

Requirements for Partnerships

PARTNERSHIP APPLICATION

All prospective agencies are required to first fill out an application as the first step in the process to becoming a partnering agency with Mid-Ohio Foodbank. Information about the application and the process is available online at: [Become a Mid-Ohio Foodbank Partner \(Process and Application\)](#). Every week applications are reviewed by MOF staff.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

All partner agencies must sign and abide by the *Mid-Ohio Foodbank Partnership Agreement*. This section details the information outlined in The Partnership Agreement as it relates to food distribution and food program operations. Information regarding billing, food safety, and civil rights are detailed in their respective sections.

AGENCY ACCOUNT UPDATES

The *Mid-Ohio Foodbank Partnership Agreement* explicitly states that partner agencies must inform the Foodbank if the program is altered, discontinued, changes location or undergoes any significant change. In the event the authorized ordering representative or the agency director is replaced it is imperative that the Foodbank is notified immediately to update the account details.

Partner agencies must have an email account set up to receive important information from the Foodbank. Email is the primary source of communication from the Foodbank. New agency representatives will need to attend an agency orientation, and any change in agency location or programming will require a new site visit.

WHO AND HOW WE SERVE

Our goal is to ensure that hungry people have access to food in their greatest times of need. Our partner agencies ensure that we connect food to those who need it most. We use the [Federal Poverty Guidelines](#) set forth by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to establish income-eligibility, with special programs for the most vulnerable populations– children and seniors. The Mid-Ohio Foodbank strives to provide the best possible customer service and ensure that the most vulnerable Ohioans are treated fairly and equitably in seeking food assistance.

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VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are essential to the operation of food distribution programs and organizations. Partner agencies are expected to maintain a strong and committed team of volunteers to carry out the day-to-day functions of their food programs. The Mid-Ohio Foodbank understands how critical volunteer retention is and is committed to making sure partner agencies have all the resources they need to attract and support volunteers.



FOOD SAFETY TRAINING

To maintain the integrity of the food distributed by the Foodbank and ensure it remains healthy and safe for consumption, agencies must be trained in proper food storage and safe handling practices. Each partner agency agrees to observe safe food handling practices in transportation, storage, handling, and distribution of food and USDA commodities when the Mid-Ohio Foodbank Partnership Agreement was signed. One representative from each agency must undergo food safety training every three years for Level 1 and every five years for Level 2 in order to remain compliant with Foodbank policy. Food pantries and produce programs must maintain a current Level 1 PIC certification. All meal programs must maintain a Level 2 certification. In the event a staff/volunteer with the certification departs from the organization, the agency has 30 days to obtain the appropriate certification.

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAINING

All partner agencies must take civil rights training to ensure equal treatment for all applicants and beneficiaries under the law. Every staff member and volunteer associated with each agency must be trained annually in civil rights. Agencies are responsible for training their staff and volunteers. Civil Rights training materials can be found on the Mid-Ohio Foodbank website. This training also provides knowledge of rights and responsibilities to recipients and program staff, elimination of illegal barriers that prevent or deter people from receiving benefits. In keeping with Mid-Ohio Foodbank's mission to co-create a community where everyone thrives, this training provides a baseline of dignity and respect for all.



PANTRY TRAK - CLIENT INTAKE - AND STATISTICS

Pantry Trak is an online web-based client management system, which takes the place of the [ODJFS Eligibility to Take Home Form](#). This method of record keeping has been certified by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services for use within our network of partner agencies and is the standard method for capturing information on food transactions. **All agencies operating as a Food Pantry or directly distributing produce are required to use Pantry Trak.** Partner agencies are required to submit monthly statistics reports to provide Mid-Ohio Foodbank with feedback on service demographics and numbers. This data informs our distribution efforts and enables us to better communicate our impact with donors.

MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

The *Mid-Ohio Foodbank Partnership Agreement* states that all partner agencies are to permit Foodbank staff to monitor the program annually including the authority to check records and inspect the facility. Site visits will include an examination of food storage areas, and a short interview regarding the program. Please be prepared to have records available. At the conclusion of the site visit agencies will sign a Partner Monitoring Acknowledgement Form confirming that a Foodbank representative completed a site visit.

Additional Requirements For Produce Programs

Operating a Produce Program involves logistical, volunteer capacity, and outreach requirements that must be in place prior to starting your program.

LOGISTICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HOSTING PRODUCE OR MOBILE MARKETS

Produce program host sites must guarantee the following in order to receive produce from the Mid-Ohio Foodbank: physical space for a large crowd, volunteers, tables for sign-in and displaying products, signage directing clients to distribution, WiFi/internet connection, computer or tablet, and paper sign-in forms. Sites must have an indoor space or sheltered area for produce market participants to wait. It is highly recommended **that Produce Market sites provide shopping carts or wheelbarrows to make the client experience as smooth and stress-free as possible.** Other helpful items include: Box cutter, traffic cones, “caution” tape, and bottled water.

SITE INTAKE LOGISTICS

- **Number system:** It is highly recommended that host sites serving more than 100 households utilize a numerical system. Upon signing in, clients receive a number that holds their place in line. This helps in keeping the flow of clients orderly, reduces client anxiety, and allows clients to seek shelter in inclement weather.
- **Household size:** Although most host sites opt to distribute produce so that each household receives the same amount, some distribute based on the size of a household to more equitably serve families in need. Family size can be indicated with colored placards given at sign-in, or by the client simply stating their household size for volunteers at each table. The client would then receive twice the allotted amount for a household of 3-5, or thrice the allotted amount for households of six or more.
- **Drive-through:** Partners who have access to a large parking lot may want to explore the idea of a drive-through distribution. Volunteers’ pre-pack boxes or bags of produce and load produce directly into client vehicles. This model is particularly helpful for sites that serve a large senior and/or disabled population.

Additional Requirements For Produce Programs

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are imperative to the success of distribution every produce distribution, large or small. The Mid-Ohio Foodbank recommends having one volunteer for every ten households your distribution will serve (i.e. A small-scale distribution of 50 households could have 5-6 volunteers, while a larger distribution of 200-300 households should plan to have 20-30 volunteers).

Volunteers are eligible to receive produce from a distribution, so long as they sign-in attesting that they meet income guidelines. It is strongly recommended that volunteers wait until the end of the distribution, or go through the line as clients are being served.

REFERENCE GUIDE FOR PRODUCE MARKETS:

- **PRODUCE PROGRAMS TOOLKIT** - [Agency Zone](#)