



TO: Prospective Member Agency

FROM: Tiffany Morales, Partner Capacity Coordinator
Food Bank RGV

RE: Pre-Application to the Food Bank RGV

Thank you for your interest in partnering with the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley, Inc. others like you have discovered the wonderful rewards of contributing to the ongoing need to nourish our local communities. With the desire of organizations such as your selves we can implement our MISSION of Feeding the Hungry, Here at Home.

The FOOD BANK of the RIO GRANDE VALLEY, INC., is a distribution center for over 250 agencies throughout the Valley, serving a three county area. On average, 24 million pounds of food was distributed in 2014 to over 395,207 families along with over 860,470 meals from our on-site feeding programs, however there are still more families in need of our assistance, 42,000 individuals are fed on a weekly basis via our partner agencies.

In order to facilitate your request in a timely manner, the Food Bank RGV requests that ANY organization that is interested in partnering with the Food Bank RGV must meet and submit the following requirements:

- **Proof of 501(c)(3) documents/forms issued by the Internal Revenue Service.** Must be a non-profit, public, charitable organization. Offer services directly to the ill, needy, or children (under 18 years), free of charge and with no requirement to attend any kind of service.
- **Proof of a current Safe Food Handling certificate**
- **Provide a current list of the Board Members or Food Program Committee** (include names, title, home addresses, home phone, cell phone, and work phone numbers for each person on the list)
- **Provide a Budget** (estimate of costs, revenues, and resources)
- **Enclose a one-time non-refundable processing fee of \$20.00** in the form of a check or money order payable to the: Food Bank RGV (memo: New-40-2260)
- **Agree to the attached General Rules and Regulations of the Food Bank RGV and INTIAL each statement.**

Four part application process:

Part I: Complete enclosed forms and submit with all the required documents that are listed above.

Part II: After we receive this form with all required documents, the Chief Programs Officer will review your pre-application and determine your organization's pre-approval. If your agency has been pre-approved, an Agency Relations staff member will contact you to schedule a site visit and deliver an application. This process will take from 3-5 days.

Part III: If possible complete application during the onsite visit with an Agency Relations staff member or return your completed application to the Food Bank RGV as soon as possible.

Part IV: After we receive your application, your application will be presented to the Chief Programs Officer and Chief Executive Director for approval. This process will take 2 weeks or less. Upon approval, an Agency Relations staff member will contact you to schedule an orientation at the Food Bank. This orientation includes Review of Food Bank RGV rules, regulations, and Civil Rights procedures.

Once again, thank you for your interest and we look forward to working with you.



Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley, Inc.
P.O. Box 6251 • 724 N Cage Blvd • Pharr, TX 78577
Phone: (956) 682-8101 • Fax: (956) 682-7921



www.foodbankrgv.com



Part I: Complete this form and return to the Food Bank RGV with all required documents on the check list.

Organization Name: _____

Food Contact: _____ Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Physical Address where service will be provided: _____

City: _____ County: _____ Zip code: _____

Type of service provided: Pantry ___ On-site feeding ___ Snacks only ___ Other ___

Days/Hours of program: Mon ___ Tue ___ Wed ___ Thurs ___ Fri ___ Sat ___ Sun ___ 24/7 ___

- What is your service area? (zip codes, cities, etc.) _____
- How many meals/families do you plan to serve a month? _____
- Are clients charged a fee or required to attend a religious service to receive food? Yes ___ No ___
- Has your food program been operating for at least 6 months? Yes ___ No ___

**The following documents must be included with your pre-application for processing:
If marked with an asterisk, the item is required.**

1. _____ *501 (c) (3) status determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service
2. _____ *Board Members or Committee List with home addresses and phone numbers
3. _____ * Safe Food Handling Certificate
4. _____ * Budget (estimate of costs, revenues, and resources)
5. _____ * General Rules and Regulations of the Food Bank RGV
(Included with the pre-application, please initial each statement and sign.)

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If mailing your documentation, please mail to:

Food Bank RGV Attn: Agency Relations Department 724 N Cage Blvd Pharr, TX 78577

Member Agency Name

Address City and Zip



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GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE FOOD BANK RGV

Please initial next to the statements you agree to abide by. Failure to abide by any of the following Food Bank Rules and Regulations may result in ineligibility as a Member Agency.

- _____ Member Agency is a nonprofit 501(c) (3) organization that serves the needy, ill or infants.
- _____ Member Agency will provide a list of Directors or Committee Members of the organization at any time upon request of the Food Bank of the RGV.
- _____ Member Agency agrees to operate as a **Client Choice** food program. (For information on operating as a Client Choice food program, read enclosed Food Program Checklist and literature)
- _____ Representatives of the Member Agency must attend the initial orientation meeting and any other meeting or training required by the Food Bank of the RGV.
- _____ Representative of the Member Agency **MUST ATTEND ANNUAL CIVIL RIGHTS TRAINING AND /OR AGENCY RELATIONS CONFERENCE.**
- _____ Member Agency agrees to annual inspections/monitoring visits by a Food Bank Agency Relations personal.
- _____ Member Agency agrees that at any time the program may be subject to a surprise inspection or visit by the Chief Programs Officer, Food Bank Staff personnel, the Chief Executive Officer, the Food Bank RGV Board Members, USDA inspectors, Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), Health and Human Services inspectors.
- _____ Member Agency agrees to contribute to the Shared Maintenance and Delivery Policy of the Food Bank of the RGV. Agencies joining the Food Bank of the RGV program will be required to pay (19) cents per pound for all food, salvage and other products. A Shared Maintenance fee will not be imposed on produce and from time to time on other products.
- _____ Member Agency agrees it will be required to pay an additional (10) cents per pound if commodities are to be delivered to your facility. Currently the Food Bank of the RGV can only deliver to certain areas.
- _____ New Agencies are required to pay all invoices at time of pick up or delivery of product. There will be a 90 day probation period before an open line of credit is acquired.
- _____ Member Agency will provide adequate and secure storage facilities to insure the wholesome qualities of the food.



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- _____ Member Agency will provide adequate refrigeration or freezer if planning on ordering products that require this form of storage.
- _____ Member Agency will bring freezer blankets/coolers if picking up frozen products.
- _____ Member Agency will have pest control in place.
- _____ Member Agency will inform the Food Bank of the RGV of program changes when utilizing food product from the Food Bank of the RGV. Changes in use of product other than what was stated on the original application must be approved by the Chief Programs Officer.
- _____ Member Agency will not distribute food to another program, organization, church or entity without the approval of the Chief Programs Officer.
- _____ Member Agency will keep the Food Bank of the RGV current on all contact information in the event of staff or volunteer changes that occur within the member agency.
- _____ Member Agency will keep the Food Bank of the RGV current on all current days and distribution times and any changes that occur within the member agency.
- _____ Member Agency agrees to not discriminate on the basis of race, color, citizenship, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation including gender identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from military or status as a protected veteran.
- _____ Member Agency will provide food directly to low income individuals or families as defined by the TEFAP guidelines of 185% of federal poverty levels in the form of Client Choice or prepared meals.
- _____ Member Agency will post up the days and hours of distribution in a visible area for clients to view.
- _____ Member Agency will keep all client information confidential.
- _____ Member Agency will keep a record of all clients being served.
- _____ Member Agency will provide all food free of charge.
- _____ Member Agency will not sell food.
- _____ Member Agency will not barter food.
- _____ Member Agency will not use food for fundraising event.
- _____ Member Agency will not make a request for donations in receipt of food.



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- _____ Member Agency will not require client to pay a fee of any kind in order to receive food assistance.
- _____ Member Agency will not require attendance of organization or church activities in exchange for food.
- _____ Member Agency will not exchange work or volunteer services in exchange for food.
- _____ Member Agency will not allow food to be distributed to Mexico.
- _____ Member Agency will submit a monthly client report to the Food Bank of the RGV between the 1st and the 5th of the following month. The report should include the number of families/individuals or meals/snacks provided by your program.
- _____ Member Agency will be placed on hold at any time if any of the above statements are not in compliance and accepts responsibility for the hold put on an account for which a report is late in one month, follow up from monitoring visits has not been completed, paperwork is not turned in, expired Civil Rights or Safe Food Handling, or the billing account is past due. The member agency understands the account will remain on hold until any and all issues have been resolved.

We hereby understand the above General Rules and Regulations of the Food Bank of the RGV and agree to abide by all to the best of our ability. We hereby understand the Food Bank of the RGV reserves the right to change any of the above rules and regulations when it serves in the best interest of our mission of Fighting Hunger, Feeding Hope.

Board President/Pastor	Date	Program Director	Date
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Name of Member Agency

Address, City and Zip of Member Agency

The Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, citizenship, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation including gender identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from military or status as a protected veteran, reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



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Food Program Checklist

Facility

Building must be of strong and secure structure.

Outside of building must be clear of over grown grass and debris.

Facility must have no gaps or holes in doors, windows and/or walls.

Handicap access.

Restroom facilities must be available for clients use.

Security:

Facility and Pantry must be secure from theft.

Secure locks on main entrance doors and pantry doors.

Windows must be locked at all times.

Secure windows from the inside and outside to prevent a break in.

Supplies:

Sufficient shelving: shelves may be made of wood, metal or plastic.

2 pallets

4-6 pallets if you do not have shelving

3-4 plastic containers with lids; to store rice, flour, mashed potatoes, etc. (*items that come in bag form to prevent animal infestation*)

Room needs to have air circulation.

(*Fans or air conditioning*)





Freezer Blankets/Coolers for transportation of frozen products
(*Only needed if you plan to carry products that require it*)

Note: you will not be allowed to order frozen or refrigerated products.

Refrigeration

Freezers and/or refrigerators

(*Only needed if you plan to carry products that require it*)

Note: you will not be allowed to order frozen or refrigerated products.

A thermometer in each freezer and/or refrigerator.

Pantry - Storage Room:

Room must be disinfected.

Room must be thoroughly cleaned.

Clear storage of any items that are not food related.

(Ex. Cleaning supplies, clothing.)

There is no requirement on the size of the room you need since every building is different. Remember you will be ordering by the caseload not individual items. You will need sufficient room to store large amounts of food. A room with a minimum of 20-25 square feet would be best suited to store food. You may have less room than this; however a plan would need to be in place to store any access commodities.

Note: Even though there is no requirement on the size of the room, during the inspection the Agency Relations staff member may refuse the storage area due to insufficient size and or location of the storage room.



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Pest control:

Traps must be in place for mice and insects or a current receipt from your most recent extermination visit.

Waiting area/Feeding area

Air circulation

Client Choice Programs and On site feeding facilities will need a sufficient seating area for clients (*please make this area as comfortable as possible for your clients*)

Bulletin board to post notices information, civil rights and USDA posters for clients.

Will you be a Client Choice Program?

Yes _____ (Continue on to Distribution Area)

No _____ (Skip to next question)

Will you be an Onsite Feeding Program?

Yes _____

No _____ (skip to next question)

What are you going to do? (specify)



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Distribution Area:

Designate an area for your “Client Choice”.

(Example #1)

You can set up your food pantry like a grocery market and clients can select their items right off your shelves.

(Example #2)

You can set up tables with items that are available for your clients..

Bags or boxes for clients to use.

1- Table (if you will set up your pantry as example #1)

2-4 Tables (if your distribution is set up as example #2)

Table with chairs to fill out Household Assistance

Applications.

Pre made numbers to hand out to clients as they come in for their distribution.

1- large 3-inch binder to keep completed applications in.

1- spiral notebook to be used as a sign in log

1- travel file box to store additional paper work and forms.

Pens, pencils, highlighters and markers.

Are you ready? Yes_____ No_____

If you are ready for your inspection please call for an appointment:

Glenda Reyes 904-4508

Tiffany Morales 904-4536

Libby Salinas 904-4506



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Appointment has been set for:

Month: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Inspection will only be conducted if the Pantry Director is present. Please make yourself available for this appointment.

Please have the above ready prior to your inspection. Any items that are not ready will delay the process of your possible approval to become a Food Bank RGV member agency.

Thank you,
Tiffany Morales
Partner Capacity Coordinator
956-904-4536
956-246-3482
tmorales@foodbankrgv.com



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USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

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, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

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 Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may 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 complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at:

http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, 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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



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Dignity: (dĭg'nĭ-tē) the quality or state of being worthy of esteem or respect.

“The key value of Client Choice is Dignity!”

- Food Bank of Alaska

Client Choice Food Program

Most of us take for granted the choices we make when we go to the grocery store. We stroll down the aisles and pick from a wide variety of foods, some very nutritious and some empty calories; but the point is we are in control of what goes into our basket. This same concept carries over to a “Client Choice” Food Pantry.

During the 1980’s food pantries were springing up around the United States through a network of churches and community organizations. Food supplies were tight, donor networks were not in place, and USDA commodities were in short supply. The focus for pantries was on rules and restrictions and limiting the amount of food distributed. As a result, many pantries fell into the practice of pre-bagging groceries for clients.

***The old models do not fit the lifestyles of our clients today
and as a result, new ways of helping
Those in need have been created.***

Here are a few examples of some problems that are results from pre-bagging groceries for clients.

- ☺ A young Mom is given a box of powdered milk that she doesn’t need or want. No one asked her if she is on WIC.
- ☺ A widowed man is given a sack of flour that he promptly tosses into the alley behind the pantry. Is he ungrateful? No, he simply does not know how to cook or use the flour



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and he was never given a choice about what went into his food bag.

- ☹️ A family could have used two bags of flour, but they were never asked and received the standard one bag per family.
- ☹️ A woman from another country is given flavored gelatin that she has never seen before; her children eat the powder. She would have preferred a bag of rice, but no one asked.
- ☹️ An older woman with high blood pressure, diabetes and no dentures is given a bag with canned vegetables, heavy syrup fruit and snacks she cannot chew. Most of her food bag went to a neighbor.

No matter what the income level, people need to be able to select their own foods and have control over what they eat.

For two decades food pantry administrators have been selecting food "they think" their clients need.

Here are some of the main issues associated with the pre-bagging system:

- ☹️ Food pantries are spending valuable resources to purchase foods that clients many not want or need.
- ☹️ Pantry bags that are done in advance tend to be very much the same. Canned tuna, peanut butter, pasta, a can of vegetables etc.; however no two families have the same food needs or desires, so why should their bags be identical?
- ☹️ Pre-bagging food takes an enormous amount of volunteer time.



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"The life of a man consists not in seeing visions and in dreaming dreams, but in active charity and in willing service" - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

