specific needs such as baby food, diapers, special diet foods, etc.

One Person

1 loaf bread
1 jar peanut butter
1 jar jelly
1 can tuna or chicken
3 cans soup
1 can pork & beans
1 can stew
1 can ravioli
1 box macaroni & cheese
1 box cereal

Three People

1 loaf bread
1 jar peanut butter
1 jar jelly
6 cans soup
6 cans fruit
1 can juice
1 box cereal or oats
6 cans vegetables
1 lb. pasta or rice
1 box crackers
1 lb cheese
1 box tea
2 cans pork & beans
1 lb margarine
1 lb dry milk
1 can stewed tomatoes
3 cans meat, chicken or stew
1 box pancake mix
1 bottle pancake syrup

Two People

1 loaf bread
1 jar peanut butter
1 jar jelly
1 can tuna or chicken
4 cans soup
4 cans vegetables
2 cans meat or stew
1 can chicken & dumplings
1 lb spaghetti
1 jar spaghetti sauce
4 cans fruit
1 box cereal or oats
1 lb cheese
1 can evaporated milk

Four People

2 loaves bread
1 jar peanut butter
1 jar jelly
6 cans soup
6 cans fruit
1 can juice
2 boxes cereal or oats
6 cans vegetables
1 lb pasta
1 lb rice
1 box crackers
1 lb cheese
1 box tea
1 lb margarine
1 lb dry milk
1 jar spaghetti sauce
4 cans meat, chicken or stew
1 bottle cooking oil
5 lbs potatoes
1 doz eggs
1 lb flour
1 lb sugar
1 lb dried beans

MENU SUGGESTIONS

The USDA recommends the following guidelines for a well balanced meal.

1. Meat or Meat Alternative

Any combination of any of these items to give an equivalent in quantity to:

- 2 oz. lean meat, poultry or fish
- 2 oz. cheese
- 2 large eggs
- 8 oz. cooked dry beans or peas
- 4 tablespoons peanut butter

2. Vegetable and/or Fruit

Four servings per day of vegetables or fruit or both to equal a per serving total of:

- 4 oz. vegetables, fruits or fruit juices

3. Bread or Bread Alternate

Four servings per day of bread or bread alternate, or four servings of each of the following:

- 1 slice whole grain or enriched bread
- ½ hamburger bun, hot dog bun or English muffin
- 4 oz. cooked rice
- 4 oz. cooked macaroni, spaghetti or noodles
- 4 oz. breakfast cereal, oats or grits

4. Milk

Four servings per day of milk or milk alternate:

- 8 oz. milk
- 8 oz. pudding or custard
- 16 oz. cottage cheese
- 8 oz. yogurt

Basic suggested menus using this guideline are as follows:

Breakfast

2 eggs
fruit juice
2 slices toast
milk

Breakfast

pancakes w/syrup
fruit juice
milk

Breakfast

cereal w/milk
sliced fruit or cereal
milk

Lunch

1 can vegetable soup
2 slices cheese
1 orange
crackers
milk

Lunch

peanut butter sandwich
1 apple
milk

Lunch

tuna salad sandwich
1 apple
milk

Dinner
 canned stew
 tossed salad
 1 slice bread or toast
 tea or coffee

Dinner
 spaghetti w/meat sauce
 tossed salad
 green beans
 tea or coffee

Dinner
 cooked beans w/rice
 cooked carrots
 mixed fruit
 tea or coffee

Menu for Christmas & Thanksgiving Baskets

Quantity	Food Item
1 10-12 lb	Turkey
2 cans	Green Vegetables
2 cans	Yellow/Red Vegetables
2 cans	Soup
2 cans	Fruit
1 can	Cranberry Sauce
2 cans	Pork & Beans
1 loaf	Bread
1 pkg	Dessert
1 box	Crackers
1 box	Cereal
1 pkg	Instant Potatoes
1 pkg	Dressing
1 pkg	Pasta/Rice

SUGGESTIONS ON SAFETY FOR PANTRY VOLUNTEERS

PROPERTY SAFETY

1. Have a permanent sign on the pantry door indicating exact hours and days the pantry will give out food.
2. Have a wide-angle viewer installed in the door to the pantry. Before opening the door, be sure there aren't more people than you expected.
3. Have a dead bolt and chain on the main entrance of the pantry.
4. Have all windows bolted or nailed to prevent entrance by intruders.

PERSONAL SAFETY

1. Have one or two other people at the pantry during indicated hours the pantry gives out food. If alone, arrange the pick-up times when someone else will be with you at the pantry.
2. Never invite referrals or "walk-ins" to accompany you into the pantry. You do not want to be in an isolated place with an unknown person.
3. When speaking on the phone to those needing help, be cautious about telling them you are alone, or when you will be leaving the pantry. Give no indication of your routine arrival and departure times, or information about your home address, phone number, etc.
4. Call the police at the slightest infringement of your rights as a person. Give the police accurate information as to what is happening in order that they may respond rapidly. This is another good reason to work in pairs.
5. Whether you are at work or at home, always let someone know where you are going. Even if you live alone, leave a note, so that in case of an emergency, someone will know where to find you.
6. **NO MATTER HOW NICE OR INNOCENT A PERSON MAY APPEAR TO BE, NEVER TAKE ANY CHANCES WITH YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY!**

SECTION VI

KEEPING PANTRY RECORDS

Record keeping is important so that you can document how many people you are serving, who they are, how often they need help, and the reasons for hunger in your area.

SCREENING RECIPIENT CLIENTS

Screening potential recipients is also an important part of your work. Unfortunately, you may run across an unscrupulous person occasionally. You should be ready to effectively deal with the problem and not be discouraged in your work.

Ask people for the following basic information.

- Name, address, phone number, and social security number
- Number and ages of people in household
- Usual source of income and total amount from all sources
- Unusual circumstances (i.e.; broken stove or refrigerator)
- If anyone in the household is physically challenged or disabled
- Public assistance programs from which they receive help
- If special dietary needs are required by any family member
- The reason they are without food resources
- If they have been helped previously and by whom
- When their next financial assistance arrives
- The source of their referral to you

This information can be taken over the phone or in person. If you have criteria limiting eligibility, it is better if you tell people they are ineligible before they come in to pick up food. Check their identification to verify walk-in people. Refer to the SAMPLE INTAKE FORM as a guideline in compiling your initial information on the client.

Permanent Card Files

Basic permanent information can be recorded on an index card and arranged alphabetically in a file box. Record on the card the assistance provided and the date. Although documenting your program is important, peoples' names and specific information about their lives and problems should be confidential and accessible only to appropriate people. Refer to SAMPLE CLIENT PERMANENT RECORD CARD as a guide

Inventory Records

It is also important that you keep a simple inventory record so that you can keep up with monies spent in supplying your pantry as well as pounds distributed to the needy. Documenting your history will give you a foundation and guideline for future efforts. Refer to INVENTORY TRACKING SAMPLE FORM.

SAMPLE INTAKE FORM

NAME _____ DATE _____

ADDRESS _____ SSN: _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PERMANENT RESIDENT OF (city & state) _____

PHONE NUMBER (where client can be reached) _____

HAS CLIENT BEEN PREVIOUSLY HELPED? _____ DATE LAST HELPED _____

REFERRED BY: _____ PHONE _____

AGES OF ADULTS: M ___ F ___ M ___ F ___ M ___ F ___ TOTAL IN FAMILY _____

AGES OF CHILDREN: M ___ F ___ M ___ F ___ M ___ F ___ TOTAL IN FAMILY _____

IS ANYONE IN THE FAMILY PREGNANT? ___ DISABLED? ___ HANDICAPPED? ___

DOES CLIENT HAVE COOKING AND REFRIGERATION FACILITIES? _____

DOES CLIENT HAVE TRANSPORTATION? _____

REASONS FOR NEEDING ASSISTANCE:

- _____ Social Security check late, lost or stolen
- _____ welfare check late, lost or stolen
- _____ food stamps late, lost or stolen
- _____ waiting for food stamp approval
- _____ unemployed
- _____ new job / between jobs / laid off _____ how long? _____
- _____ just divorced, deserted, separated
- _____ illness / pregnant / accident
- _____ disaster victim (fire, flood, tornado, etc.)
- _____ out of money due to poor management
- _____ other _____ why? _____

HOW LONG WILL ASSISTANCE BE NEEDED? _____

USUAL SOURCE OF INCOME OR ASSISTANCE & AMOUNT:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| \$ _____ Food Stamps | \$ _____ VA Pension |
| \$ _____ Social Security | \$ _____ Retirement Income |
| \$ _____ Welfare Assistance | \$ _____ Unemployment Compensation |
| \$ _____ Friends or Welfare | \$ _____ Regular Employment Income |

COMMENTS: _____ NO SHOW _____ CANCEL

NOT SERVED _____ WHY? _____

SIGNED _____

FOOD RELEASE AGREEMENT

The food distribution program is a ministry to everyone in need of assistance with food.

We acquire foods from various sources that we believe to be reputable establishments. Perishable foods are kept under refrigeration and frozen foods are kept in freezers at all times.

We request that you examine the contents of these packages of foods and determine if they are still in good and usable condition. If you determine they have spoiled, please dispose of them. Since the foods are given free of charge to you, there is therefore no personal loss to you.

These foods are given to you in good faith and we will not be held responsible for any harm that comes from their misuse.

The undersigned acknowledges and agrees to the foregoing statement.

Recipient of Food

Date

Witness

Date

SECTION VI

FOOD RESOURCES

Your group may either purchase or seek food donations. Many groups use a combination of both, as this enables them to have a wider range of nutritious food available. Food can be donated by local merchants or in church and community food drives. It can be bought at low cost wholesale prices or in bulk.

DONATIONS

Businesses are often receptive to requests for support. Your group may have members who run businesses and would be willing to contribute a few cases of food or day-old baked goods. Some groups arrange for businesses to accept special coupons for meat and milk from people they help. If your group is registered with the federal government as a 501(c)3 tax exempt charitable organizations, donors can receive tax deductions for their donations following the guidelines set forth by the IRS.

FOOD DRIVES

A great way to kick off your pantry program is with a food drive. This makes people aware of your work and helps everyone feel a part of it. As the pantry begins to serve the needy, the witness of its good work can inspire continued support. A food drive can be connected with a social event or a religious service, in which a donation would be the “entrance fee” or an offering, or it can be directed outward to include the larger community.

A word of caution: be alert for damaged or rusted cans, or cans with bulged ends. They may contain contaminated food. Some people ‘clean house’ for a food drive. For more information on identifying potentially hazardous foods, contact your local city or county health department.

PURCHASES

Specifically needed items that are not usually obtainable through donations must sometimes be bought. You can get discounted food from many sources. Co-ops often have a special bulk buying rate for volume purchases. Farmers markets are a good source for fresh produce. Sometimes grocers or local restaurant owners can be persuaded to order a few extra cases of a needed food item and pass it along to you at cost.

OPERATION COMPASSION

Reply Form

Pastor's Name _____

Church Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone (_____) _____

Ministry Outreaches (Check all that apply.)

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Food Boxes: approximate number of families helped per month _____
Distribution schedule: (check one)
_____ daily _____ weekly _____ monthly _____ other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Holiday Food Boxes:
Thanksgiving: approximate number of boxes given _____
Christmas: approximate number of boxes given _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Holiday Hot Meals on site or delivered: approximate number of individuals
Thanksgiving _____
Christmas _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hot Meals on site or delivered: approximate number of individuals helped per
month _____
Distribution schedule: (check one)
_____ daily _____ weekly _____ monthly _____ other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Food pantry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Clothing pantry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Second hand store |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Outreach counseling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Homeless ministry |

I give my permission for Operation Compassion to provide my name to any person or organization who can provide me with support, material, donated goods, food, etc. for my relief ministries. I understand that this is not a commitment by Operation Compassion or me and I maintain the right to decline items offered at any time.

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SEND ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: PICTURES, ETC.