



**FOOD BANK**  
*of* **ALASKA**

**Partner Agency**  
**Policies and Procedures Manual**

2019



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Closed most major holidays

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## *WELCOME!*

Food Bank of Alaska (FBA) welcomes you to our food bank family. Your agency will play an important role in finding community-based solutions to hunger. We look forward to working with you in our joint efforts to alleviate hunger in our community.

The purpose of this manual is to orient you to Food Bank of Alaska. It will also be your guide to complying with all of FBA's policies and partnership requirements. Please make sure that all individuals who will be participating in your food distribution program familiarize themselves with the content within this manual and continue to use it as a point of reference as needed.

Food Bank of Alaska reserves the right to change any of the policies described in this manual at any time. All agencies will have access to updated versions of the manual. Contact our Agency Relations Coordinator for the most recent version.

## *OUR MISSION*

Food Bank of Alaska is dedicated to eliminating hunger in Alaska by obtaining and distributing food to partner agencies feeding hungry people and through anti-hunger leadership. We believe that no one deserves to be hungry. We accomplish this by soliciting, collecting, and rescuing food for distribution through a network of social service agencies and programs; and through public awareness, education and community advocacy. We find creative solutions to hunger and its underlying causes, and we believe a responsive food bank includes programs that help people help themselves. FBA collects surplus edible food from the food industry, which includes food processors, manufacturers, hunters, fishermen, farmers, retailers and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). We also collect food from the community in the form of food drives or direct donations. FBA does not distribute food directly to individuals; we make the food available to our nonprofit partner agencies at a nominal handling fee or free. We provide the following services for our partner agencies:

- Collection, storage, and distribution of USDA commodity, donated, and purchased products.
- Cooperative food purchase program (Co-Op).
- Anti-hunger leadership and advocacy.
- Food safety education.
- Delivery and shipment of products to rural communities.
- Collaborative projects such as Thanksgiving Blessing and Neighborhood Gift.
- The Mobile Food Pantry, in which food is distributed at several sites in Anchorage each week.
- Sponsorship of meal sites for children through SFSP (Summer Food Service Program) and CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program)
- Collection and dissemination of information on hunger and poverty in Alaska.

## *OUR PARTNERS*

FBA partners with over 150 organizations that provide food to individuals in need throughout Alaska. Partner agencies include soup kitchens, food pantries, meal sites for seniors and children, homeless shelters, child care centers, rehab centers and tribal governments. It is our goal to provide food and customer service to our partner agencies so that they can concentrate on what they do best—providing food to hungry Alaskans.

## *OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES*

Food Bank of Alaska has developed a variety of innovative programs to address hunger and food security in Alaska. From addressing childhood hunger to providing food assistance for seniors, people with disabilities, the working poor and the unemployed, we are committed to providing programs and services to meet the needs of diverse populations.

### **FOOD DISTRIBUTION NETWORK**

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Making food easily available to the people who need it is at the core of our commitment to serve. Donated food and commodities are distributed through emergency food pantries, meal sites, shelters, and non-emergency programs. This state-wide network of providers, many of them volunteers, is on the front lines serving families in need.

### **DONATED FOOD**

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As a member of Feeding America, Food Bank of Alaska receives both local and national donations of food and non-food items. A majority of the food we receive is not sold on the market due to overproduction, cosmetic damage, or nearing code date but is still deemed safe to eat. We also receive a great deal of nonperishable items from local food drives and fresh produce from local produce companies.

### **COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM (CSFP)**

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CSFP is a federal nutrition program designed to help vulnerable seniors by providing a box of nutritious, shelf stable food each month. Clients must be 60 years or older and meet certain income requirements. CSFP agencies are responsible for distribution of monthly food boxes and monthly reporting to FBA as well as programmatic record keeping. For more information on becoming a CSFP agency, please contact Sandra Mitchell at 907.222.3104.

### **MOBILE FOOD PANTRIES**

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When Food Bank of Alaska receives donated perishable food such as fruits and vegetables, it is often close to the end of its life. With the support of our community partners, FBA maintains a truck for distribution of highly perishable food to several locations in Anchorage each week. Our Mobile Food Pantry distributes this food to families in need while it's still good. Families especially appreciate having the healthy produce and dairy products that they often can't afford at the store.

## THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TEFAP)

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TEFAP is a federal commodity program that offers monthly supplemental food to eligible households. For more information on becoming a TEFAP agency, please contact FBA's Director of Food Programs at 907.222.3109.

## SNAP OUTREACH

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Food Bank of Alaska's SNAP Outreach team visits sites where low-income people congregate to provide information about SNAP (formerly the Food Stamp Program) and to help clients fill out and submit applications. We also provide assistance with recertification. This equates to a return of millions of dollars in federal dollars to our local economy, while ensuring that families and children have more access to nutritious food. Ask about hosting a SNAP outreach event or for more information about volunteering to conduct SNAP outreach at your site.

## SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM

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FBA, with the State of Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, acts as a sponsor for child and youth summer feeding sites throughout Alaska. SFSP provides federal reimbursement to organizations that are providing meals and snacks to low-income children and youth during the summer months. FBA will partner with sites to handle the administrative duties, coordinate with food vendors, and provide training to sites. Partner sites provide staff to record and distribute meals and help coordinate with FBA any other local support that may be needed.

## *ADVOCACY*

Why should anti-hunger agencies advocate for federal nutrition programs? Because we can't feed everyone by ourselves! We need the government programs to help provide nutrition assistance.

The goal of the FBA advocacy program is to make sure that Alaskans have maximum access to all the federal nutrition programs. These programs are authorized and funded by the federal government and managed and administered at the state and local levels. In Alaska, these programs include:

- CSFP (Commodity Supplemental Food Program)
- FDPIR (Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations)
- SFSP (Summer Food Service Program)
- SNAP (Formerly Food Stamps)
- TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)
- CACFP (Child & Adult Care Food Program)

Our local, State, and Federal leaders face tough choices around policies and budgets. Decision-makers need to consider the impact of their decisions on low-income Alaskans who face tough financial choices every day. If no

one tells them otherwise, they can easily have an inaccurate understanding of the nature and extent of hunger. Be a voice for your neighbors that are struggling to get by and tell our leaders their stories.

Everyone can be an Advocate! Here are a few things you can do to get started. For more information contact the Director of Public Engagement at 907.222.3113.

- Sign up for “Advocacy Alert” emails ([info@foodbankofalaska.org](mailto:info@foodbankofalaska.org))
- Invite your State legislators to visit your program.
- Contact our congressional delegation by phone, email or in person about the importance of federal programs.
- Collect stories. You know hungry people; make their stories come alive.
- Help set up a feeding site in your community where children can get nutritious meals during the summer, afterschool programs, and school holidays.
- Hold a food stamp clinic for your clients ([snap@foodbankofalaska.org](mailto:snap@foodbankofalaska.org))

### *OUR NETWORK*

Food Bank of Alaska is a member of Feeding America, the nation’s food bank network. Feeding America connects over 200 food banks in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The Feeding America network secures and distributes more than 2.5 billion pounds of donated food and grocery products annually.

### *THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOOD BANK OF ALASKA AND PARTNER AGENCIES*

Food Bank of Alaska establishes and maintains relationships with local social service agencies and programs to distribute food. These agencies, such as yours, are called Partner Agencies. To become a Partner Agency, you must apply, meet certain criteria, and maintain regulatory standards and requirements. Food Bank of Alaska establishes a contract, called the Partner Agency Agreement, which allows you to receive the food that flows through the system, as outlined below.

### *FOOD BANK OF ALASKA PARTNER AGENCY ELIGIBILITY*

All FBA Partner Agencies must be non-profit organizations under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. If you do not have a 501(c)3 letter of exemption, your group may be sponsored by an organization which holds a 501(c)3 letter of exemption. Most importantly, the main function of the agency must be to provide services and resources to low-income people, or to the care of the ill, needy or infants (minor children under the age of 18), without a fee of any kind charged to them for the food. Food may never be sold. All food accessed from Food Bank of Alaska must be used in conjunction with such a mission. Aside from the distribution of food, potential Partner Agencies must agree to meet all IRS requirements including maintaining records of donated products

received and distributed; must adhere to policies regarding the receipt, storage and distribution of donated foods; and allow affiliate representatives to conduct on-site monitoring visits to ensure compliance with these policies. For details about this please see your Partner Agency Agreement.

## OPEN ACCESS

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FBA believes in making food assistance available to all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability, or any other distinguishing characteristic. This philosophy of open access guides our service ethic of treating all people with dignity and respect. All agencies must engage in this same ethic, by ensuring that food assistance programs are open, welcoming, and sensitive to the needs of diverse clients. An agency's commitment to this ethic will be evaluated as part of the application process and on an on-going basis.

## FOOD PANTRIES

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In order to be considered for partnership, food pantries must meet several criteria;

**Accessibility:** Food pantries must have at least two standard distribution days per month. No "on-call" only or "emergency" only pantries will be accepted as members. Pantries located in churches or other places of worship must be open to the general public and cannot be limited to church members. Also, church pantries must ensure that clients will not be expected to attend service or join the church in order to receive food.

**Donations:** Pantries may accept voluntary donations from clients but may not actively encourage or ask for donations. In fact, any donation jar or box should be located away from the pantry or intake area to avoid the appearance of active solicitation.

**Distribution:** All pantries are highly encouraged to be "Client Choice" meaning that clients are given the opportunity to choose the items they need instead of receiving a pre-packed bag of items chosen by a pantry volunteer. If you are not able to accommodate a full "Client Choice" pantry, think of offering a "swap" table or other ideas that may help to provide a more personalized approach for your clients. FBA can provide you with ideas to get you started.

All FBA partner agencies are expected to follow regulations established by Feeding America related to proper handling, storage and distribution of donated product. Additionally, FBA has developed its own specific policies to ensure partner agency accountability as well as fair and equitable distribution of product throughout our service area.

## PRIORITY OF SERVICE

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Our new priority of service plan related to product distribution categorizes each agency based upon criteria established by the Food Bank of Alaska. This allows us to determine the best way to fairly and equitably distribute our purchased and food drive product throughout our service area. By utilizing the numbers that you as an agency provide to us through your Request for Partnership, the annual poundage that your agency receives, your interest in providing additional services to your clients (i.e. SNAP), your answers provided on your agency assessment, your account history, and whether or not you are an emergency food provider vs. a non-emergency food provider, we have separated our active agencies into four categories. These categories will determine the amount of purchased product and food drive product that your agency can access in our warehouse. In addition, it also places credit limits on agencies based upon current payment and spending habits. Please remember that you are asked to pay every 30 days based upon the invoices that were accrued throughout the month. Once you have reached your credit limit, you will no longer be able to purchase products. In addition, if you are currently in the

Yukon group for example and you fail to submit reports on a timely manner, or make payments on a regular basis, you will be moved to the Tanana group which will reduce your ability to access the amount of product that best meets your needs. Conversely, if an agency is showing consistent growth, we have the ability to move them “up”, allowing them to access more product and better serve their client base.

## FBA PARTNER AGENCY APPLICATION PROCESS

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The first step to becoming a Partner Agency of FBA is to complete a Request for Partnership packet. Packets are available from the Agency Relations Coordinators or online and are accepted during October and November of even years. Complete all parts of the application and include supporting documents with your application. Applications are evaluated based on the agency’s capacity to handle food and serve people, whether the agency’s activities will fill an identified gap in the service network, whether the agency’s activities will enhance or duplicate other agencies’ efforts, and FBA’s inventory supply. The Agency Relations Coordinator or Director of Food Programs may perform a site evaluation to help determine any of these criteria.

After the RFP period has ended, we will contact all applicants to apprise them of the status of their application; usually the following February. Upon approval, you will be asked to sign agreements with Food Bank of Alaska which describes the policies, procedures, and responsibilities of your agency and FBA regarding your food distribution program. You will also need to attend Food Safety and Warehouse Orientation prior to your first shopping appointment.

## *ORIENTATION, TRAINING, MEETINGS AND COMMUNICATION*

### AGENCY ORIENTATION

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We require Partner Agency orientation sessions for all new and existing Partner Agencies whose staff or volunteers are new to utilizing FBA's services. These are required for any volunteer or agency employee who distributes food, intakes clients, or prepares monthly reports. Periodic attendance is also encouraged and may be required of agencies that may benefit from a "refresher course" such as when staff or volunteers turn over. Orientation sessions are held on monthly.

### AGENCY TRAINING & ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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FBA offers classes and related materials to Partner Agencies on various topics that will help them accomplish goals in their communities including community development and awareness, volunteer recruitment, how to hold a food drive in your community, and advocacy (how to become a voice in your community for those who are hungry and in need). FBA hosts an Annual Partner Agency Conference with training and advice on a variety of topics pertinent to food distribution programs. Partner agencies are strongly encouraged to attend these conferences.

## MEETINGS

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Meetings are held semi-annually depending on the program the agency participates in. For example, we have a Mobile Food Pantry meetings twice a year for partners who operate mobile food pantries. We also hold an annual agency conference in the fall at the BP building. While these meetings are not mandatory, they offer an opportunity to share information related to FBA's inventory, other community resources, and updates to forms and policies.

## COMMUNICATION

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FBA Partner Agencies are required to have the capacity to communicate by email or fax. Agency Relations staff rely on email communication to let partners know about recalls, holiday closures or other information that needs to be disbursed widely. Food Program staff work to return emails and phone calls within one business day, but please note that they are required to be away from the office at site visits and other FBA business that may not allow rapid response.

## *ACCESSING AND PURCHASING FBA PRODUCTS*

### **What is Shared Maintenance?**

**We do not charge an annual or monthly membership fee. However, as a partner, each agency agrees to contribute to the ongoing support of FBA operations. Currently, FBA asks for up to 19¢ per pound shared maintenance fee on all donated products. This fee offsets a small portion of the acquisition, storage and distribution costs of donated food.**

## USDA COMMODITIES/TEFAP

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USDA commodity food is government surplus food provided through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). It is intended for distribution to agencies who serve those with emergency food needs. There are federal regulations regarding its handling, use, and reporting. They are distributed proportionately to agencies, based on the number of people the agency serves each year. The USDA/TEFAP commodities have specific ordering and handling requirements. Please be familiar with them by reading your USDA/TEFAP manual.

## COOPERATIVE FOOD PROGRAM

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Food donations sometimes do not meet the needs of clients served by FBA partners. At times, FBA can purchase many items in bulk and make them available to our partners at a reduced price. This enables agencies to obtain these items for far less than the normal retail price.

## INACTIVE STATUS

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If you do not access food for a 3-month period, FBA will consider you inactive. You will also receive a letter notifying you of this status. To regain your access to food products, please contact the Agency Relations Coordinator.

## PAYMENT

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Agencies are encouraged to pay their shared maintenance fees at the time that food is accessed from FBA. However, agencies are permitted to keep an account of the maintenance fees they accrue each month. Invoices indicating fees are provided at the time of distribution, with the exception of Valley distribution invoices. Valley distribution invoices are sent out with the monthly statements. Invoices are also available upon request. Statements are mailed out at the end of each month to agencies carrying a balance. *All fees are due by the last day of the month following the month in which each invoice was issued.* In cases of agencies with overdue accounts, FBA reserves the right to inactivate, place on product hold, or require agencies to maintain a “pre-pay” status.

FBA will only accept checks from the account of the partner agency. No personal checks from individuals will be accepted. A fee of \$25.00 will be assessed for any checks returned by the bank for insufficient funds. If a check is returned, the agency will not be permitted to access additional food until the balance, including the returned check fee, is paid. A second returned check will cause the agency to be put on a “pre-pay” status and carry a credit balance on their account.

FBA will accept agency credit cards. The credit card must be imprinted with the agency name and must be made in person at the FBA front office. We do not accept cash.

FBA expects that all members maintain current account balances i.e. no more than 30 days past due. Our hope is to prevent agencies from accruing excessively large balances that will be difficult to pay down and identify agencies in need of assistance with fundraising and/or grant writing skills. Agencies with outstanding balances will receive a reminder phone call after 60 days. Agencies with accounts over 90 days past due will be made temporarily inactive until some kind of payment is received or a payment plan is created in collaboration with our CFO.

## WAREHOUSE RULES AND GUIDELINES

### ORIENTATION:

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Prior to accessing food for the first time, each authorized shopper of an agency must receive a warehouse safety orientation. Orientations are held on the second Monday of the month at 2pm. All authorized shoppers are required to sign the Warehouse Safety Policy Acknowledgment prior to shopping at FBA for the first time. It is the agency’s responsibility to ensure that shoppers have attended orientation and have been approved. Failure to communicate changes in staffing will result in denial of shopping to unapproved staff members. Please report all staffing changes to the Agency Relations Coordinator.

### SHOPPING PROCESS

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Agency Room- The warehouse has a room in which authorized individuals can select individual food items. The food found in the agency room tends to be “loose” individual items collected from food drives and retail donations.

Agency Cooler and Freezer- the Anchorage warehouse has a cooler and freezer in which authorized individuals can select individual food items. The food found in the agency cooler and freezer is typically not listed on the pick list and typically comes from retail and community donations.

The warehouse occasionally has non-food items available for authorized individuals to access. This product can typically be found in the agency room.

At times the FBA will have cases of items must be purchased as a case and not as individual items. These cases will be clearly marked, and in a designated area. Please ask FBA warehouse staff before opening any closed cases. Also, there may be items available to partner agencies outside of the agency room, cooler and freezer. Please ask an FBA staff member before accessing product outside of these areas.

## GOVERNMENT COMMODOTIES

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The warehouse has aisles, freezers, coolers, and pallets that hold items used for government food programs per USDA regulations. All items found in the racking at FBA is government food. These items are clearly marked “Do Not Touch” and are labeled for each program. It is the agency’s responsibility to ensure shoppers understand and comply with posted signs.

## SHOPPING APPOINTMENTS

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Here are some basic rules you must adhere to for appointment shopping:

- You must give 48 hours’ notice if you are unable to make your appointment. Canceling your appointment does not guarantee that you will be rescheduled; you may have to wait until your next appointment time.
- Failure to show up for two appointments will result in your agency being removed from the shopping schedule and an appointment must be made through one of the Agency Relations Coordinators.
- You have up to 30 minutes to pick products and 15 minutes to check-out and load your vehicle.
- Unapproved shoppers will not be allowed to take product from the warehouse.
- Failure to follow the appointment shopping procedure consistently could result in an agency being placed on probation status.

## PICK-UP AND SHOPPING HOURS:

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Monday - Friday 9am-12pm

The warehouse is a busy place! When you are here, we ask that you please abide by the following rules and guidelines.

- Come only at your designated pickup and/ or shopping time. If you cannot make your scheduled time and day, you must reschedule in advance with your Agency Relations Coordinator.
- Two people maximum per agency in the warehouse. You may have additional people out on the dock helping to load your vehicle if needed.
- No children are allowed in the warehouse. The warehouse is a dangerous environment. Be very alert. Never go near a moving forklift.
- Once your vehicle is loaded, please move it so others may load. If you have business in the building, please move your vehicle to the front parking area away from the dock.
- Bring adequate help to load. Warehouse staff does not always have manpower to help load your product.
- If you have a spill or notice a spill, please immediately bring it to the attention of a staff person.

Please remember that your agency is part of a network of food assistance across Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley, and that each partner agency has a similar desire to help their clients. Take only what you can distribute and be courteous to other shoppers. If you have a problem with other shoppers, please let your Agency Relations Coordinator or the Warehouse Manager know about it.

## *REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION*

### CLIENT SURVEYS

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Periodically, surveys are conducted to determine the circumstances and needs of a representative sampling of food recipients. Partner Agencies are asked to distribute the survey to their recipients, collect all surveys, and return them to FBA in a timely manner.

### OTHER SURVEYS AND REQUESTS

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We rely on agencies to respond to other requests for information or for administering special surveys. These requests may be in response to changes in federal policy, such as the SNAP program or a need for a snapshot of agencies' specific resources such as volunteer or storage capacity. Information gathered can assist FBA and policymakers in decisions about resources, policy positions or new roles or tasks for the food bank.

### RECORD KEEPING

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Agencies need to keep certain documents on file at the agency: The following is a list of these documents:

- Keep receipts of all foods received from FBA going back three years.
- Keep records of all foods donated to the program. A receipting process that meets the requirements of the Partner Agency Agreement should be in place for all public donations.
- Keep a log of refrigerator/freezer and dry storage temperatures and pest control inspections.

### MONITORING

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Feeding America requires all Food Banks to monitor partner agencies once every two years at minimum, just as the Food Bank itself is monitored in the same fashion by Feeding America. The Food Bank of Alaska has determined that it is in our best interest, as well as our partner agencies, that we perform monitor visits at a minimum, annually. The main purpose of the monitor visit is to ensure that the high sanitation and safety standards we are committed to are upheld throughout the network, from the point of donation to the time the product is placed in the hands of the individual who will use it.

Other objectives include:

1. Verify that agencies are in compliance with FBA membership agreements especially related to food storage and record keeping.
2. Provide agencies with technical assistance and resources on distribution methods, record keeping, nutrition, food safety, etc.
3. Increase and improve communication between FBA and Partner Agencies.

It is critical that member agencies not view monitor visits as the FBA trying to “catch” them in the process of doing something wrong. We believe that monitor visits can help strengthen the collaborative relationship between the FBA and partner agencies. They give agencies and our staff the opportunity to brainstorm and fine-tune the food distribution programs as professionals in an increasingly complicated field. In addition, monitoring provides an opportunity for coaching and learning between us and our partner agencies.

All monitoring visits are scheduled in advance with the full knowledge and cooperation of an authorized agency representative. Staff will try to accommodate the agency's schedule as much as possible by conducting monitoring visits in the evening or on weekends if necessary.

Once at the agency's facility, our staff will review the following:

1. All food and/or food preparation areas.
2. FBA invoices- All invoices must be signed and kept on file at your site from one monitor visit to the next.
3. Food Safety certifications and any applicable permits.

During the monitor visit, the agency will also have the opportunity to comment on the services provided by FBA, ask questions, and request materials or technical support in specific areas.

After the monitor visit, the agency will receive a copy of the completed monitor visit for their files. If any areas of improvement were noted during the visit, a letter will be sent to the agency after the visit is completed requesting an action plan to address the issues or concerns. If an agency is found to be in violation of any major Feeding America, or FBA guidelines, they may be temporarily suspended until corrections are made and a follow-up visit will be scheduled.

The following infractions could result in suspension:

- Evidence of selling product or requiring payment in exchange for product.
- Missing or unaccounted product when comparing invoices to distribution patterns.
- Hazardous food storage practices including leaking or humid basements, rodent infestations, extremely outdated products.
- Storing products in personal residences.
- Unsanitary food preparation practices including defrosting meats on counters, staff/volunteers not wearing gloves or hair restraints, etc.
- Failing to serve clients, or turning clients away without just cause.
- Requiring clients to participate in religious services

### *SUSPENSION, TERMINATION, AND APPEALS POLICY*

FBA's Suspension, Termination, and Appeals Policy describes what may happen if an agency is found to be out of compliance with the rules or policies of FBA or Feeding America, or not fully meeting the conditions of the Partner Agency Agreement. You may be asked to correct any areas that are out of compliance within 30 days. If the violation isn't corrected, or if the violation is very serious, you may be placed on suspension for up to 90 days. During the suspension period you will not be able to access food products. FBA's Chief Executive Officer or designee also has authority to terminate a partner agency at any time. You may appeal the decision as described in the policy, which is included as an appendix of your Partner Agency Agreement.

If at any time an agency disagrees with a decision or determination regarding their partnership status, they may file a formal grievance with the Food Bank of Alaska. Agencies may submit a written grievance addressed to the Chief Executive Officer including the reason for the grievance, pertinent facts, and what the agency believes

would be an acceptable solution to the problem. The agency will receive a written response from the Food Bank of Alaska within ten working days of the Chief Executive Officer's decision.

## *FOOD SOLICITATION POLICY*

The following Food Solicitation Policy exists to ensure that FBA Partner Agencies have access to the food resources they need and to maintain the equitable distribution of food throughout the network.

### FOOD DONORS

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Partner Agencies are discouraged from soliciting food donations from current, national retail chains as it creates an overlap of service.

FBA will not solicit food donations from current Partner Agency donors if doing so is likely to diminish the food resources of that Partner Agency.

FBA will keep Partner Agencies apprised of the status of these food donor relationships, working to ensure donor partnerships serve FBA and our Partner Agencies in the most effective manner.

### FOOD DRIVES

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Partner Agencies are welcome to plan and execute food drives which generate up to 1,000 pounds within a fiscal year. We suggest that any food drive that is expected to generate over 1000 pounds be coordinated with the FBA Food Drive Coordinator. This helps to ensure that the food drive will not diminish FBA's food resources or conflict with a food drive that FBA has planned.

Rural pantries are welcome to plan and execute food drives of any size. In rural communities, Partner Agencies that are not pantries are encouraged to coordinate their food drive efforts with their local pantry to ensure that they are not competing for the same resources as the pantry.

FBA will continue to work hard to collect food that will be distributed throughout the entire network.

## *DISTRIBUTION OF DONATED FOOD TO VOLUNTEERS*

The distribution of food to volunteers as a reward for their efforts and as encouragement to continue involvement as a volunteer is not allowed. This practice, whether the volunteer meets the income guidelines for eligibility for services or not, is considered compensation for the volunteers' labor and changes the status of the volunteer to employee. *Compensation offered to employees must meet wage and hour guidelines and is taxable.*

Rewarding volunteers with donated food violates our agreement with donors that the donated products will not be used for trade, sale or barter. The only acceptable uses of donated food in relation to volunteers is very limited tasting and testing to see if food is still palatable, or if the food might otherwise need to be discarded. The key is to ensure that this is not a regular occurrence or expected distribution for the benefit of volunteers. Additionally, volunteers at meal sites are allowed a "shift meal" if the meal is taken at the same time and in the same manner as clients. *It is not allowable to set food aside for volunteers to be eaten later or taken home.* If a volunteer is eligible for the services that your agency provides, the volunteer must receive their food in the same manner and at the same time as all other clients.

## *DISTRIBUTION OF DONATED FOOD TO OTHER AGENCIES*

Generally, the goal is for Partner Agencies to distribute all food received from FBA. There may however be an occasion when you are unable to distribute all the food you have received. With prior FBA approval, you may redistribute food to another FBA Partner Agency. Once food has been transferred between Partner Agencies once, it may not be transferred on to another agency. All food transfers must be tracked, logged, and kept on file.

## *EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDERS*

Agencies must make FBA products available to all needy individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. All Partner Agencies must operate in full compliance with all provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Posters or signs regarding this policy must be posted at all food distribution sites. Each agency must have an anti-discrimination policy in place.

### NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

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Long version:

“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, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or 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 discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) 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: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant 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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).”

Short version (text must be the same size as the rest of the document):

“Name of Agency is an equal opportunity provider”

All complaints of discrimination will be investigated by the Agency 504 Coordinator. If the agency's practices appear to be discriminatory, the Agency 504 Coordinator will report the practices to FBA's Chief Executive Officer for review and action.

## FOOD SAFETY

### TRAINING

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Food Bank of Alaska offers free food safety training to all partner agencies that distribute unprepared food. We recommend that all staff, and as many volunteers as are able, participate in this training. At least one representative of all partner agencies must successfully complete the class and exam. A certified representative must be onsite during the entire donation acceptance and food distribution process. If primary responsibility for food distribution shifts to a new person at the agency, the new person must then take the class and exam, even if the previous person's certificate is still valid. The procedures differ for agencies in Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley and agencies in the rest of Alaska:

- *In Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley:* Agencies must take a class in person at FBA in Anchorage or in a Mat-Su location. The class takes 2 hours (including exam time) and is offered as often as is needed. New agencies may not access food before their representative(s) have completed the class, or a suitable alternative.
- *Outside Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley:* Agencies must read FBA's "Safe Food Handling Manual for Alaska Food Pantries," take an exam, sign a statement at the end of the exam, and mail, fax, or e-mail the exam back to FBA. The exam is "open-book," meaning that the manual may be consulted, but it must be completed without assistance from other individuals. Representatives from these agencies must successfully complete the exam before they can access food from FBA.

Partner agencies are expected to comply with the food safety requirements in the manual, and FBA staff members will review food safety procedures as needed during site monitoring visits. Agencies should keep the manual for future reference. An agency that is not in compliance with FBA's training requirements or with safe food handling procedures may be placed on product hold until that agency becomes certified or has rectified their food handling procedures.

Partner agencies that prepare food on site are required to have at least one agency representative successfully complete a Food Protection Manager ServSafe training. Consult with the State of Alaska (<http://www.dec.state.ak.us/eh/fss/>, 1-877-233-3663) or Municipality of Anchorage (<http://www.muni.org/departments/health/environment/fss/Pages/default.aspx>, 907-343-4200) to determine the level of food safety training required. These trainings are available through Alaska CHARR (<http://alaskacharr.com>).

### GENERAL PRACTICES

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- Keep all food six inches off the floor and six inches away from the wall by storing it on pallets or shelves.
- Keep food away from walls for good ventilation and pest control.
- Keep doors and windows well sealed to prevent pest entry and water damage.
- Maintain proper temperatures in dry storage areas, refrigerators and freezers. Check temperatures of all storage areas at least weekly and keep a log of the date and temperature of each.
- Maintain good pest control systems. Check rodent traps weekly and keep a log of the date and findings at each trap.
- All foods should be inspected and assessed for fitness of consumption.

## *FOOD STORAGE*

The size and quality of your storage space can give you greater flexibility in your food purchases and may even save you transportation costs and time by reducing replenishment trips. However, the nature of food banking is to use the acquired product quickly, and not store it for more than a short period of time. We encourage you to rapidly turn over products. While FBA does our best to inspect the quality of all items leaving the warehouse, it is the individual partner agency's responsibility to use this product in a timely fashion to ensure it is safe and palatable at the time it is distributed or served.

If product is remaining in your storage area longer than two months (including frozen products), you should look carefully at your shopping habits and make necessary adjustments. Are you shopping too often or bringing back too much to your program? Are you choosing too many items that are found difficult to use? Is the product unfamiliar to the persons you serve? Would recipes help clients to use the product? Does the specific size of the product make it difficult to use in a reasonable length of time? The Agency Relations Coordinator can help you on all the above questions either at the time of your order or at the point that you need further suggestions. A basic rule for food storage is the FIFO (First in, First Out) system.

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### FIRST IN, FIRST OUT (FIFO)

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FIFO is a system of food rotation that should be established at each agency. No more than a two-month supply of commodities is recommended to avoid unintentional stockpiling of resources which might lead to commodities being stored longer than is safe. Therefore, the food received first should be used or distributed before foods received later.

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### ROOM TEMPERATURE OR DRY STORAGE

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When you store food out of the refrigerator or freezer, it is called "room temperature storage." Food that is low risk can be stored at room temperature between 50-70° F. The best conditions for storing low-risk dry goods include a dry, cool, well-ventilated and clean space.

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### THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ROOM TEMPERATURE STORAGE:

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- Keep the area where you store food clean and neat.
- Keep all food at least 6 inches above the floor and 6 inches away from the walls. If you are keeping the food for more than 30 days, leave at least 18 inches between each stack of food and walls.
- Keep food in clean, covered containers with a label that shows the name of the food, the date you received it, and the date by which it should be used.
- Do not store food near anything that could make the food unsafe like cleaners, poisons, sewer lines, water lines, or refrigerator lines.
- Carefully check grain, rice, nuts, seeds, spices, and similar foods for signs of infestation. Bugs may be small and hard to see.

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### REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZER STORAGE

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- Refrigerator temperature must be kept between 33-41° F and freezer temperatures at or below 0° F.
- Keep refrigerators and freezers neat and clean.
- Keep food in clean, leak-proof and covered containers with labels that show the name of the food, the date you received it, and the date by which it should be used.

- Wrap raw meat, poultry, seafood, cheese, baked goods, and prepared foods tightly. Store these types of foods that may leak away from and below other foods.
- Check produce often for pests, slime, mold, and rot.
- After serving food, return leftovers to the refrigerator immediately. Mark all leftovers with the day and date to verify when and/or where the item may have come from.
- Do not pack food in too tightly. Cold air must be able to flow around the food.
- Have a backup power supply for your refrigerator in case you lose power.

## REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZER MAINTENANCE

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Refrigerators and freezers must be maintained properly to keep food safe to eat. You can extend the life of your units by following these guidelines:

- Keep the inside of the unit clean. Use bleach and water solution to sanitize regularly.
- Allow adequate air circulation around stored food. Do not overstock the units; keep air space between shelves.
- Remove food from cardboard cases whenever possible and allow adequate air circulation around the food. Cardboard insulates the food and keeps it from reaching the temperature needed.
- Defrost freezers on a regular schedule to keep ice from building up.
- Keep the area directly in front of and under the interior cooling fans open. Allow about six inches so the air can circulate properly.
- Avoid exposing freezers or coolers to damp areas or direct sunlight. For freezers, if the unit is self-defrosting, don't let the outside temperature drop too much below 50° F. Otherwise, the oil becomes thick and causes premature compressor failure.
- Do not store items on top of units. This can interfere with proper cooling.
- Keep the filter clean by washing in warm soapy water every month.
- Vacuum the coils and keep dust and cobwebs off the coils and compressor.
- Keep a thermometer inside all cooler units and maintain the temperatures at or below 40° F. Avoid going below 32° F (freezing).
- Keep a thermometer in every freezer and keep the unit below 0° F and please remember that freezers do not kill bacteria.

## WHAT TO DO IF THE POWER GOES OUT

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- Keep the refrigerators and freezers closed. Do not open the doors any more than needed. A full freezer will stay at 0° F for about two days. A half full freezer will stay at 0° F for about one day. If the freezer is not full, put foods together so they can keep each other cold. Food in the refrigerator is safe if the power is out for no more than a few hours.
- If the power will be out for several days, add dry ice or block ice to the refrigerator and freezer. Be careful with dry ice; do not touch it or breathe in fumes.
- Put meat and poultry on the bottom shelf or on a tray so that if they begin to thaw, their juices will not drip onto other food. Be sure to throw out any food that becomes contaminated with raw meat juice.
- If possible, find another place to take your fresh foods. Your agency should have an emergency plan in case of this situation.

## *FOOD HANDLING*

### FOOD SORTING SAFETY GUIDELINES

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While all product that you acquire from FBA has been evaluated, it is important that you are able to recognize basic food sorting safety guidelines. This will significantly reduce the possibility of an unfortunate contamination of valuable food product, or worse. The following information is to provide a basic understanding of the food sorting process. Each agency situation is different. FBA staff can gladly provide you with more details.

Foremost, inspect all product coming into your agency before placing anything on your shelves or into refrigeration units. Check for any obvious signs of rodent or other pest activity like droppings, gnaw marks, or insect casings. Has anything been damaged on transport to your site? Are there any signs of spills, including powders that could have contaminated other nearby items? At a minimum, items should be wiped using a sanitization solution made with one tablespoon of chlorine bleach per gallon of water.

**Cans:** Throw away cans with bulges at either end, pitted rust (can't be wiped off), dents that affect your ability to open it, dents shaped like a pouring pitcher, or severe dents on seams.

**Bottles:** Throw away bottles with any leakage, any sign of dirt or mold under the lid, loose tops, raised "button" in center of cap, when held up to the light any unusual separation or discoloration, or anything unusual about the cap.

**Dry boxes:** Throw away boxes with any rips, punctures, or splits in seams that might have led to contamination of product if the inner bag is not intact; packages with no inner bag (flour, rice, beans etc.); bags that have been taped shut; or bags that are leaking dry product.

### HANDLING DONATIONS FROM PERISHABLE FOOD DRIVE OPERATIONS

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If your agency holds or is a recipient of a food drive in which perishable items are specifically requested (e.g., turkeys, hams, milk), you must comply with applicable food safety regulations. If someone else is hosting the food drive, you must make sure that they will comply with these rules. It's best to have a meeting before the food drive to be sure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities.

### RECEIVING PERISHABLE FOOD DRIVE DONATIONS

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Appropriate cold holding equipment must be available when receiving perishable food drive donations (walk-in cooler/freezer, refrigerated truck, chest freezer, chest cooler) if the perishable food drive takes place anywhere other than at your agency. Refrigerated product must be received at 41°F or below, frozen product must be received at 0°F or below.

### REJECTING PERISHABLE FOOD DRIVE DONATIONS

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Remember to use the same standards for a targeted perishable food drive that you would use for any other donation:

- If perishable food drive products do not arrive at your agency at appropriate temperatures, they must be promptly isolated and discarded.
- If a frozen food drive product is provided and no longer frozen, the item cannot be refrozen. It must be promptly isolated and discarded.
- If any perishable meat, pork or poultry food drive product is not frozen by its sell-by date, it must be promptly isolated and discarded.
- If any perishable product shows signs of time/temperature abuse, such as large ice crystals inside the packaging, it must be promptly isolated and discarded.

## DISTRESSED CANNED FOOD GUIDE

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Distressed canned foods may be potentially hazardous to consumers. In almost every case, laboratory analysis is required to determine the safety of the food. This is not practical for most agency situations.

Outdated or obsolete canned goods are acceptable for donation and can be distributed several years after the “sell-by” date. Although color or texture may be affected due to age, the product is still safe.

Unopened shelf-stable dressings and sauces that are up to three months past “sell-by” date are acceptable. Also acceptable for donation are unopened, out-of-code, or obsolete dry food products. Outer package may be torn but internal packaging **MUST** be intact (e.g. cake mix box is torn but the plastic bag containing the cake mix is **NOT**.)

Do not accept cans that:

- Sharp dent on side seam; flat dent is ok
- Sharp dent on top or bottom seam; unless it is a seamless can
- Missing labels
- Swell at top or bottom
- Rust that cannot be brushed off
- Cans that are leaking
- Springer or flipper; vacuum seal broken
- Sharp dent with crease; pointed ends

## PROPER RECALL PROCEDURES

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Upon receipt of a recall notification, partner agencies in coordination with FBA will issue recall notification flyers and posters for their recipients/ volunteers as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours after receiving the recall notification. The partner agency will disseminate the recall notification. The recall notification will include:

- a. Product name affected, lot # and any other product information necessary;
- b. If the media is used to contact recipients, partner agencies will use the press information forwarded by FBA.

Partner agencies will see to it that product is consolidated, tagged, and isolated in a designated location.