

FEEDING[®] THE GULF COAST





PREFACE

Welcome to Feeding the Gulf Coast (FTGC). We are a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization and one of 200 regional food banks across the country who are affiliated with Feeding America, the largest domestic hunger relief organization in the United States. We are also a United Way agency. In addition to donated food from Feeding America, we carry United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodities. **All the food we carry is intended for needy people.** The IRS defines “**needy**” as those unable to provide for their own needs without the assistance of others.

We typically do not issue food directly to needy people, but to agencies with a clear objective of feeding the ill, needy, or infants. All agencies receiving donated products from FTGC must also be federally exempt 501(c)(3) organizations or the equivalent (churches).

The food you receive from the food bank is free to your organization; however, you pay a per-pound handling fee to help with the costs of procuring and distributing donated products. This fee is called a **shared maintenance fee**, which is currently 0.02 to 0.19 cents a pound. This handling fee provides about 70% of our operating budget. We are also supported by Feeding America, United Way, individual donors, corporations, and foundations.

In addition to the shared maintenance fee, you will also pay a **\$120.00 member fee** upon approval of your membership and each year you are a member agency with the food bank. The fee is designed to help with operation and program expenses.

Member agencies of the food bank consist of non-profit organizations or churches with the objective of serving the ill, needy, or infants. This includes residential programs serving foster children, organizations serving those in recovery from addiction, non-profit day care centers, half-way homes, soup kitchens, and emergency food pantries. Together, Feeding the Gulf Coast and our member agencies work to feed people who are hungry as a result of personal crisis or disaster.

Our Food Bank has ZERO Tolerance for the following:

- Threats or acts of violence directed at staff, volunteers, agency representatives, or property of the food bank. This includes, but is not limited to, threatening or hostile behaviors, physical and/or verbal abuse, vandalism, arson, or sabotage on food bank premises and at any of our Agency Partner locations.
- Theft, includes Agency Partner staff and volunteers consuming or possessing food bank items meant for those eligible clients (needy, ill, or infants) being served by the Agency Partner organization.
- The manufacture, possession, sale, or use of any controlled substance while on food bank premises. The food bank is a **DRUG-FREE workplace**.
- Violators will be asked to leave food bank premises and will not be allowed to return. In addition, his/her Agency Partner organization will be contacted and further action may be taken, including and up to possible suspension/termination of Agency Partner status.



GENERAL RULES

- ***ALL the food we provide is intended for needy people.*** The IRS defines **needy** as those unable to provide for their own needs without the assistance of others.
- You may pick up food **ONLY** for the member feeding program. You may **NOT** pick up food for yourself, relatives, friends, or neighbors. No food may be diverted from the agency for personal use or private events such as birthday parties, church picnics, fundraising, sale, or profit.
- The Agency must be open publicly to eligible recipients, eligible staff, eligible volunteers, congregational members or any other sub group of recipients shall not be given priority or exclusive rights over the distribution of FTGC product.
- You must provide the products you receive from Feeding the Gulf Coast at **NO CHARGE** to your clients. This rule is governed by the IRS ruling that donated food **MUST** be free from donor to the final recipient. If any agencies charge for donated food, the donor maybe at risk of tax fraud; putting the donated food system at risk. If your program is a residential program with a fee charged for resident services, donated food can be used as long as the fee is assessed based on total services provided, not based on meals alone and as long as most of the clients are needy.
- You may **NOT** require a donation or volunteer services in exchange for the products contributed. Such use of donated goods is clearly prohibited by the IRS. You are able to accept donations as long as they are truly voluntary, completely anonymous, and not received during food distribution hours.
Your agency may not actively solicit donations from clients.
- Your agency may **NOT** require that recipients listen to a religious message as a condition of receiving food. Your agency may choose to hold service before or after the distribution, as long as it ends two hours prior or begins two hours after the distribution ends. Clients need to be aware that attending service is optional and will not impact their ability to receive food.
- Donated products and USDA products may **NOT** be distributed for the purpose of fundraising, either as prepared food (such as spaghetti dinners or bake sales) or as “prizes.” Donated products and USDA products are intended for people in need and may **NOT** be used for private events such as birthday parties or church picnics.
- The products you receive from FTGC may **NOT** be distributed outside the borders of the United States.
- Your agency agrees to be monitored by FTGC personnel as needed.
- Your agency agrees to receive regular communication from FTGC and has designated an email address, which is checked regularly, to receive such communication.
- ***Your agency agrees to attend the annual agency conference to receive updates and fulfill training requirements. Your agency agrees to have at least one key staff or volunteer receive food safety training by FTGC.***
- You must pay by agency check each time you receive product from FTGC. Payment is due upon delivery or at the time of pickup. We do not accept cash, personal checks, or credit cards.
- Your agency must agree to pay the \$120.00 Membership Fee upon approval of your partnership. Annual membership fees are billed upon membership approval every January.
- Your agency must **NOT** require any additional documentation in order for a client to receive food. Feeding the Gulf Coast will provide you with all documentation requirements during orientation or site visits.



REQUIREMENTS

GENERAL FOOD STORAGE

- Products should be kept in a secure, clean, and dry location dedicated solely to the feeding program.
- There must be thermometers in **ALL** food storage areas (*dry, frozen, refrigerated*) and a Temperature Record form must be maintained (*copy included.*)
- The area should be rodent and pest free. Regular extermination treatment is recommended.
- All food products should be stored at least 4-6 inches off the floor and away from the walls.
- All food products should be stored separately from pesticides, herbicides, cleaning supplies, lubricants, or other materials that could contaminate the food.
- All products should be used in “first in/first out” order. In other words, use the oldest products first to reduce food waste.
- Food safety posters will be provided to you by Feeding the Gulf Coast. These should be displayed where volunteers can see them.

USDA COMMODITIES

- You must display the **“And Justice for All”** poster and the Civil Rights Non-Discrimination statement, which the food bank will provide to you. This poster is to be placed at the point of service at your pantry or kitchen, and must be visible to all clients.
- You must practice a **no discrimination** policy in food distribution.
- ***Your agency must attend the annual Civil Rights training at Feeding the Gulf Coast.***
- USDA commodities may not be stored in a private home.
- Pantries must ask their clients to complete a **current year** Self-Declaration form declaring that they are eligible to receive USDA commodities. You may not ask for additional documentation of need or to verify the information given on the Self-Declaration form.
- Agencies serving prepared food must determine, in their estimation, that at least 51% of those participating are needy. In this case, participants do not need to fill out a Self-Declaration form but should sign in on the Sign-In sheet provided to agencies.
- You must allow access to your agency’s food storage facilities and records if requested by a USDA inspector.



REQUIRED RECORDS

USDA COMMODITIES

Agencies must maintain records that accurately reflect the following items. These records should be maintained for three years plus the current year **at the site where the food is stored**.

Commodities In

Maintain copies of the invoices you receive from Feeding the Gulf Coast in a file folder documenting the commodities you receive from us.

Commodities Out:

Pantries: Keep track of each time USDA commodities are issued to each recipient by having the recipient sign and date on the back of their Self-Declaration form (*sample included*.) Keep these Self-Declaration forms in a file folder for three years plus the current year.

Residential Agencies (*homes for mentally challenged, half-way houses, addiction recovery homes, etc.*): Remember, in order to use commodities, you must first determine, in your estimation, that at least 51% of the participants are eligible. You must keep track of the number of residents and the number of meals and snacks served each day. You may keep this information on the Soup Kitchen form (*copy included*.). Each day commodities are used, write on the Soup Kitchen form the number of residents and number of meals/snacks served. For instance, in the block for April 2, 2020, you might write “35 residents, 3 meals, 2 snacks” Keep these Soup Kitchen forms in a file folder.

End-of-Month Inventory

At the end of each month, take inventory of the USDA commodities used at your facility on the USDA Inventory form (*copy included*). Keep these monthly inventory pages in a file folder. For help completing these forms, contact your Agency Relations Coordinator.

Temperature Record

For each frozen, refrigerated and dry area where USDA commodities are stored, keep a Temperature Record. If you have more than one refrigerator, freezer, or dry storage room, you will need to use a Temperature Record for each one individually and indicate for which unit it records. Maintain a consistent record—at least three times per week. Keep the completed records in a file folder for three years.

Monthly Report

At the end of each month, your agency should report the distribution totals to FTGC through Primarius Web Window (PWW) under the Statistics page. These reports will be due by the 5th of the following month. If your agency does not submit these statistics, you will not be able to place an order for pickup or delivery and any existing appointments will be canceled until the reports have been submitted.

Pantries: Report the total number of **households and individuals** served, including the total number of children (ages 18 and under), the total number of seniors (ages 60 and older), and the total number of veterans in the household. The total number of individuals served more than once per month if your program serves more than once per month.

Soup Kitchens, Residential Programs, etc.: Report the total number of **meals** served, total number of **people** served, total number of children ages 18 and under, and total number of seniors ages 60 and older. The total number of meals served should not be less than the total number of people served.

REQUIRED RECORDS *continued*

Standards for Storage Facilities

Facilities for the handling and storage of USDA foods must:

- Be sanitary and free from rodent, bird insect and other animal infestation
- Include safeguards against theft, spoilage and other loss
- Provide for the maintenance of food at proper storage temperature

Methods of Reducing and Eliminating Insect Infestation

- The most effective way of eliminating insects is by fumigation. Fumigations services should be rendered by a reputable licensed company on a regular basis at a minimum of at least once per month agency must provide a copy of your pest control contract.
- Foods susceptible to infestation may be placed in a cooler or chilled storage space as a means of reducing insect activity.

NON-USDA FOOD

Agencies must maintain records that accurately reflect the following items. These records should be maintained for three years ***at the site where the food is stored.***

Pounds In

Agency should keep all invoices from FTGC for three years plus the current year. They should be kept separate from other FTGC invoices and readily available during site visits.

Temperature Record

For each frozen, refrigerated, and dry area where commodities are stored, keep a Temperature Record. If you have more than one refrigerator, freezer, or dry storage room, you will need to use a Temperature Record for each one individually and indicate for which unit it records. Maintain a consistent record—at least three times per week. Keep the completed records in a file folder.

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GUIDELINES

DISASTERS

- In the case of a disaster, there may be an increase in food distribution points, therefore your agency may see a drop in the number of requests for food. However, if you do receive requests, you may continue to operate as usual.
- During all phases of a disaster we may operate on an emergency basis in regards to Operations and Delivery. Preference and priority will be given to those in the immediately affected areas. FTGC may be temporarily unable to be open for product selection and deliveries of agencies in non-affected areas.
- After a disaster, you must contact your Agency Relations Coordinator to let them know if you are operational. "Operational" is defined by ***safely able to distribute food, water, and supplies in a paved lot or a building with a paved lot while maintaining a sign in sheet.*** If you cannot reach your coordinator on the phone, leave a voicemail or e-mail with your **agency number** stating whether or not you are operational, and if you can accept more food to feed affected areas.
- During a disaster food safety is still required, as are basic sign in sheets to track individuals. However, we understand some slight modifications will need to be made due to loss of structure and facility. Please contact your Agency Relations Coordinator with any questions.
- Please refer to the FTGC Agency Disaster Plan specific for your state and protocol of events. This includes all documentation during a disaster. If you have any questions or concerns please contact your Agency Relations Coordinator.
- If you have any questions regarding the distribution of TEFAP commodities during a disaster, then please contact your Agency Relations Coordinator.

ORDERING FOOD

- An appointment is required for all FTGC warehouses. Appointments must be made through Primarius Web Window (PWW) at least three working days in advance but no greater than eight working days in advance. View the Primarius Web Window Guide for instructions on using PWW.
- At the Theodore Warehouse, agencies do not need an appointment if they **ONLY** wish to pick up produce, dairy, and bread. This produce pick up is on a first come, first serve basis.
- For pickups, you must sign in at the warehouse. Please have a photo ID ready to show the warehouse staff prior to entering the warehouse. This ID will be checked against the list of authorized agency representatives that we have on file for your agency. The main contact for your agency must contact Agency Relations to have this list updated.
- You must pay each time you receive food with a check from your agency. We do **NOT** accept cash, personal checks, or credit cards. For pickup orders, you will give your *receipt* to the warehouse associate who completes your order. For delivery orders, you will give your *check* to the driver.
- A \$25 restocking fee will be charged to agencies who cancel orders and mobile pantries less than one working day in advance. A \$50 fee will be charged to agencies who do not show up for their scheduled appointments for pickup or delivery.
- There is a \$25 charge for all returned checks and your agency will be placed on hold until the returned check and \$25 charge are paid.
- Please order only as much as your agency can use. If you order excess product and ask to return some at the time of pick up or delivery, you will be charged a \$25 restocking fee.

GUIDELINES *continued*

- All products are issued in cases or unit boxes, except for perishables. You must take the entire case or box that you order. You may not sort through the boxes to remove unwanted items. Our volunteers have already sorted the product for food safety under the supervision of Reclamation staff.
- Only 2 people per agency are allowed in the warehouse areas at one time. You may bring additional staff/volunteers to help with loading your vehicle, but they may not enter the warehouse.
- Each visit must be completed in 30 minutes. You must stay within the designated areas of the warehouse.
- No children under age 16 are allowed in the warehouse area without adult supervision.
- Closed toe shoes should be worn at all times. Cell phone use is not permitted in the warehouse.

NOTE: Agency representatives who do not comply with these guidelines, commit theft, or create an unsafe or hostile environment for other agencies will be banned from the warehouse and another agency representative will need to be appointed to pick up food on behalf of the agency.



GENERAL INFORMATION

We are happy to have you as a member agency of Feeding the Gulf Coast. This booklet is intended as an overview of the guidelines for using the food bank; however, if you have other questions, please call the Agency Relations department or email agencyrelations@feedingthegulfcoast.org.

The Main Branch office hours at 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The Panhandle Branch office hours are 7:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Alabama and Mississippi Agencies

5248 Mobile South Street., Theodore, AL 36582 | *phone:* (251) 653-1617 Option 4 | *fax:* (251) 653-4208

Main Branch Warehouse Hours:

Monday-Friday Mornings: 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Tuesday Afternoons: 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

Closed Saturday and Sunday

Florida Agencies

5709 Industrial Blvd., Milton, FL 32583 | (850) 626-1332 ext. 202

Panhandle Branch Warehouse Hours:

Tuesday-Friday: 8:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Closed Saturday through Monday