

Food Pantry Process

Below is a suggested process list for churches planning to launch an in-school Food Pantry for a public school. It's helpful to start initial planning two or three months before the launch date of the Food Pantry to allow time for volunteer recruiting, procurement and setup.

1. Work through the Be|Undivided "Prelaunch Planning" page (see Strategic Planning).
2. Meet with school contacts, working with them to find out their needs and how your resources and vision line up with theirs.
3. Start to fill key volunteer roles, beginning with the Food Pantry Director. The volunteer recruiting and training process will be an ongoing one parallel with all other steps.
4. Meet with church, Procurement Team (see *Strategic Planning for Volunteer Organization* document) and volunteers to develop a plan for stocking the Food Pantry.
5. Determine what resources will be required for shelving, refrigerating and otherwise storing food.
6. Develop partnerships with third parties for any desired donations, volunteers, connections, etc.
7. Begin resource procurement.
8. Set up the Food Pantry location.
9. Meet with school contacts again, finalizing rules and any referral requirements, and determine how communication with students about the Food Pantry will be established.
10. Open the Food Pantry with a limited referral scope for two or three weeks, in order to work out any potential problems.
11. After the timespan allotted for Step 10, communicate Food Pantry hours to the broader student community.
12. Open for business!
13. Maintain a clear communication cycle with the school about availability, hours, problems, student referrals, etc.

Food Pantry **Materials List**

Below are some ideas of goods and equipment that you may want to have available for your Food Pantry. Note that many, but not all, of the items are things that church members and the community could donate from their own kitchens and pantries. We recommend establishing a permanent donation site at your church for this purpose.

- Storage shelves to keep the food organized and off the floor
- Refrigerator to store perishable items and expand what you have to offer
- Microwave if you have items that need heating
- Food types (to be consumed at school):
 - Bagels and cream cheese
 - Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches
 - Individual cups of applesauce, fruit or veggies
 - Individual cups of soup and oatmeal
 - Instant noodles
 - Granola bars and healthy proteins
- Food types (to be taken home for families):
 - Peanut butter
 - Cereal
 - Canned vegetables
 - Canned fruit
 - Pasta
 - Canned spaghetti sauce and tomatoes
 - Rice
 - Canned chili and beans
 - Canned soup
 - Mac and cheese
 - Tuna or other canned meat
 - Frozen bread
 - Granola bars or other healthy snacks
 - Any available produce
- Can openers for homes without them
- Handcart for transporting deliveries
- Boxes or bags for customers to transport food
- Easy-to-read labels/signs for organization and customer ease (multilingual if applicable)
- Easy recipes that include preparation not requiring a stove

Food Pantry **Volunteer Positions**

Food Pantry Director

- Wants to alleviate the burden on schools and students, and to build an efficient and effective program.
- Duties:
 - Primary point of communication for the school's Site Coordinator re: the Food Pantry
 - Works with the Site Coordinator to promote the Food Pantry within the school, and to advertise volunteer and donation opportunities to the church
 - Depending on volunteer staffing structure, oversees and supports the work of the Food Pantry's Volunteer Coordinator and Inventory Coordinator
 - Is onsite during open hours until trusted volunteers are trained to manage things smoothly on their own
 - Works with the Site Coordinator to make sure the school stays updated and comfortable about this aspect of the partnership
 - *Optional:* Carries out the roles of the Volunteer Coordinator and Inventory Coordinator (below), if it is a combined position
- Skills needed:
 - Organization
 - Leadership
 - Inspiration
 - Positivity
- Hours required:
 - 10-15 hours/week (more at startup)

Volunteer Coordinator (optional position, depending on the scope of work; duties may be done by Food Pantry Director)

- Wants to support the Food Pantry and volunteers, and make things run smoothly with volunteer coordination in the project.
- Duties:
 - Works with Food Pantry Director to recruit and train volunteers
 - Ensures that onsite volunteers have had a background check run through the school
 - Manages the volunteer schedule
 - Makes sure that all volunteer timeslots are filled
- Skills needed:
 - Organization

- Leadership
- Inspiration
- Positivity
- Hours required:
 - 5-10 hours/week (more at startup)

Inventory Coordinator (optional position, depending on the scope of work; duties may be performed by Food Pantry Director)

- Wants to support the Food Pantry and volunteers, and make things run smoothly with inventory to create efficiency in the project.
- Duties:
 - Makes sure there are procurement people gathering the needed supplies
 - Makes lists of needed items for shoppers and procurement people to get or advertise for
- Skills needed:
 - Organization
 - Leadership
 - Positivity
- Hours required:
 - 5-10 hours/week (more at startup)

Open-Hours Volunteers

- Wants to help connect with and serve the people using the Food Pantry.
- Duties:
 - Is onsite during certain shifts
 - Helps students find the supplies that they need
 - Helps make people feel comfortable; connects with each person coming through
 - Stocks new deliveries
 - Makes sure the Food Pantry stays clean and in proper condition
- Skills needed:
 - Good with people
 - Welcoming
 - Willing to serve no matter who comes in
 - Nonjudgmental
 - Selfless
 - Organized
- Hours required:
 - 2-4 hours/week

Off-Hours Volunteers

- Wants to maintain a Food Pantry that is stocked and organized for the school and student body.
- Duties:
 - Sorts and organizes deliveries
 - Throws out unusable produce
 - Checks expiration dates and throws out expired goods
 - Helps maintain lists of needed goods
- Skills needed:
 - Knowledge of products offered
 - Ability to do laundry (access to a washer and dryer)
- Hours required:
 - Varies depending on donations

Procurement Team

The Procurement Team (see *Strategic Planning for Volunteer Organization* document) should be contacted and available to help obtain donations of equipment, food, etc.

Transportation Team

The Transportation Team (see *Strategic Planning for Volunteer Organization* document) should be contacted and available to help transport equipment, food and other goods as needed.

Food Pantry Additional Requirements

- **Financial:** The financial needs will be determined by whom you choose to serve (students, families, etc.) and how large the demand is in your area. How do we meet the financial needs of running a Food Pantry without being a drain on the church?
 - Procurement from businesses
 - Procurement from service organizations
 - Procurement from church attendees
 - Grants
 - See "Partnerships" section below
- **Facilities:** There are some realistic, nonnegotiable needs for space.
 - Storage: Food has to be stored somewhere. Is there an unused room or multiuse room that could be used, or could there be a mobile option like a van? Are you going to need electricity for refrigeration or microwaves? Some schools might even have an underused shop building or snack shack.
 - A fixed space is great because it does not have to be set up and taken down. The issue may be access. When can you get into the building, and who else has access?
 - Mobile options are more under your control for accessibility but have to be managed more for food safety. They also take setup management.
 - Distribution: Where will you distribute the food? Ideally, this would be the same place you use for storage.
 - Onsite at a school: Serving students during the school day ensures that you're able to target students through your food program, and eases distribution. It might also be possible to have open hours for families outside of school hours.
 - Portable: Mobile arrangements still allow you to serve students, but having students come to you presents some additional barriers.
 - Offsite/accessible location: This is helpful for serving families without causing unneeded embarrassment for their children. It's also easily expanded to increase the number of schools served. The downsides are that students and families have to travel to the Food Pantry location, and it's more difficult to serve students during the school day.
- **Transportation:** Whenever you are providing a product to customers, you have to transport that product. How will you get the food to your location?
 - Delivery: Some partner organizations may deliver to your location.
 - Pickup: If your church or other organizations you partner with collect food, you can create easy volunteer opportunities by having a team who drives, when needed, to where the donations are being

collected and deliver them to your site. (See *Strategic Planning for Volunteer Organization* document)

- **Purchasing:** If you have collected money or gift cards to purchase food, you can create another easy volunteer opportunity by having a team go shopping and deliver the food to your location.
- **Partnerships:** Many organizations have a heart to serve hungry students and their families. Partnerships multiply your ability to serve. Who can you partner with?
 - Local businesses
 - Clubs (Rotary, Elks, etc.)
 - Other churches
 - Other local food pantries
 - PTA

Food Pantry

General Information & Resources

General Considerations

- **Summer/winter breaks:**
 - Will you offer services when the school is on a break?
 - Are facilities available?
 - Will you offer premade food boxes that can last for the duration of the break?

- **Important relationships to build:**
 - Social services director
 - Counselors
 - Principal
 - Custodian
 - Teachers and others referring students to the pantry
 - Office staff

- **Distribution:**
 - Who gets food? This can largely be determined by the quantity you have available and the limits the school may have. Here are some ideas:
 - Any student can come a certain number of times a year
 - A teacher or staff member can refer any student
 - Any student on the free or reduced lunch program
 - Any student
 - Any family with school-age children in the district
 - When can food be distributed? This is largely determined by your volunteer availability, food availability and school rules. Here are some ideas:
 - During school hours
 - After or before school
 - Certain days a week or month

- **Deciding open hours:**
 - Determine student need:
 - Are students receiving free or reduced lunch? Is that program adequate for their needs? (Older students and athletes may require additional calories.)
 - Are there students who are undernourished for breakfast or after school? Are there other programs filling those needs?
 - Are there students whose families are in a situation of food insecurity?
 - Determine school needs:

- Does the school have rules on when students can receive food? Do they have requests about how food be made available to students? This is a question your school contact can answer.
 - Determine volunteer availability:
 - When can you mobilize volunteers? This will determine if you can have availability before, during or after school.
- **Making adjustments for school rules, desires and requests:**
 - As the school sees the potential in what you are offering, they may request more options. It's important to manage that relationship by saying "yes" when you can and knowing your limitations. Every school is different, and every expression of a church–school partnership is different. Keep focused on your mission while being flexible on how to get there, and keep communication flowing.
 - As you implement new strategies, the school may see new liabilities. Treat all school input with respect, and allow it to inform planning.
- **Communicating to students:** How will the students know that you are there? Here are some ideas to talk through with your school contact:
 - School-wide announcements
 - Teacher/staff referral
 - Counselor referral
 - Letter home to parents (all parents or free/reduced lunch program participants)
 - Word of mouth

Mistakes to Avoid

- **Only stocking non-nutritious items:** *Make sure there are plenty of healthy options for growing kids.*
- **Not locating good community sources of fresh fruits and vegetables:** *Local co-ops, urban farms, farmers markets and grocery stores are all potential sources of produce donations.*
- **Leaving expired goods on the shelves of the Food Pantry:** *A weekly inventory system can be helpful.*
- **Going it alone:** *A partnership can help ensure the success of a school-based Food Pantry, and ease the burden on all parties supporting it.*

Resources Below

Sample Donation Receipt

Roosevelt High School

**Thank you for your generous donation
in support of Roosevelt High School!**

No goods or services were received in exchange for this donation.
Donated items were not reimbursed.

NAME OF DONOR: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

TYPE OF CONTRIBUTION: _____

DONOR ESTIMATION OF THE FAIR MARKET VALUE OF GOODS:

DESCRIPTION OF GOODS:

ESTIMATED VALUE:

_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____

TOTAL VALUE: \$ _____

Roosevelt High School Tax ID #: [REDACTED]

For further information, please contact [REDACTED] at (503) [REDACTED]