



Community Partner Handbook

July 1, 2025 to July 31, 2027

Guidelines and Procedures for Chester County Food Bank's Community Partners

Welcome to Chester County Food Bank!

Thank you for being part of Chester County Food Bank's network of Community Partners and for helping us alleviate food insecurity while ensuring access to real, healthy food in Chester County. This Handbook will guide you through the procedures and processes involved in being a Chester County Food Bank (CCFB) Community Partner.

In addition to procedural information, this Handbook will be a guide to information about CCFB, CCFB's programs, other existing resources, and form templates. CCFB's staff are available to answer questions and receive feedback from you about how we may better serve your agency. *Please, note there are forms included in this handbook that must be returned to CCFB by September 1st, 2026, or 30 days upon receipt to ensure continued receipt of food and program support from CCFB.* We look forward to growing our partnership with you and working together to mobilize our community to ensure access to real, healthy food.

Sincerely,

Laura Bender
Senior Manager, Community Partnerships
Chester County Food Bank
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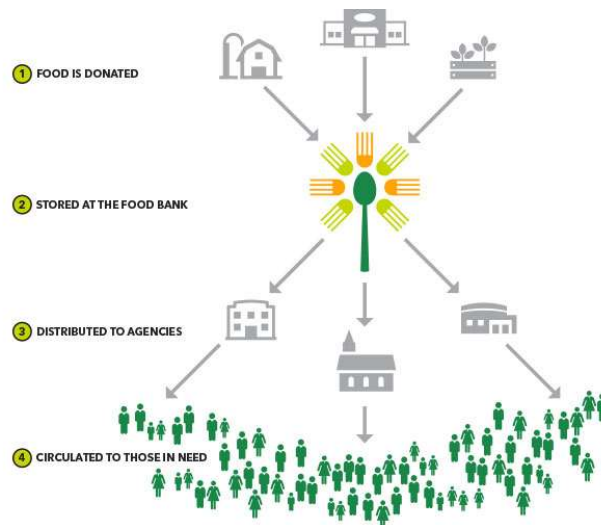
ABOUT US

Chester County Food Bank (CCFB) was formed in 2009 to address an escalating food insecurity problem in the county. Our primary goal was, and still is, to have a viable, sustainable organization that secures, manages, and distributes food to those in need. The Chester County Food Bank is currently housed in a 36,000-square foot facility including offices, a commercial kitchen, a food processing kitchen, warehouse, refrigeration, and freezer space.

Chester County Food Bank serves more than 160 partner agencies in Chester County, PA and distributes over 6.1 million pounds of food to our neighbors with limited or uncertain access to adequate nourishment. CCFB, however, is more than food drives that put cans on shelves. We take a steadfast approach to provide healthy food and build support in Chester County communities through educational programs, while raising awareness and engagement within the community.

OUR MISSION

We mobilize and educate the community to ensure access to nutritious and familiar food.



COMMUNITY PARTNERS ELIGIBILITY

CCFB relies on its Community Partners to distribute food directly to the food insecure population. CCFB and its network of more than 150 partners come together to maintain a positive partnership with the mission of ensuring access to real, healthy food for Chester County's food insecure community.

CCFB's network of Community Partners ranges from pantries and shelters to community service organizations and schools. In addition to providing each Community Partner with nutritious shelf-stable, frozen, and fresh foods, CCFB routinely hosts meetings for continuing education opportunities, food safety certification and compliance training.

CCFB internally classifies Community Partners according to the following:

Core Service Partners – These Community Partners have access to our “Core Four” foods, including protein, dairy, eggs, and produce. Core Service Partners include food cupboards and pantries distributing government food, as well as housing sites and hot meal programs that distribute government food.

Supplemental Service Partner– Community Partners who receive service on a consistent pre-determined schedule. Includes: schools with pantries & all box distributions, other sites that do not fit into core partnership structure

Direct Neighbor Support Partner– Partners who provide services directly to neighbors which includes supplemental nutrition & education, prepared meals, mobile market, cooking & wellness classes, healthcare & produce prescription

For more information about Community Partners, please contact:

Laura Bender, Senior Manager, Community Partnerships

610-873-6000 ext. 130

LBender@chestercountyfoodbank.org

COMMUNITY PARTNER CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT

What does your organization need to better serve your community and increase the consumption of real, healthy food? CCFB is pleased to announce the Capacity Building Grant, which is a grant process that awards equipment or supplies to partner agencies, allowing for the expansion of programming and services, in an effort to increase access and distribution of real, healthy food.

A detailed explanation is required on how any awarded equipment or supply will be used to expand capacity and distribution of real, healthy food to be considered for this grant opportunity. The Capacity Building Grant provides an opportunity for Community Partners to request funding to obtain capital assets (e.g. shelving, pallet jacks, coolers or freezers, etc.). All equipment or supply requests must be accompanied by an estimated invoice, quote, or cost breakdown to substantiate the funding amount requested.

Eligible Applicants:

- Community Partners must be active and in good standing by demonstrating full compliance in all CCFB's policies and procedures, quarterly reporting, food safety, and Civil Rights Training.

Application Information:

- Application period: Ongoing as resources allow.
- An email confirmation will be provided upon receipt of application.
- Grant applications will be evaluated based on the strength of the capacity building proposal as detailed in the application and the agency's needs.
- Your Program Manager must be available if the review committee has follow-up questions regarding your application or needs to schedule a site visit.

If awarded the grant, Community Partners must adhere to the following:

- Community Partners will agree to and comply with the Grant Agreement.
- Community Partners will agree to submit documents of the effectiveness and expansion of programs and services related to the awarded grant equipment or supplies.
- If the Grant Agreement is not received 30 days after the grant is awarded, the award will be considered unclaimed. Unclaimed awards will be given to other qualifying applicants.

How to Apply:

- Complete the Grant Application (Appendix A) and sign the Grant Agreement (Appendix B). Typed applications are preferred. Handwritten applications will be accepted if they are neat and easy to read.
- Applications may be emailed to Laura Bender at LBender@chestercountyfoodbank.org with the completed Capacity Building Grant Application file attached and the email subject line: “Your Organization Name - Community Partners Capacity Building Grant Application”
- Grant applications also may be mailed or delivered to:
Chester County Food Bank
Attention: Capacity Building Grant, Laura Bender
650 Pennsylvania Dr., Exton, PA 19341.

Questions regarding this application may be directed to Laura Bender:
610-873-6000 ext. 130
LBender@chestercountyfoodbank.org

DIRECT DISTRIBUTION PROGRAMS

Chester County Food Bank provides bulk distribution and pre-packed box programs to organizations that directly serve clients, free of charge to the organization and clients. Through bulk distribution we ensure that community organizations have a variety of fresh produce, milk, eggs, frozen protein and healthy non-perishable foods such as pasta, rice, beans, and canned goods. We aim to provide optimal proportions of fresh and non-perishable foods, focusing more heavily on fresh foods as these are harder for pantry members to access in their communities. We are proud that 50% of the food we distribute is fresh and approximately 38% of the produce we distribute is Pennsylvania grown!

Through pre-packed food box programs, we target specific populations to meet their unique preferences and nutritional needs. We offer several box-style grocery programs that aim to create a full plate for people while meeting specific nutritional requirements based on where they are in their life cycle. Most people enrolled in one of these programs also receive additional non-perishables and/or fresh produce, meat, and dairy. CCFB has seven initiatives that provide direct support in response to a specific need in our community:

Community Partners Food Cupboard

Direct distribution of produce, dairy, meat, and non-perishable food items occurs within the food cupboard setting established within partner organizations throughout the county. All food cupboards must maintain a Certificate of Liability Insurance form, attend quarterly food provider meetings to receive appropriate training and information, and have a staff or volunteer who is ServSafe for Food Banking Certified or has a Food Handler License. Those partners who have decided to have a food cupboard within their organization understand the importance of providing a space that is welcoming, inclusive, and dignified for every person who comes to them for assistance. Additional emphasis is placed on adopting the Best Choices Model.

The Best Choices Model encourages pantry leaders to thoughtfully rethink and redesign their environment to nudge participants to choose the best options agencies have to offer, such as fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, and whole grains. The Best Choices Model includes strategies, such as pantry rearrangement, Taste-It food demonstrations, and resources, including recipes and educational handouts, that have the potential to increase participants' self-efficacy while selecting nutritious foods at CCFB's member agencies and cooking at home.

CCFB Emergency Food Pantry

Chester County Food Bank houses a small, emergency food pantry set up in the CCFB warehouse. The CCFB Food Pantry offers a one-time emergency food provision to clients who call or stop in the warehouse and operates as a choice model offering nonperishables, frozen meals and canned proteins, produce, dairy and eggs on an emergency basis. With receipt of the emergency food, clients receive supportive information for additional services from our Community Partnership Department, and they are provided with information about local pantries near their home community that can serve them in the future with ongoing support.

Essential Box

The Essential Box includes heart-healthy food items that can be supplied to any person or family in need, being mindful of most potential dietary restrictions. The boxes are provided to a variety of service locations that may or may not have easy access to a local cupboard and need emergency food for clients or specialized dietary needs.

Emergency Response Food Box

In the event of an extreme weather emergency or other form of disaster emergency, the Chester County Food Bank collaborates with the American Red Cross and Chester County Department of Emergency Services, among other supportive agencies, to assist those affected in Chester County. CCFB has prepared frozen meals available through partnership with the Red Cross, and we have emergency kits on hand to utilize if a large-scale disaster takes place. These kits contain food and supplies for larger community level response.

Summer Student Food Box

The Summer Student Food Boxes help school age children and their families receive nutritious, easy-to-prepare non-perishable food during the summer vacation months at their participating Community Partner or Youth Center. This box of supplemental non-perishable food is designed to be kid-friendly, containing items that children should be able to prepare with little to no adult supervision. The box weighs about 20 pounds and is distributed in June, July, and August.

Senior Food Box

Senior Food Boxes meet the unique nutritional needs of seniors, focusing on fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, as well as reduced sodium and sugar content. The Senior Food Box weighs approximately 20 pounds. It is distributed once a month to recipients that are 60 or over and have an income level at or below 185% of federal poverty guidelines.

Weekend Backpack Program

Backpack Boxes are provided through partnerships with schools and food cupboards throughout the county during the school year. School staff identify students who qualify for free or reduced lunch, or show signs of food insecurity, and then provide an enrollment form for their parents/guardian to register for the program. The backpack boxes contain 8 bags, 1 per student, that schools give out every Friday to provide supplemental food over the weekend. Items in the bags include breakfast, lunch, and snack options. The bag is designed so that students can prepare most of the items on their own or need very few added ingredients to prepare.

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Government nutrition assistance programs exist to help people access the nutritious food they need to feed themselves or their families. We administer two government programs to deliver food to over 40 participating partners. Typically, less than 10% of our food inventory is funded by government programs that require income qualifications. Regardless of qualification to receive government food assistance, donated food is still available through local participating food cupboards. All government food programs are equal opportunity providers.

State Food Purchase Program (SFPP)

SFPP, State Food Purchase Program, is PA's support for purchasing food. These funds are intended to be used to support PA businesses, producers, and farmers. Pennsylvania is one of a small number of states in the nation to provide state revenues for an emergency assistance food program for residents who qualify based on income at or below 185% of federal poverty guidelines. Hunger relief organizations like the Chester County Food Bank use the SFPP grant dollars to purchase nutritious food at wholesale, competitively bid prices, or better. Food is then allocated and delivered to our community partners for distribution to individuals and families who qualify, free of charge, to the agency and participant.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a federal program, designed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), to help supplement the diets of clients who qualify based on Federal income guidelines by providing emergency food and nutrition assistance at no cost. The USDA makes commodity foods available to States for distribution to clients through emergency food providers like the Chester County Food Bank. USDA also provides States with some funding to assist food banks with the storage and distribution costs for TEFAP commodities. The amount of food and funds a state receives is based on a

formula which considers state poverty and unemployment rates. CCFB receives retail-size frozen and dry food products through TEFAP for allocation and delivery to our agency partners for distribution to individuals and families who qualify based on the income at or below 185% of federal poverty guidelines.

For more information about Government Food Programs, please contact:
Laura Bender, Senior Manager, Community Partnerships
610-873-6000 ext. 130
LBender@chestercountyfoodbank.org

POLICY AND GUIDANCE

CCFB relies on food and financial donors in addition to government programs to help meet the need of food insecure individuals in the community. CCFB receives or purchases food from a range of sources including food drives, good Samaritan donations, government programs (TEFAP and SFPP), local farmers and gardeners, retailers, and wholesalers.

CCFB goes beyond hunger to nourish the community struggling with food insecurity. CCFB's Agricultural Program is comprised of partnerships with local farms involving the purchase at local produce auctions to provide Community Partners with farm fresh food.

Volunteers help to inspect, sort, and repackage food in preparation for distribution. Volunteers provide thousands of hours of support every year ranging from processing fresh produce in our kitchen, packing bags for the Backpack Program, sorting donated food in our warehouse, and working the fields at local farm partners.

Using our refrigerated box trucks, our staff of drivers make regular weekday deliveries to our cupboards and social service agencies throughout the 759 square miles of Chester County.

Cancellations

In the event that the Community Partner has submitted an order and is no longer able to pick up that order, the Community Partner must notify the Chester County Food Bank by email or phone before their assigned appointment time. If a Community Partner fails to notify by their appointment time, this is considered a "no-show." If a Community Partner has 3 no-shows during a calendar year, the Community Partner's account may be temporarily suspended for up to 3 months at the discretion of Chester County Food Bank staff.

Distribution Restrictions

Ordering Window

The Ordering Window opens two weeks before the pick-up/delivery day and closes midnight three full business days before the pick-up/delivery day.

Order Changes

To make any adjustments to an existing order after submission, please contact the Online Ordering Team. If the adjustment request is made during the Ordering

Window, then the request may be honored, subject to product availability. If the adjustment request is made after the Ordering Window, i.e. less than 2 full business day before the scheduled pick up/delivery day, the Distribution Team may determine whether to meet the request based on the availability of staff and volunteers and on product availability.

- If you forgot an item or would like to add something after submitting your order, simply place a new order with the same delivery or pickup date, and it will be combined with your existing one.

Placing an Order

Community Partners must place their order through Primarius Web Window (PWW), the online-based inventory system used by the Chester County Food Bank, during the appropriate ordering window of two weeks for the Community Partners.

- Primarius Web Window: Please see the Primarius Online Ordering Guide which is available on our website page Community Partner Resources to learn how to place an order, view order status, and review previous orders.

For more information about food orders contact:

Nate Sletvold, Warehouse, Distribution, and Logistics Manager
610.873.6000 ext. 126

nsletvold@chestercountyfoodbank.orgg

VOLUNTEERS: Recruitment, Management and Retention

Volunteers are an integral part of our work with the community. From individuals to corporations, each person and every volunteer hour makes an impact on our mission to alleviate food insecurity in Chester County. For this reason, building and maintaining relationships with volunteers is very important.

Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteer recruitment can be a daunting and overwhelming process. A few strategies to make it easier:

1. Identify all the work at-hand where volunteers would be beneficial.
2. Break down the work into specific categories and roles.
3. Write detailed job descriptions for the volunteers you want to recruit (ie: Assisting with filling out paperwork, tracking information, filing, assisting with food distribution, picking up donations from the community, being on your board of directors or agency committee, etc.).
4. Set times and dates that you need volunteers. Be consistent with dates and times.

Volunteers like to know exactly what is expected of them and what they in turn can expect from you. Once you have a clear internal picture, recruitment becomes a simpler and more straightforward process. There are many people who care about your cause, and they're excited to donate their time - they just need help finding you! Consider whether you want to work with court ordered volunteers or students from local schools and universities who need community service hours.

Online resources to connect you with volunteers:

- Volunteer Match - <https://www.volunteermatch.org>
- Idealist - <https://www.idealists.org>

Volunteer Management

Once your volunteers are in the door it is important they know how valuable their time is. Whether it is a one-time project or an ongoing job, it is best to have everything set before they arrive and give them a general plan for the shift. It is also important to reiterate your expectations, guidelines and goals before the shift begins.

If it is their first time, be sure to show them around, introduce them to other volunteers and staff and give them the history and mission of your organization. People respond to responsibility - don't be afraid to give volunteers important jobs! It is also beneficial to meet people where they are and see if they have any interests or skills they want to share and be mindful if they have any limitations. Recognizing that every volunteer is an individual with unique talents is beneficial for everyone!

One time Volunteer Event (ex. Holiday need)

CCFB Volunteer Service will assist with posting for this event; required information timeframe, date, details of volunteer job participation, age requirement, weather conditions (indoor/outdoor) and how many volunteers are needed. Communicate with Director of Volunteer Service, CCFB as to what volunteers showed up for the event.

Ongoing Volunteers (pantry distribution)

CCFB Director of Volunteer Service will assist with posting for these events for a period of 3 months max. During this time, it is your responsibility to cultivate the volunteers that have been attending your facility. Required information to provide CCFB Director of Volunteer Services: timeframe, dates needed, how many volunteers, job description.

Volunteer Retention

You've recruited them, you've managed them – now the most important part is keeping them! If you have a volunteer that is a great fit make sure you do everything you can to bring them back.

A few tips on keeping your volunteers:

- Collect contact information (phone, email and mailing address) and find out their preferred method of communication
- Have a template “Thank you” to send out and include the ways they can continue to be involved
- Keep projects at a consistent date and time –a set schedule allows your volunteers to better plan around it
- Value their time and keep them busy whenever they're volunteering
- Have a name badge for the volunteer.
- Have a sign-in sheet and keep track of volunteer hours and reward volunteers for example, once they hit their first 50 hours, then again at 100 hours and so on.

For more information about Volunteers contact:

Karen Mudgett, Director of Volunteer Services

610-873-6000 ext. 122

Kmudgett@chestercountyfoodbank.org

MONITORING, REPORTING & COMPLIANCE

Civil Rights

- The purpose of Civil Rights policies and training is to promote fairness and equality of treatment for all people served. All partners distributing TEFAP and SFPP food must complete annual Civil Rights Training and maintain an updated Civil Rights folder on-site.
- In accordance with Federal Civil Rights law, Community Partners are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity and gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by CCFB.
- All Community partners are required to complete annual Civil Rights Training.
- See Appendix F, where you will find the USDA's Nondiscrimination Statement. We recommend all agencies post this in plain view at your food distribution site for all to see. Tier 1 agencies are required to post this to adhere to TEFAP and SFPP rules and regulations.

Invoices

- Community Partners must maintain all Chester County Food Bank invoices for 1 year. Chester County Food Bank employees may request to view these records during a biennial site visit. Maintaining access to an account's invoices through Primarius Web Window is sufficient to meet this requirement.

Monthly Statistics

- Community Partners must keep accurate records of duplicated and unduplicated individuals and households served ***on a monthly basis***. Food Pantries must provide the number of households and individuals served each month. Meal programs should report the number of meals served per month.
- Community Partner must complete the Monthly Statistics Report found on CCFB's website: <https://chestercountyfoodbank.org/community-partners/agency-zone/>
- Monthly Statistics Reports are due by the 5th of each month.
- A Member Agency representative must attend all "Quarterly Food Provider Meetings" at CCFB designated location.

On-Site Records

- In addition to Statistics, each Community Partner is required to maintain records of their program participation (TEFAP Self declaration forms) for 3 years plus the current fiscal year. The information kept should be sufficient to

fulfill the requirements of the Statistics (i.e. individuals served, households served, and demographics of those served). The Chester County Food Bank recommends that each Community Partner establish a method of tracking that is most appropriate for their program(s). These records may be maintained in hard copy or electronic format. All Community Partners of the Chester County Food Bank submit monthly statistics on PWW, and these electronic records satisfy this record keeping requirement. Chester County Food Bank employees may request to view these records during a biennial site visit.

On-Site Visits

- CCFB is required to make an on-site visit to each community partner at least once every year. This on-site visit is designed for better acquaintance with the partner, ensure that products are being properly handled and used for their intended purpose, stored properly, and for CCFB staff to answer any questions that you might have.
- These visits are also a time for agencies to highlight things they are doing that work well, to spotlight best practices, share exciting community partnerships, offer feedback, demonstrate need for a capital asset (ex. shelving, refrigeration) and learn about new opportunities that may exist for the organization. CCFB's visits will be scheduled ahead of time.
- A Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture or USDA representative may perform site visits periodically during the fiscal year.
- A Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture or USDA representative may visit without notice, so it is best practice to ensure your organization is following the outlined necessary compliance measures at all times as listed in this handbook.

Updating Partner Information

- Maintaining accurate contact information is critical to ensure your organization receives all Food Bank communications. Notify CCFB promptly of any changes to service hours, days of operation, contact information, administration, pantry leadership, or location.
- All changes must be submitted using the appropriate change form (See Appendix C). Completed forms must be emailed.

SAFE FOOD HANDLING REQUIRMENTS & PRACTICES

Listed below are basic guidelines for safe receiving, transportation, product evaluation, rotation, storage, and distribution of food products.

Dry Storage and Distribution

- Store all food products in a cool, dry environment where there is air circulation.
- Temperature should be maintained between 50 and 70 degrees – higher temperatures will spoil food more rapidly.
- Food must be stored/distributed at least 6 inches from the floor and 6 inches away from walls.
- Surplus boxes cannot be stored on the floor. We recommend storing extra boxes on top of a pallet.
- Store and distribute your stock using the First In, First Out (FIFO) system. Distribute food with the closest container dates first.
- Keep food and paper products on separate shelves or pallets.
- All food received from CCFB that is not immediately distributed should be stored in a secure location.
- Chemicals such as bleach, floor cleaner, shampoo, or laundry detergent should be stored in a separate room or on a separate shelving unit to protect food from cross contamination.

Refrigerated and Freezer Storage

- The safe temperature range at which refrigerated units should be set and maintained at 35 to 40 degrees. The appropriate range for a freezer unit is 0 to -10 degrees.
- Cooked food should be packaged in clean, labeled containers in the refrigerator. Labels should contain the name of the food and the date it was prepared or packaged.
- When stocking product into the refrigerator or freezer, leave space between cases and packages to allow cold air to circulate. Store poultry and other meats on the lower shelves of your refrigerator to avoid cross contamination in case of drippings.
- Each refrigerator and freezer should contain an internal thermometer.
- Freezer and refrigeration logs must be maintained (see Appendix D).
- Check freezers and refrigerators for proper temperatures daily or every day your agency is open. These should be logged.

Transporting Frozen or Refrigerated Food

- Member agencies picking up refrigerated and/or frozen items such as meat, produce, dairy, and deli products are required to use coolers or insulated blankets to ensure food products are safely stored and transported. This is a year-round requirement. If such precautions are not taken, you will not be allowed to take the refrigerated and/or frozen products.

Receiving Donations

- Food and other items donated directly to an agency should be checked to ensure quality and safety of the products before shelving.
- Cans of food that have dents along the top or bottom edge, the side seam, or have extreme dents at any other point should be discarded. Cans that show rust, leaks or bulges should be discarded.
- Boxes of food product must have their inner packaging intact. If the inner package is punctured, discard the product.
- Food stored in glass jars should show no evidence of rust around the lid, and the top of the lid should not be bulging. You should not be able to push in the pop top button. If either of these conditions exist, discard the product.
- When you dispose of spoiled food, be sure that it cannot be retrieved and eaten. We recommend you use a locking trash container.
- Never accept home canned foods or accept food that comes from suspicious containers or appears to be spoiled.

Produce Handling

- Inspect produce upon receiving. Eliminate any produce with serious defects.
- Handle produces with care. Avoid stacking containers very high and dropping or bruising items. Any dropped or severely bruised items should be thrown away.
- Be sure to keep produce off the ground and in a designated area that is clean.
- Participants should be notified of any storage items that have been refrigerated i.e. potatoes, onions, winter squash
- Be careful when handling fragile produce items like leafy greens. Mishandling these items can drastically decrease their shelf life and increase waste.
- Use gloves when handling produce that is ready-to-eat (i.e. apples).
- Keep the area where produce is stored clean. Stack away empty boxes, sweep frequently, and keep trash at a distance.
- After distribution, move perishable produce items to a refrigerated area as soon as possible.

Pest Control

- Member Agencies must take reasonable precautions to protect against pest infestation. Pest prevention and control programs must be maintained by a contracted source.
- Member Agency must ensure annual pest control inspection and service of the facility and storage areas, and maintain logs containing the name of the company contracted and date of the service.
- Copies of the latest pest control inspection and service containing the name of the company contracted and date of service must be held on file for site visit inspections.

FDA Requirements for Labeling, Date Information and Shelf Life

- Except for infant formula and baby food, product dating is generally not required by Federal regulations. In fact, there is no uniform or universally accepted system used for food dating in the United States at this time. Baby food and formula should not be distributed after the expiration date. Dates are determined by the manufacturer of the product. See below for types of dates on food products.
- “Sell-by” dates tell the store how long to display the product for sale. You should buy the product before the listed date.
- “Best if used by (or before)” dates are recommendations for best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase by or safety date.
- “Use by” dates are the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. The date has been determined by the manufacturer of the product.
- Closed or coded dates are packing numbers for use by the manufacturer. These appear as a series of letters and/or numbers which might refer to the date or time of manufacture but are not meant for the consumer to interpret.

Use the following steps to review products that are stamped with a date that has passed. First, review the type of date as described above. Except for use by dates, product dates don't always refer to use after purchase. Even if the date expires during agency storage, a product should be safe, wholesome and of good quality if handled properly and kept at proper temperatures. Freezing a product before the date on the package extends the length of time a product may be used. Trust your good senses - when in doubt, throw it out! (See Appendix E for Shelf Stable Food Products Date Extension Guide)

COMMUNITY HEALTH & FOOD ACCESS PROGRAMS

Chester County Food Bank strives to address the root causes of hunger through innovative programs and by working to strengthen the community food systems. Below you are presented with a brief description of some of our departments and programs.

AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

The goal of the Agriculture Program is to successfully grow culturally appropriate vegetables while engaging in the community through volunteer opportunities. Volunteers participate in every step of vegetable production, from seed to harvest. The Agriculture Program is comprised of CCFB farmers and is supported by staff and volunteers across the organization and throughout the county. Fresh produce is distributed through our Partner Agencies, the Fresh2You Mobile Market, and Eat Fresh classes. Our produce is also utilized in our commercial kitchen for meal preparation.

CULINARY PROGRAMS

Our 2500-square-foot Community Kitchen supports our mission by creating nutritious meals for Meals on Wheels, Simple Suppers, Summer Meals for Kids, and our largest meal program Sunshine Meals. Each meal is delicious and nutritional, often featuring fresh produce grown at our [CCFB farm sites](#). Meals on Wheels are hot meals that are home delivered while Simple Suppers, Summer Meals, and Sunshine meals are frozen microwavable meals that can be prepared as needed. Each year we prepare and distribute approximately 100,000 meals.

Meals on Wheels

Through our partnership with Meals on Wheels, we provide hot meals for homebound seniors living in isolation. Volunteers deliver meals to their homes, providing “nourishment for the body and soul” with each visit. The seniors in this program are grateful for both the food and company they receive.

For more information about Meals on Wheels of Chester County:

[*Meals on Wheels of Chester County FAQs*](#)

[*Meals on Wheels of Chester County - Application*](#)

Or call 610-430-8500

Simple Suppers

Our Simple Suppers are frozen meals that follow a voluntary “pay what you can” model which does not depend on set prices for its goods but instead asks customers to pay an amount that they deem comfortable. For those without transportation or

who are unable to leave their home to visit local food pantries, deliveries can occur each week.

A box of Simple Suppers consists of a five-week menu cycle that can be picked up at the Food Bank or home delivery is available in some areas of Chester County. We also provide opportunities for “buy one, give one” allowing for customers to purchase and donate a meal.

Sunshine Meals

Sunshine Meals are our free frozen meals that were established in response to the pandemic. We introduced Sunshine Meals to reach new populations and increase total output in response to school closures and increased need. Met with an overwhelmingly positive response, the program has grown to provide thousands of meals each year. Sunshine meals are provided to the food cupboards, residences, and many other community partners to reach those in need of meals.

Summer Meals

Summer Meals help ensure that students who rely on school for breakfast and lunch can continue to receive nutritious foods throughout the summer when school is not in session. We work to fill the gap in the summer months when children can no longer receive free or reduced meals at school by providing healthy and nutritious ready to eat foods to our partner agencies cost for distribution to children in grades K-12.

Workforce Development: Culinary Job Training

Our Culinary Job Training provides a pathway out of poverty and helps students gain confidence and skills to begin a career in the restaurant industry. We provide transportation and personalized support for each student based on their personal and professional goals.

Establishing a career with a livable wage is the foundation to achieving self-sufficiency and food security. Many of the participants have faced extraordinary personal hardships and endured the challenges of generational poverty and systemic oppression.

Our students experience barriers to employment such as having been previously incarcerated, recovering from addiction, mental illness, developmental disabilities, and homelessness, among other difficulties. Through this training, we provide the necessary support for individuals who have not had the resources or opportunities to succeed.

As a partner of **National Restaurant Association’s *Restaurant Ready* program**, our curriculum is designed to meet the six core competency areas defined by the industry. In addition to culinary arts instruction, training, and six certifications, the

program focuses on self-empowerment (value systems, time management, attitude, communication) and job readiness (resume building, mock interviewing, computer literacy, professional goal setting, interpersonal relationships). The class is concluded with an internship and job placement opportunity where students put their newly developed skills into action in the workplace. The program has a fully certified production kitchen and a uniquely qualified staff to support students during and after the completion of the program. We provide wrap-around services post-graduation to provide ongoing assistance and emotional support.

CCFB Culinary Training will instruct enrolled participants to acquire a specific skill set with a FREE 10-week culinary arts training program. With an anticipated three graduating cohorts per year, each class will be open to up to eight students. The program operates Tuesday through Friday, 9:30 am – 3:30 pm, and provides the following instruction and support:

Practical Hands-On Instruction by Mentor Chefs

[ServSafe Workplace Managers Certifications](#)

[Restaurant Ready Certification](#)

Transportation Provided / Stipend

Job Placement Support

Daily Participation Stipend

Weekly Supplemental Groceries

Wrap-around support post-graduation

For more information about Culinary Programs contact:

Carey Snow, Senior Director of Culinary Operations & Workforce Development

610-873-6000 ext. 1261

csnow@chestercountyfoodbank.org

COMMUNITY FOOD ACCESS PROGRAMS

Fresh2You Mobile Market

Fresh2You Mobile Market makes select stops throughout Chester County selling local, seasonal fruits and vegetables at affordable prices. All forms of payment are accepted, and purchases made with SNAP/EBT or Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) checks are matched with Veggie Bucks, which can be used on future purchases of fruits and vegetables. Produce sold at Fresh2You is either grown by CCFB or purchased from other local farmers, closely connecting customers to the local food system. The market welcomes everyone and creates a supportive environment around food, helping customers discover new foods and encouraging healthy eating.

FreshRX

FreshRX is a program that partners with health care providers to connect food insecure Chester County residents with fresh, local produce at Fresh2You Mobile Market and partner farms. This preventative health partnership not only promotes healthy diets, but also fosters dignity and respect for participants by giving them more choice as they are able to freely shop our markets with their FreshRx prescription cards. CCFB partners with healthcare and social services providers in the county to identify and enroll people who would benefit from this program.

Garden Programs

Garden Programs originated at the founding of CCFB, increasing the availability of fresh produce for food insecure households by supporting nearly 100 garden installations, which then donate at least 70% of their produce to local food pantries. The Garden Programs also provide education and resources through six-week Seed to Supper Classes and seasonal workshops on growing food, all while fostering community around food and gardening, changing food attitudes and self-efficacy around growing food and making healthy food choices.

TasteIt Food Demonstrations

TasteIt Food Demonstrations are held at partner organizations, events, schools and Fresh2You Mobile Market locations. TasteIt features seasonal recipes that are simple and delicious, using basic tools, techniques, and ingredients. TasteIt Food Demonstrations are one-time events intended to increase food knowledge and encourage healthy food choices.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Community Food Access and Education Programs empower adults, children, and families to participate in their local food system by giving them the space to choose, grow, cook, and learn about fresh, healthy foods. Our programs meet people where they are using a community-centered collaborative approach. All programmatic offerings below are available in English and Spanish.

EatFresh Cooking and Wellness Classes

EatFresh Cooking and Wellness Classes provide education and resources to increase food literacy, promote a sense of well-being, and build community engagement and trust around food. This 18-class series is held over three seasons at partner host sites throughout Chester County and is led by a trained facilitator to increase food and cooking skills, self-efficacy, and confidence. Class participants receive fresh fruits and vegetables with every class session. Classes are completely free of cost to participants.

For more information about Community Food Access and Education Programs contact:

Kale Doughty, Senior Manager of Food Access & Education Programs:
610-873-6000 ext. 131
kdoughty@chestercountyfoodbank.org

PARTNER QUICK REFERENCE CHART

Backpack Programs	Michelle Soria	msoria@chestercountyfoodbank.org
Box Programs	Matthew Regan	mregan@chestercountyfoodbank.org
Civil Rights	José Frazier or Laura Bender	jfrazier@chestercountyfoodbank.org
Delivery Concerns	Nate Sletvold	nsletvold@chestercountyfoodbank.org
EatFresh Classes	Erika Mendez	EMendez@chestercountyfoodbank.org
Fresh2You Mobile Market	Jade Menow	jmenow@chestercountyfoodbank.org
General CCFB Partnership Questions	Laura Bender	lbender@chestercountyfoodbank.org
Online Ordering	Nate Sletvold	nsletvold@chestercountyfoodbank.org
Pantry Partnership Inquiries	Laura Bender	lbender@chestercountyfoodbank.org
Raise Bed Gardens	Kale Doughty	kdoughty@chestercountyfoodbank.org
Retail Rescue Questions	José Frazier	jfrazier@chestercountyfoodbank.org
SNAP Inquire Support	Valentina Bracho	vbracho@chestercountyfoodbank.org
The Emergency Food Assistance Program(TEFAP) Questions	Laura Bender	lbender@chestercountyfoodbank.org
Volunteer Inquire Support	Laura Bender	lbender@chestercountyfoodbank.org
Work Development	Kyle Pettine	kpettine@chestercountyfoodbank.org

Appendix A
Capacity Building Grant Application 2025 – 2027

Date of Application Submission: _____

Organization Name: _____

Name of Contact: _____

Contact's Phone Number: (_____) _____

Organization's Physical Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Organization's Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Please provide a brief explanation of why your agency is applying for the Capacity Building Grant. Specifically state the need, what equipment is being requested or repaired, how many people will benefit from the grant (number of participants served), and how the award will increase your Agency's capacity to distribute real, healthy food.

All grant applications must be signed by the Executive Director (or main volunteer) of the agency.

Member Agency Representative

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

*Make a copy of your Agency's application for your records.

Appendix B
Chester County Food Bank
Capacity Building Grant Agreement

This agreement and the responsibilities as outlined hereunder are not transferable without the written approval of Chester County Food Bank (CCFB). By executing this Agreement, the partner agency agreed to comply with the terms set forth below:

The Member Agency shall be responsible for the proper use and deployment of the Equipment or facility enhancement(s).

The Member Agency agrees to use the Equipment for food distribution use only, and not for any commercial use or application.

The Member Agency shall be responsible for the safe packaging, handling, and receiving of the Equipment.

The Equipment shall be returned to:

Chester County Food Bank
650 Pennsylvania Drive | Exton, PA 19341

In witness whereof, the parties have executed this Agreement effective as of the date of the last party to sign this Agreement below.

Member Organization Representative

CCFB Representative

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C Partner Information Change Form

Use this form in case you have change in personnel, site location or another important program information

Organization Name: _____
Organization Tax ID #: _____
Mailing address: _____
City: _____
Zip Code: _____
Phone Number: _____
Email: _____

Please indicate what is being updated:

- Contact information
- Address/location
- Hours of operation
- Distribution schedule/changes

Contact information

New contact name: _____
New contact title: _____
New phone number(s): _____
New email address: _____

Address/location

New address: _____
City: _____
Zip Code: _____

Hours of operation




New Days: _____
New Hours of Pantry operation: _____




Distribution schedule/changes

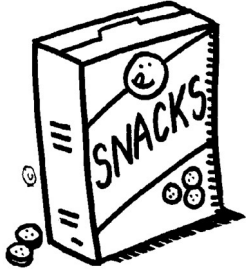



New date of delivery: _____
Additional delivery day: _____

Appendix E

Shelf Stable Food Products Date Extension Guide

Food Group	Product	Date Extension
<p>Grains</p> 	<p>Rice (white, brown) Rice, flavored Pasta/noodles Cornmeal and cornmeal baking mixes Crackers Couscous Canned pasta (spaghetti, ravioli) Polenta Macaroni and cheese Pasta mixes (hamburger helper) Bread, tortilla, pita Stuffing Popcorn (microwave)</p>	<p>2 years 6 months 2 years 6 – 12 months 8 months 2 years 2 – 3 years 6 – 12 months 1 year 18 months 3 months (frozen) 6 months 2 years</p>
<p>Breakfast Items</p>	<p>Cold cereal Hot cereal (oatmeal, grits, farina) Pancake/waffle/biscuit mixes</p>	<p>6 – 12 months 6 months 6 – 9 months</p>
<p>Vegetables</p> 	<p>Low-acid canned veggies (ie: potatoes, green beans, corn, carrots, spinach, peas, pumpkin, beets)</p> <p>High-acid canned veggies (ie: tomatoes, pickles, sauerkraut, food treated with vinegar based sauces)</p> <p>100% vegetable juices</p> <p>Dehydrated, dried veggies</p>	<p>2 – 3 years</p> <p>12 – 18 months</p> <p>12 – 18 months</p> <p>1 year</p>
<p>Tomato Products</p>	<p>Tomatoes, canned (diced/whole/crushed) Tomato sauce Pasta sauce Salsa</p>	<p>12 – 18 months 12 – 18 months 12 – 18 months 12 – 18 months</p>
<p>Fruits</p> 	<p>Canned fruits (in juice or light syrup) Dried fruits 100% fruit juices</p>	<p>12 – 18 months 6 months 12 – 18 months</p>

<p>Dairy</p> 	<p>Dry milk packets Shelf stable milk (soy, almond, rice) Canned, evaporated or condensed Parmesan cheese</p>	<p>6 months Best if used by date 9 months 10 months</p>
<p>Protein</p> 	<p>Beans, peas, lentils (canned) Beans, peas, lentils (dried) Peanut butter Nuts (canned, shelled) Canned meat, poultry and fish (tuna, salmon, etc) Canned ham Meat or poultry in retort pouches Hard/dry sausage Seafood in retort pouches Canned stews (chicken, beef) Dried beef (jerky) Meat substitutes/textured protein (ie: bacon bits)</p>	<p>2 – 3 years 12 months 9 – 12 months 4 months 2 – 3 years 2 years Consume by date on package 6 weeks 18 months 2 – 3 years 12 months 4 months</p>
<p>Soups</p>	<p>Canned (except tomato based soups) Canned tomato based soups Mixes Chili</p>	<p>2 years 12 – 18 months 12 months 2 – 3 years</p>
<p>Beverages</p> 	<p>Coffee Tea (bags) Tea (instant) Water Hot chocolate mixes</p>	<p>2 years 18 months 3 years Indefinitely Indefinitely</p>

<p>Snacks & Desserts</p> 	<p>Biscuit mix Brownie and cake mix Chips Chocolate Cookies Crackers Frosting Gelatin mixes Granola, cereal bars Pie filling Pudding mixes Toaster pastries</p>	<p>15 months 9 months 2 months 18 months 2 months 8 months 10 months 18 months 2 months 10 – 12 months 1 year 6 months</p>
<p>Condiments & Baking Items</p>   	<p>Baking powder Baking soda Bread crumbs Bread mix Broth Ketchup Cheese sauce Chocolate flavored syrup Cornstarch Cornmeal Condensed milk Croutons Flour, white Flour, whole wheat Sauces and gravy (jar or mixes) Spices Honey Jam and jelly Pancake syrup Mayonnaise Mustard Olives Cooking oils Pickles Salad dressing Sauerkraut Shortening Sugar (brown) Sugar (granulated) Sugar (powdered) Taco kits (shells) Vinegar</p>	<p>6 months 2 years 9 months 9 months 2 – 3 years 12 months 9 months 2 years 18 months 1 year 9 months 2 months 6 – 12 months 3 months 1 year 2 – 3 years 3 years 18 months 1 year 2 – 3 months 1 year 1 year 6 months 1 year 10 – 12 months 12 – 18 months 8 months 4 months 2 years 18 months 2 months 2 years</p>

Appendix F

A Quick Guide to Civil Rights

To ensure equal access to our programs, participating entities **MUST**:

- 1. Let people know how to apply for the TEFAP/CSFP and how to file a Civil Rights Complaint:**
 - Place the “And Justice for All” poster where it can easily be seen;
 - Use the Nondiscrimination Statement on all materials and websites that mention FNS Programs;
 - Notify community groups that the program is available;
 - Provide information when an individual or group requests it;
 - Schedule hours of operation according to the needs of the community
- 2. Identify and accommodate Language needs:**
 - Find out what languages are spoken in your service area;
 - Make sure that *everyone* knows what to do when a Limited English Proficient participant needs help;
 - Provide translated material if there are many people who speak another language;
 - Hire bilingual staff when possible; otherwise, use certified interpreters or contract services (i.e. Language lines)
 - Do not ask participants to bring their own interpreters
- 3. Accommodate Persons with Disabilities:**
 - Accommodate persons with disabilities by allowing them to use pre-designated proxies to pick up food packages
 - Provide participant with hearing and vision impairments the accommodations that they need.
- 4. Data on race and ethnicity *must* be collected (ONLY FOR CSFP)**
 - Explain to participants that collecting the data is required by law; it will not affect their eligibility, and will help to prevent discrimination;
 - Remember that you **MUST** ask participants to self-identify their race and ethnicity;
 - Participants may identify more than one race
- 5. If a participant states that s/he has been treated different because of race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability:**
 - Try to resolve issues as quickly as possible;
 - Refer the participant to the Civil Rights contact, or to the address provided on the poster; and
 - Offer the participant a civil rights complaint form (available in English and Spanish)



For more information, see FNS Instruction 113 or contact FNS MARO OCR at (610) 259-5062/5123