FOOD BANK
OF NORTHEAST GEORGIA

Member Manual

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Welcome to the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia!

We are grateful to have you join us in our mission to connect neighbors with nourishing food. Organizations like yours are the hands and feet of the work we do, and it would not be possible without you. Let's work together to create a place where we have every neighbor with enough food, every day!

Defining the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia

The Food Bank of Northeast Georgia serves as a distribution hub, procuring food through national, regional, and local donations, government grants, and purchasing. The Food Bank partners with wholesalers, grocers, manufacturers, and growers to collect fresh, frozen, and shelf-stable food items. These items are then made available to our Members, non-profit organizations partnering with the Food Bank to distribute locally to our neighbors seeking food assistance. Our Food Bank has two branches: one in Athens and one in Clayton. The Food Bank's service area includes 15 counties across Northeast Georgia: Banks, Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Franklin, Habersham, Hart, Jackson, Madison, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, and White counties.

Our Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission: We connect neighbors with nourishing food.

Vision: EVERY NEIGHBOR. WITH ENOUGH FOOD. EVERYDAY.

Values:

1. Accountability – We commit to continuous improvement and transparency in all that we do.
2. Belonging – We create a place of welcome and hospitality for all.
3. Compassion – We acknowledge that hunger is a burden that no one should bear alone.
4. Dignity – We honor the humanity of all people.
5. Efficacy – We get things done, and we understand the urgency of our work.
6. Stewardship – We honor the power of giving by applying resources in a mission-driven and thoughtful manner.

Common Food Bank Terms

Engagement Visit – Non-compliance visits by Food Bank staff to volunteer with Members, focusing on building deeper relationships and trust.

FIFO – First-In-First-Out (FIFO) is an inventory management method to optimize distribution quality, ensuring the oldest items stocked are the first items pulled from inventory and distributed.

Food Access Coordinator – Food Bank staff member dedicated to coordinating, training, and ensuring Members within a county region meet compliance standards.

Food Bank – a regional non-profit with the purpose of seeking, collecting, and safely storing millions of pounds of food to be provided for, delivered to, and distributed at local food programs, such as food pantries or soup kitchens, within its determined service region.

Food Pantry – an independent community site that hosts and distributes food directly to neighbors at risk of food insecurity.

Food Insecurity – a temporary or long-term condition in which a person lacks regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth, development, and an active and healthy life.

GNAP – Georgia Nutrition Assistance Program (GNAP) is funded by federal TANF funds with the purpose of providing food to children and families with children experiencing food insecurity.

Household – a house and all its occupants counted as one unit.

Member – a non-profit organization that has joined the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia's network to host local food distributions; also known as an Agency.

Member Reference Code – a shorthand code assigned to Members for login access and scheduling purposes.

Neighbor – an individual experiencing food insecurity.

Primarius (P2) – the inventory management system of the Food Bank which allows Members to place orders of bulk food for pickup or delivery, submit monthly statistics reports, and review invoices and statements.

Sharing Floor – a space dedicated for displaying food so Members may shop for smaller quantities of foods. Every active Member has access to both Sharing Floors at both Branches of the Food Bank (Athens, Clayton) by appointment.

Shared Maintenance Fee (SMF) – a nominal weight-based fee which Members provide to assist the Food Bank in funding the costs of Food Bank operations, which includes acquiring, moving, receiving, sorting, storing, and distributing food to Members. Shared Maintenance does not correspond to the retail or wholesale value of food items.

SNAP – the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federally funded benefits program providing a specified benefit amount each month to eligible individuals/families to use towards purchasing grocery items. This allows autonomy to choose foods that meet individuals' dietary, medical, and cultural needs or preferences. *(Previously known as "food stamps")*

TANF – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a federally funded grant program that allows states to create and administer their own assistance programs, replacing "welfare" federal programs. In Georgia, TANF provides funds for Food Banks to purchase and distribute GNAP foods as well as 48 months of cash assistance for eligible families.

TCS Foods – Time and Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) foods are foods that require specific temperature control to ensure they remain safe for consumption. TCS foods are more susceptible to spoilage, bacterial growth, and foodborne illnesses if not handled and stored correctly.

TEFAP – The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a federal program offering supplemental food assistance through USDA foods for Food Bank distribution.

USDA – the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is a federal agency that administers programs such as TEFAP and SNAP, and implements policies

and regulations related to American farming, forestry, ranching, food quality, food safety, and nutrition.

The Neighbor Experience

Our Neighbors deserve to receive high quality and nutritious food assistance with no impediments, and, to that end, the Food Bank and its Members strive to provide an exceptional level of service for Neighbors. Our goal is that every Neighbor interacting with the charitable food system be reminded of their inherent Dignity and be surrounded by a sense of Belonging and Compassion as they acquire the food that is essential to their lives.

Equitable and Free Distributions

Our Neighbors have the right to receive all food assistance free of charge and burdensome external requirements. Members are not permitted to charge for food, which includes bartering or trading of any kind. Neighbors cannot experience solicitations, religious proselytizing, or counseling while waiting to receive food assistance, unless by their own choice. Food assistance may not be withheld in exchange for participation in any sort of civic, religious, or other event or activity such as work, volunteering, or listening to a lecture or sales pitch. A Member may host a table or booth, or host a religious practice separate from the distribution. This allows Neighbors to approach for information or interaction by choice.

Additionally, Neighbors have the right to receive their food free of discrimination of race, color, citizenship, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation including gender identity or expression, unfavorable discharge from the military, or status as a protected veteran or by political affiliation. Members are responsible for how they and their volunteers conduct themselves. Members should establish clear safeguards to ensure that discrimination does not occur.

The Food Bank's partnership with Members found in violation of these regulations can be immediately and irrevocably suspended. Members should contact their Food Access Coordinator if they are concerned that they may be out of compliance with any of these requirements.

Neighbor Data and Privacy

The information Neighbors provide to receive food assistance is valuable and should always be properly handled, stored, and protected. Any documents with Neighbor information must be organized, stored, and secured on premises either physically or digitally. Information that our Neighbors provide to the Food Bank through our Members, such as TEFAP and GNAP forms, is not to be provided to or accessed by any party other than the Member and the Food Bank without written permission from the Food Bank.
All information submitted by a Neighbor is anonymous when reported to the Feeding America Network and will not affect their benefits or citizenship.
Members looking to collect and share pictures and content for marketing purposes should not include any identifying markers such as Neighbors faces, license plates, or names. If a Member would like to request a Neighbor to provide their story on-record or have their picture or video taken, the Neighbor and the Member must first sign a **Media Release Form** (Appendix).

Neighbor Accommodations

Members should plan for and provide reasonable accommodation when possible, utilizing any available resources to address language barriers, such as French or Spanish TEFAP forms, Google Translate, written word for hard of hearing and deaf, and verbal translation for those with vision loss and blindness. Physical assistance should be offered when possible, to those with physical limitations. In cases of a mental health crisis or for de-escalation, call 988. If at any time Members and/or volunteers feel physically unsafe during a distribution, call 911.

Volunteer Food Assistance and Member Food Usage

Members may not use Food Bank items as a reward or bribe for volunteer work. Volunteers are welcome to receive food assistance by adhering to the same requirements as every other person receiving food assistance. For example, volunteers must complete the appropriate paperwork at the distribution and the Member must ensure that no special treatment or privileges are given to volunteers. Additionally, Member volunteers must sign the Neighbor's First

Volunteer Agreement, pledging to serve Neighbors first, before seeking/securing food themselves (Appendix).

Common Distribution Methods

Members are welcome to distribute food through any method or combination of methods that they see fit, but should keep their budget, volunteer base, space, and time in mind. Your Food Access Coordinator can provide advice and help to set you up for success.

Food Pantry (FP)

A Food Pantry, sometimes called a Standing Pantry or On-Site Pantry, consists of a brick-and-mortar food pantry which often requires Neighbors to enter a building to receive food. A dedicated storage area is required, though there are no limitations on minimum or maximum pantry size. This storage area cannot be in a personal residence and must meet all requirements for food safety, monitoring and maintaining safe storage temperatures, enacting regular and comprehensive pest control, and maintaining general cleanliness.

Members may provide food from their food pantry via pre-packed or choice style distribution. Common distribution styles associated with a Food Pantry include:

1. Pre-Packed Food Boxes: Members collect and pack boxes or bags with food from their pantry ahead of time for their distribution. In this “pre-packed” manner, the Member determines a menu per household based on the food they have within their food pantry. Each household receives a “one-size-fits-all" box. Members can provide these boxes through Neighbor receiving the box in the Food Pantry or by having the Neighbors drive through a line to receive food.

2. Choice Pantry/Choice Market: Members display the contents of their food pantry and direct the Neighbor to take what they would like with or without quantity limitations, similar to the function of a grocery store. In this style, Members may provide bags/boxes or choose for neighbors to be responsible for bringing their own bags, totes, or carts to transfer food to their cars or homes.

Mobile Pantries (MP)

Mobile Pantry distributions are “pop-up” style events that take place in parking lots or large indoor spaces. Mobile pantries are most effective when location and timing are consistent; regularly scheduled for weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly distributions.

Common styles of Mobile Pantry distributions:

1. **Drive Thru**: Drive Thru distributions permit Neighbors to remain in their cars to receive food assistance at a faster and more convenient pace, sheltered from the elements. Members generally arrange lanes of cars to ensure safe and proper traffic flow into and out of the area, then pull one or multiple cars through the line at a time to receive their food.

2. **Choice Market**: Members display their food on tables and have the neighbors park, then walk through the area to receive a pre-determined number of items. In this style, neighbors are responsible for bringing their own bags, totes, or carts to transport food to their cars or homes.

Direct Distribution

Direct Distribution is a form of distribution in which Members take food directly to neighbors. This can take the form of prepared meals or groceries packed into bags or boxes by Member staff or volunteers, typically delivered to the Neighbors’ homes. This is often used to serve

home-bound neighbors, Seniors, and neighbors experiencing homelessness.

Direct Distribution may be an option for providing food access in your community without the requirement of having a designated storage space, refrigerator, or freezer. However, Members who opt to provide Direct Distribution must still adhere to all regulations regarding food safety standards, especially in the case of not having proper and approved storage space and/or not being verified for On Premises Meals. Members who choose to provide Direct Distribution must uphold the following regulations:

1. Cold and frozen foods must be distributed within 4 hours of receipt. All shelf-stable foods should be distributed before the end of the day. All food must be transported, staged, and held at temperatures appropriate to the relevant food item.

2. If a Member has excess foods by the end of the distribution, foods can only be stored at sites pre-approved by the Food Bank, meaning food cannot be stored in your car overnight, but can be donated to another Member. For Members to be approved for sharing food with each other, they must complete and record exchanges using the **Member-To-Member Food Sharing Agreement** (Appendix).

On Premises Meals (OP)

This style of food distribution involves preparing food on-site and serving those meals to neighbors. These meals can either be on-the-go or served at the member's facility. To provide On Premises Meals, Members complete the following:

1. Have a dedicated room or space for preparing and cooking food. The site must be adequate for storing and cooking foods and follow all regulations set by the Food Bank for proper and safe food storage, have access to a sink and fresh water, and

include a **Weekly Temperature Log** (Appendix) for all refrigerators or freezers in the space. This room must be inspected and approved before the Member is permitted to use Food Bank food for On-Premises Meals.

2. Maintain compliance with all local and state Health Departments and other regulatory authorities. Report their health inspection score during annual monitoring visits (as applicable).

3. Have at least one associate of their organization with an active Servsafe Manager certification.

4. Use properly insulated containers to limit the exposure of cold and frozen foods to temperature danger zones.

5. Track and keep a record of all meals and individuals served using the **Meal Tracker Form** (Appendix). This includes tracking meals prepared with any amount of USDA and/or GNAP foods separately from meals which do not use USDA or GNAP.

6. Reporting statistics for prepared meals is different from other forms of food distribution. Neighbors that are served meals that have USDA ingredients do NOT need to fill out TEFAP forms. Instead, Member staff/volunteers must record how many meals using USDA product were prepared and served. Reporting statistics for food prepared with GNAP ingredients works the same way – record the number of meals prepared and served. Please see the **Meal Tracker Form** in the Appendix for a helpful chart for tracking meals.

Member Benefits and Responsibilities

Shared Maintenance Fees

The Food Bank is empowered to engage in its mission of connecting neighbors with nourishing food through individual donations, government grants and funds, and Member Shared Maintenance Fees. Member Shared Maintenance Fees are used for shipping, handling, sorting, storage, and similar costs associated with the infrastructure required to provide safe and quality food to our Members at a large scale. Food Bank Members agree to support a portion of the distribution costs and operation of the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia with a Shared Maintenance contribution of up to $0.19 per pound on food received. This is to help cover the indirect costs of sourcing and maintaining large quantities of food safely and is not a charge for food.

Sharing Floor

The Sharing Floor is stocked with donated products from local grocers, manufacturers, and retailers, providing a variety of individual shelf stable foods, meats, dairy items, produce, baked goods, and non-food product. These donations are checked for quality and safety before being made available to Members. No food consumption or tobacco use is permitted on the Sharing Floor. If a Member is ill, they should reschedule their appointment or have another member of their organization shop on the Sharing Floor in their place.

Members should note that the online inventory (including all USDA and GNAP foods) is not available to shop from the Sharing Floor, and the Sharing Floor inventory cannot be viewed when placing an online order.

Scheduling and Cancellations

Members may schedule a Sharing Floor appointment once a week, with a minimum of one business day ahead (I.E. calling Thursday allows a Friday appointment). There are no same-day appointments. Appointments are made for a full hour and on-the-hour. Appointments are currently limited to three Members per hour.

Hours of operation differ per location:

- Athens Branch: 8:00am-4:00pm.
- Clayton Branch: 8:00am-12:00pm, 1:00pm-3:00pm.

To request an appointment, Members may call the branch's Sharing Floor Coordinator (see contact information on page 30). If Members are unable to attend an appointment, they should call their branch's Sharing Floor to cancel their appointment. If the Food Bank is unable to answer a call, Members should always leave a voicemail with their phone number, Member Reference Code, and reason for calling. Food Bank Sharing Floor Coordinator's check the voicemails multiple times a day.

Shoppers

Members may have up to 5 registered Shoppers for their organization. Each Member may have up to two people on the Sharing Floor at a time as long as one person is a registered Shopper with a Member's Card registered with their name. Registered Shoppers may not share their cards for Sharing Floor Appointments. If a Shopper attends an appointment without a valid Shopper's Card or has lost their Member's Card, a new Shopper's Card will be provided for them at a $5 fee, which will be charged to the Member's account.

Members must communicate with their Food Access Coordinator when looking to add or remove Shoppers. New Shoppers will be required to complete an online New Shopper's Orientation, which includes the USDA Civil Rights training, ServSafe Food Safety training, New Member Orientation, and the New Shopper's Orientation Quiz. The Member should use the **Volunteer Training Log** (Appendix) to record each Shopper who has completed their trainings to be reviewed during annual inspections for each year. Members should retain their records for 5 years.

Checkout

All items a Member wishes to collect from the Sharing Floor must be separated by the category of items (e.g., grocery, snack, beverage, non-food, etc.). When a Member is ready to check out, they must notify a Sharing Floor Coordinator who will direct them, as each category of item must be weighed separately. By the end of the

process, an invoice will be generated which the Shopper must sign and leave at the Food Bank; they will be given a copy to keep. Please note that the hour-long appointment includes the checkout process. After checkout, the Member is responsible for loading all items they received into their vehicle.

Transportation Requirements

The Member must have their own equipment for the safe and proper transportation of foods. To be considered food-safe, refrigerated and frozen foods must be A) transported in a closed cooler, B) completely covered by freezer blankets, or C) placed completely inside sealed thermal bags.

All truck and trailer beds with food in them must be fully covered and secured with tarps before leaving the Food Bank premises. Members should secure their product as needed with equipment tie downs, such as ropes, bungee cords, or ratchet straps. Please remember to keep our communities clean by taking necessary precautions to ensure that no food is wasted or littered due to lack of proper securement.

If the Food Bank staff determine the Member does not meet the requirements for safe and proper food transportation, the Member will not be able to receive the food and the order will be reshelved. This includes if Food Bank staff determine that a vehicle or trailer is not fit to safely carry large amounts of weight.

Online Ordering

After completing onboarding, all Members will have access to the Food Bank's online ordering system. Members receive bulk products (including purchased, donated, and programmatic foods such as USDA and GNAP) through placing online orders for either pickup or delivery. Our online ordering system, Primarius (sometimes referred to as P2), does not include items available on the Sharing Floor, and both inventories are separate. Items available to order will differ depending on a Member's storage capacity, the program(s) in which they participate, and the warehouse location. When calculating costs,

please be aware the Shared Maintenance fees per case include the weight of packaging.
Online Ordering rules and requirements are as follows:

1. Members are encouraged to place no more than one order per week. If you believe that your programming requires you to place more than one order per week, you should contact your Food Access Coordinator to coordinate increased order frequency.

2. Online orders can be placed for **pickup or delivery** between 3 to 10 business days from the date of ordering. The date of delivery **must be confirmed by contacting our Warehouse** before delivery of your order is guaranteed.
    a) To request confirmation from our **Athens Branch**, please email **receiving@foodbanknega.org** and include your Member Reference Code, delivery address, order number, requested time, delivery date, and phone number.
    b) To request confirmation from our **Clayton Branch**, please call **706-782-0780** and, if we are not available, leave a voicemail with your Member Reference Code, delivery address, order number, requested tim, delivery date, and phone number.

3. Pickup orders should be picked up within the scheduled window. Orders may not be picked up before the scheduled window. The schedule window for pickups is between 7:30 am and 2:30 pm. If an order is not picked up by 2:30 pm on the scheduled day of pickup it will be reshelved. **If a Member is unable to arrive on the day of their scheduled order, they should contact their Food Access Coordinator or Peyton as soon as possible. If Member regularly no-shows picking up order, the Food Bay may employ corrective actions including, but not limited to, issuing a restocking fee, restricting Member pick-ups (delivery only), and/or only pulling order when the Member is present.**

4. When arriving at the Food Bank, Members proceed to the Receiving Office, ring the doorbell, and present their Members Card. Food Bank staff will provide the invoice and give directions for regarding loading. The order in which you are helped at the receiving office is the order in which Food Bank Staff will provide service. Members will be given an invoice (subject to change based on item availability). It is important that Members should confirm the items they receive.

5. Members picking up their order must be prepared to load their order into their vehicle(s). However, Food Bank Staff will assist if your vehicle can be loaded with the order via forklift.

6. Members picking up their order must have all the required equipment for safely transporting food (tarps, proper securement, freezer blankets, etc.) or they will not be allowed to transport their order.

7. Members should bring the appropriately sized vehicle or multiple vehicles to pick up their order(s) in a single visit.

8. Members are encouraged to pair online order pickups with other visits to the Food Bank when possible (such as attending a Sharing Floor appointment or meeting with a Food Access Coordinator), to make the most of their visit.

If there are any issues with a pickup or delivery, including not receiving ordered items, Members should contact their Food Access Coordinator.

Delivered online orders will include an additional delivery fee based on the distance between the Members's delivery location and the nearest Food Bank branch (Athens or Clayton), to be calculated by FBNEGA staff:

- 10 miles or less = $50
- 11-30 miles = $70 and an order minimum of 700 pounds

- 31-49 miles = $90 and an order minimum of 900 pounds
- 50+ miles = $100 or $0.10/lb (whichever is cheaper)
    - Athens: receiving@foodbanknega.org or (706) 354-8191 Ext. 110
    - Clayton: Call (706) 354-8191 Ext. 212

Food Bank staff will inform Members of free delivery days, where delivery costs are waived. Please ask your Food Access Coordinator for more information about the free delivery days in your county.

Schedule a Mobile Pantry

A Mobile Pantry can be scheduled without the need for a physical storage site, allowing Members the flexibility to serve more rural areas or use more convenient locations to distribute food. Mobile Pantry menus consist of a variety of shelf-stable, fresh, and frozen foods. Mobile Pantry distributions often use the Drive-Thru Direct Distribution style due to the quantity of food distributed and neighbors served. Additionally, as these events do not account for adequate Member storage of leftovers, Members' volunteers and staff must plan to distribute all food they receive before the end of their event.

To host a Mobile Pantry, the Member must complete the following

1. Complete Mobile Pantry application (located on the P2 Member Page)
2. Follow all USDA and TEFAP regulations to host Mobile Pantry Distributions. This includes collecting, storing, and reporting TEFAP information, as well as displaying required TEFAP signage.

3. Mobile Pantry Distributions must have the location(s) for distribution pre-approved by their Food Access Coordinator.
    a. If this location is not owned by the Member, the Member and the site's owner or representative must sign and submit **Third Party Site Agreement** (Appendix) to their Food Access Coordinator before the distribution.

4. The Member must have the date and time confirmed by Tracey Massey at (706) 713-9319 before a distribution can be officially scheduled. Members who are hosting a Mobile Pantry for the first time will be required to volunteer at another Member's Mobile Pantry distribution before being permitted to host their own.

All requirements must be met at least 30 days before the planned distribution. For more information regarding a Mobile Pantry, please contact your Food Access Coordinator or Tracey Massey (706) 713-9319.

TEFAP/USDA

Through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) acquires a variety of nutritious, high-quality foods and makes them available to State Distributing Agencies, such as our Food Bank. Our Food Bank can then provide USDA products to participating Members. If a Member is not receiving USDA but would like access, they should contact their Food Access Coordinator.

Members who qualify for accessing TEFAP/USDA foods include:

- Members with emergency feeding programs
- Food Pantries and Drive-Thru Distributions
- Mobile Pantry Distributions
- Community and Soup Kitchens
- Emergency shelters with 3 days or less stay

Members who do not qualify for TEFAP/USDA Foods include:

- Members who do not offer public food distributions
- Members who have requirements to be met before Neighbors can receive food, such as completing a program, listening to a solicitation, or a proof of referral.

- Recovery and Rehabilitation Sites
- Summer Camps for children or child nutrition programs providing food service (besides backpack programs)
- Charitable Institutions such as retirement homes or hospitals
- Nutrition Project and programs for the elderly, such as Meals on Wheels
- Disaster Relief Programs

Members who distribute USDA foods must adhere to the following regulations:

1. Comply with all Food Bank standards and regulations.

2. Ensure that each person or household (if applicable) receiving any amount of USDA food first completes a current year **TEFAP Eligibility Form** (Appendix) in its entirety.
    i. Note: Members are NOT ALLOWED to alter the TEFAP Forms in any way. For instance, Members should not shrink the TEFAP form to fit the information of two households on one piece of paper. Any alteration or edits to the TEFAP Eligibility Form is strictly prohibited.

3. Members must complete a current year **TEFAP Commodity Distribution Record** (Appendix) for either each Neighbor served or, if all Neighbors receive the same items and amounts of USDA foods during a distribution, per distribution.

4. Submit monthly USDA statistics reports regarding the completed TEFAP forms they have collected over each month. Statistics reports for Members distributing USDA must be submitted by ***no later*** than the first day of the following month. If the Member needs clarification on reporting USDA/TEFAP statistics, they should refer to the **Statistics Reporting Guide** (Appendix).

5. Print and display a legible **“And Justice For All” flyer** (Appendix) in an area visible to Neighbors during all USDA/TEFAP distributions.

6. Print and display a legible **“Written Notice of Beneficiary Rights”** (Appendix) in an area visible to Neighbors during all USDA/TEFAP distributions.

7. Members must separate all USDA foods from non-USDA items and label the shelf or unit holding USDA foods.

8. Members must keep their USDA Civil Rights certificate of completion on-site.

Members may be chosen at random for an annual USDA audit, unrelated to their regular Monitoring Visit, and should always remain prepared for an audit.

GNAP

GNAP provides nutritious foods intended only for families and guardians with children under 18. The period in which our contract allows us to have access to and provide verified Members GNAP foods is apt to vary annually. Verified GNAP Members must distribute all GNAP foods in their inventory before the end of each active GNAP period (as listed in their GNAP MOU).

Members who distribute GNAP foods must:

1. Comply with all Food Bank standards and regulations.

2. Complete the annual GNAP Training.

3. Complete a current year GNAP MOU. The Member must also keep a copy of their completed GNAP MOU on file.

4. Members must separate all GNAP foods from non-GNAP items and label the shelf or unit holding GNAP foods.

5. Only distribute GNAP foods to children or families/guardians with children.

6. Ensure each family/guardian receiving GNAP has completed a GNAP form before receiving food.

7. If the Member is serving a child directly (such as a backpack program or On-Premises Meals), no form needs to be completed; instead, the Member must track how many children and how many times each child was served.

8. If serving and preparing meals with GNAP, the Member must be previously approved for On Premises Meals. The Member will track all meals prepared and served with any amount of GNAP product using the **Meal Tracker Form** (Appendix).

9. Submit monthly GNAP statistics reports regarding the completed GNAP forms they have collected over each month. Statistics reports for Members distributing GNAP must be submitted by ***no later*** than the first day of each month.

10. All GNAP product acquired by the Member must be distributed within the GNAP period.

Any Member participating in GNAP may be selected for a GNAP audit during each GNAP period.

Member Enablement

Member Enablement allows Members to act as an extension of the Food Bank to collect, sort, and distribute foods from a local grocer or retailer as determined by the Food Bank, at no cost to the Member. Members who are approved for this program will be paired with a store determined by location, availability, and scheduling convenience. Then, Members will follow a schedule to receive donations from that store, weigh donations using equipment provided by the Food Bank, and then report the pounds and categories of food received before the Member processes and distributes the donations.

Interested Members with a record of good standing and compliance with the Food Bank may request access to this program through their Food Access Coordinator. Member Enablement may not be immediately available to Members due to limited participating grocers and retailers. In the event that Member is paired with a retailer, the Member must complete the **Member Enablement MOU** (request this from your FAC) and corresponding training before picking up food from retailers.

Mobile School Food Pantry

Members order and manage a monthly Mobile Pantry to distribute at a school(s). These events function like our general Mobile Pantry program but are specific to serving only children and families of that school rather than being open to the public.

In-School Pantry

In-School Pantries are food pantries that operate inside of a school or child-centered organization and require a close partnership between Members and school leadership. Members assist schools by regularly communicating with staff and consistently stocking the In-School Pantries as needed. School staff typically determine when the pantry is open, what items it contains, and how it is advertised to students and their families.

SNAP

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is an entitlement program funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that provides a monthly benefit amount on an EBT card to eligible individuals/families. The Georgia Department of Family and Child Services (DFCS) reviews all applications and makes decisions on approval and benefit amount based on household size, income, living expenses, medical expenses, and disability status. SNAP benefits can be used when buying food at grocery stores or farmers markets that accept EBT—making it possible for individuals/families to shop for fresh produce, foods that meet specific dietary needs, and foods fulfilling cultural preferences.

Connecting Neighbors to SNAP benefits is one of the quickest and most effective ways to help them gain regular, quality access to food.

FBNEGA SNAP Department:
The Food Bank of Northeast Georgia's SNAP Department supports neighbors inquiring about SNAP benefits by providing eligibility prescreens, assistance with applications and/or renewals, and answering SNAP-related questions. This allows our neighbors to speak with someone about their benefits over-the-phone, through text message, or in-person when they may be unable to contact their DFCS caseworker or their local DFCS office.

Referring Neighbors for Assistance:
If your organization would like to have SNAP referral flyers and/or signage to distribute to neighbors or display within your organization, please reach out to your Food Access Coordinator or our SNAP Benefit Coordinator, Liz Mann (lmann@foodbanknega.org) to be connected with our SNAP Department.

On-Site SNAP Application Assistance:
If you are interested in providing SNAP application assistance on-site for the neighbors you're serving, please contact your Food Access Coordinator or our SNAP Benefit Coordinator, Liz Mann (lmann@foodbanknega.org) for options and details.

Food Safety and Member Regulations

Food and Storage Safety

Food Monitoring

Members should establish a weekly routine for checking the quality of their food and ensuring their storage space is neat and clean. These routines should include monitoring and recording temperatures from all refrigerator and freezer units. As Members collect food to store in their pantry, they should follow the FIFO (first-in-first-out) method to ensure all food is distributed within its optimal window. Members

should distribute any food they receive from the Food Bank within 60 days (about 2 months).

Dry storage spaces should be climate controlled with standing temperatures between 45-85 degrees Fahrenheit. If food bank food is stored in a space without air conditioning or heat, the Member must display a thermometer in the room and include the temperature of the room in the **Weekly Temperature Log** (Appendix). If temperatures of your storage are outside the recommended range, contact your Food Access Coordinator.

Temperature Log

Members using any refrigerator or freezer space for storing Food Bank foods must keep and record a **Weekly Temperature Log** (Appendix) of all units being used. Each unit must be clean and hold a working thermometer or be able to provide an internal temperature (such as a temperature display). Members should not use temperature guns to record temperatures for refrigerator and/or freezer units.

Refrigerator storage should remain between 33 - 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Freezer units should be kept at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or lower. If records show units above the proper holding temperatures for two days in a row, contact your Food Access Coordinator.

Members should follow proper food storing methods to prevent cross contamination when storing TCS foods and raw meat. For more information on proper food storage, please refer to the ServSafe Food Handler Training.

Pest Control

Members must have an active pest control routine if storing food at their facility. Pest control can be provided by a pest control company quarterly or enacted by the Member monthly. The Member must be prepared to show proof of a record of their pest control by reference of receipt or the Food Bank's **Pest Control Log** (Appendix) during annual inspections.

Storage Security

Food pantries must be locked to prevent anyone accessing and taking Food Bank foods during non-distributing hours and without proper supervision, unless otherwise approved by your Food Access Coordinator.

Food Expiration Dates and Damage

Foods our Members may receive might be expired or have damaged packaging. In these instances, Members should always refer to their ServSafe Food Handler Guide regarding what damaged items are acceptable and what must be discarded. Many items past their expiration date are still safe to consume and the quality of most food items are unaffected within 6 months of the expiration date. For this reason, any safe food items at the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia may be offered to Members up to 6 months past the expiration date. If Members are unsure if an expired food is still safe to consume, they should reference the **USDA Food Keeper App** (https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/foodkeeper-app).

Distributing Food/Serving Neighbors in Other Counties, States

Members may only distribute food within the Food Bank's 15-county region, which includes Banks, Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Franklin, Habersham, Hart, Jackson, Madison, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, and White Counties in Georgia. However, if a Member would like to establish a distribution in a county outside the one in which they are registered but within the region, they must contact their Food Access Coordinator.

All neighbors requesting food assistance from a neighbor may receive it, despite the county or state in which they live. However, if a Neighbor does not live in Georgia, they are not eligible to receive USDA or GNAP foods.

Choosing a Warehouse

After completing onboarding, Members are given the choice between ordering online product through our Clayton or Athens locations. This choice determines availability of food for online ordering, delivery availability, and delivery fee costs. If a Member would prefer to change their location, they must contact the Food Access Coordinator.

- *Members can use the Sharing Floor at both our Clayton and Athens locations, regardless of which location they are registered for Online Orders.*
- *Please make sure to contact the correct location when calling the Food Bank regarding online order delivery or scheduling a Sharing Floor visit.*

Statistics Reporting

Member statistical reports are due by the last day of each month. Members who host distributions near the end of the month are permitted up to seven (7) days in the following month to report their statistics. Members who fail to report their statistics on time will be automatically suspended from completing a Sharing Floor appointment and placing online orders and may also affect the Member's Mobile Pantry Distribution(s). If Members need assistance with reporting statistics, they should refer to the **Statistics Reporting Guide** (Appendix) or contact their Food Access Coordinator.

Recording and Storing Food Bank Paperwork

Member paperwork should be organized and filed, either physically or digitally, in an easily accessible way on-site for 5 years. Members should be prepared to present the following during annual inspections (if applicable):

- Distribution Logs
- Pest Control Logs
- Temperature Logs
- Meal Tracker Forms
- Current year Member Contract

- ServSafe Food Safety or Manager certification
- USDA Civil Rights Certificate and Log
- TEFAP Eligibility forms
- TEFAP Commodity Distribution Forms
- GNAP Eligibility Forms
- GNAP MOU
- Food Bank Program Agreements

Updating Contact Information

Members are responsible for updating their Food Access Coordinator on all relevant information. This includes removal or request to add new Shoppers, a change in contact information, any changes in leadership, and changes in location or storage of Food Bank Foods. If the Food Bank is unable to contact a Member due to outdated contact information, the Member may be suspended until all relevant information is updated.

Advertising for Member Distributions and Events

While we advertise Member Distributions on our Food Bank's Food Finder webpage, Members are responsible for advertising their food distributions in their community through their own chosen means, such as by word of mouth, posted flyers, church bulletins, local newspapers and radio stations, etc.

Member Volunteer Outreach

Members are responsible for supplying their own volunteers without the assistance of the Food Bank. If a Member would like advice on how to outreach for volunteer assistance, they may request support from their Food Access Coordinator.

Donating Foods to Other Members

Members may donate food to other Members so long as both Members meet the following requirements.

1. The receiving Member must have food storage that has been approved by the Food Bank.

   a. The receiving Member must have working refrigerator and freezer units with an active temperature log before receiving any cold/frozen foods.

2. The receiving Member may not accept any items related to programs in which they do not participate (GNAP, USDA, etc.)

3. For each Member receiving or donating food, a **Member-To-Member Food Sharing Agreement** (Appendix) must be completed by each party before food can be donated. Each signed agreement must be held on-file for up to 5 years.

Inspections, Monitoring Visits, and Audits

Initial Inspection

New Members must undergo an initial inspection to determine if the future Member's space is fit preparing and serving meals, and/or food storage and distribution before accessing Membership Benefits. After a New Member has passed their initial inspection, their Food Access Coordinator will schedule their first annual inspection within three months.

Annual and Biennial Monitoring Visits

Members are required to undergo monitoring visits by their Food Access Coordinator, which can be scheduled for any month during each year. Monitoring visits are scheduled annually for most Members; however, Members may be scheduled for biennial visits as determined by the Food Bank. The Food Bank also reserves the right to schedule multiple or last-minute Monitoring Visits if deemed necessary.

During these visits, the Food Access Coordinator will review proper regulations regarding food safety, food storage, proper filing and organization, and accurate reporting. Members must have at least one associate of their organization available to host. All inspection

results will be shared with the associate during the visit, which will be formally addressed to the organization in a Findings Letter.

To be prepared for an upcoming Monitoring Visit, Members should refer to the **Inspection Readiness Checklist** (Appendix) and the **Member Monitoring Visit Form**.

Follow-Up Monitoring Visits

When a Member has been found out of compliance or has repeated a violation, the Food Access Coordinator will schedule a follow-up visit within three months of an unfavorable monitoring visit. In significant cases, this may result in automatic suspension. Any requirements that must be completed before the follow-up visit will be listed in the Findings Letter. In significant cases, this may require the Member to return all food product to the bank if their space is determined unfit for storing food. If the Member does not address all concerns formally provided by the Food Bank, the Member may be automatically suspended (see page 27 for more details).

Accounting

Miscellaneous Fees

Members should expect an annual $125 Member fee. If a New Member application is received during any period which is less than the full twelve months of the current calendar year, the membership fee for their first year will be prorated.

If Members lose their Shoppers card and need a replacement, or if a Member does not bring their Shoppers card to an appointment and needs a new card, the Member may accrue a $5 fee per card replaced.

Payments

Payments can either be completed by check or automatic debits. If choosing to pay by check, conditions listed below must be met or the Member may be issued a “Returned Check Fee” of $35.00:

- The check must be from the Member's establishment with the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia.
- Checks must be written out to the "Food Bank of Northeast Georgia" or "Food Bank NEGA".
- The memo should include both the Member Reference Code and the invoice number(s) being paid.

Setting up your account for automatic debits allows all statements to be automatically charged directly to the Member's bank account. If a Member prefers using automatic debits, Accounting will require the following:

- A void check from the Member's bank account
- The Member's bank account number
- The Member's bank routing number
- Billing contact information

If you have questions about finances or would like to set up automatic debits, please contact your Food Access Coordinator.

Invoices and Statements

Invoices are issued with every transaction. It is important for Members to collect all invoices they receive as content may be applicable to paying bills and completing documents, such as the TEFAP Commodity Distribution Record Form.

At the beginning of each month, the Member's designated billing contact will receive a statement for all fees and invoices collected in the previous month. **It is important to pay any due balance at the beginning of the month. Members who reach their credit limit will not be able to check out any product from online ordering or the Sharing Floor.** Payments towards credit balance may take between 2-5 business days to process and can be paid per statement or invoice.

Please note, however, for online and Mobile Pantry orders, some invoices may not be confirmed if perishables are required to be

replaced before delivery (such as if the produce ordered is no longer good) or if product was not received.

Late or Unpaid Invoices

All invoices must be paid within 60 days after the transaction date. Past-due accounts will result in Member suspension. Member deactivation will occur at 120 days.

Compliance Measures

Probation

A Member may be placed on probation for reasons including, but not limited to:

- Minor violations of compliance standards
- Inactivity of food programs
- Failure to communicate with a Food Access Coordinator
- Failure to update contact information

Probation may be cause for unannounced follow-up monitoring visits. The Member will remain under probation until otherwise notified but will retain the normal benefits of Membership with the Food Bank. Failure to resolve any issues that led to probation can lead to Member suspension, or in severe cases, deactivation.

Suspension

Though most Members will be notified of suspension, the Food Bank reserves the right to suspend Members without notice. If Members are unsure of the reason for their suspension, they should contact their Food Access Coordinator.

Reasons for suspension include but are not limited to:

- Failure to produce required documentation

- Overdue payments
- An unfavorable monitoring visit
- Prolonged inactivity of food programs (longer than 6 months without ordering food)
- Overdue monthly statistical reports
- Failure to fulfill MOU requirements
- Repeated violations of any Food Bank guidelines

Suspended Members are temporarily disallowed from accessing any Member benefits until otherwise notified. Because the suspension may have impact on our Neighbors, it is vital to avoid suspension and work to regain compliance as soon as possible.

Deactivation

Member accounts may be subject to deactivation due to prolonged suspension of 90+ days. Deactivated Members immediately forfeit access to all benefits and credits provided by the Food Bank and the relationship between the Member and the Food Bank is completely severed. It is up to the discretion of the Food Bank to inform the Member of their deactivation.

Termination

In matters of chronic and/or severe food safety issues, Civil Rights non-compliance, or potential civil or criminal investigations, and/or the like, a Member may be immediately terminated. Terminated Members immediately forfeit access to all benefits and credits provided by the Food Bank and the relationship between the Member and the Food Bank is completely severed permanently. It is up to the discretion of the Food Bank to inform the Member of their termination.

Addresses, Hours of Operation, and Contacts

Warehouses and Mailing Addresses

Physical Locations for our Food Bank warehouses are as follows:

- Athens Branch Location: 890 Newton Bridge Rd, Athens, GA 30607
- Clayton Branch Location: 46 Plaza Way, Clayton, GA 30525

- Mailing address: P.O. Box 48857, Athens, GA 30604

Hours of Operation

Athens Branch

- Administrative Offices: Mondays-Fridays, 8:00am-4:00pm.
- Sharing Floor: Mondays-Fridays, 8:00am-4:00pm.
- Warehouse Pickups: Mondays-Fridays, 7:30am-2:30pm
- Warehouse Deliveries: Mondays-Fridays, 7:30am-3:00pm

Clayton Branch

- Administrative Offices: Mondays-Fridays, 8:30am-4:00pm.
- Sharing Floor: Mondays-Fridays, 8:00am-12:00pm, 1:00-3:00pm.
- Warehouse Pickups and Deliveries: Mondays-Fridays, 7:00am-2:30pm

Staff Contacts

Member Relations

For Members located in Clarke and Oconee counties or regarding: Kaycie Malcolm Smothers at kmalcolm@foodbanknega.org or 762-356-4423.

For Members located in Barrow, Jackson, Madison, Hart, Elbert, and Oglethorpe counties: Kyle Fox kfox@foodbanknega.org or 706-713-9315

For Members located in Habersham, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, White, Banks, and Franklin counties: Annie Barnum at abarnum@foodbanknega.org or 706-960-9205

For reporting and issues concerning Member Enabled pickups: Dave Williams at dwilliams@foodbanknega.org or 706-850-3211

Accounting

For general questions concerning fees, statements, invoices, and payments, please first contact your Food Access Coordinator. If your Food Access Coordinator is unavailable, you may contact Tim Schreiber at tschreiber@foodbanknega.org or 706-960-9206.

Athens Warehouse
For scheduling or cancelling Sharing Floor appointments for the Athens Sharing Floor, please call (706) 354-8191 extension 106.

For scheduling deliveries or requesting change of day for pickup, please email receiving@foodbanknega.org.

To report significant issues with orders, bad or damaged product: Dave Williams at dwilliams@foodbanknega.org or (706) 354-8191 extension 111. If Dave Williams is unavailable, please report to your Food Access Coordinator.

Clayton Warehouse
For scheduling or cancelling Sharing Floor appointments for the Clayton Sharing Floor, please call (706) 354-8191 extension 212 or extension 208.

For all Warehouse concerns, reports, and issues, contact Philip Wilkes at pwilkes@foodbanknega.org or (706) 354-8191 extension 212.

To report significant issues with orders, bad or damaged product: Dave Williams at dwilliams@foodbanknega.org or (706) 354-8191 extension 111. If Dave Williams is unavailable, please report to your Food Access Coordinator.

For all other Member Relations matters contact Solomon Smothers at 762-356-4128 or ssmothers@foodbanknega.org.

General Food Assistance
Neighbors may call 211 for an emergency line providing local emergency resources and food distributions sites. Neighbors may also find food through our website's Food Finder webpage.

Appendix

Member to Member Food Sharing Agreement
Inspection Readiness Checklist
Media Release Form
Weekly Temperature Log
Meal Tracker Form (For On Premesis)
Volunteer Training Log
Neighbors First Volunteer Agreement
Third Party Site Agreement
TEFAP Eligibility Form Effective 10.01.26 (English))
TEFAP Eligibility Form Effective 10.01.25 (Espanol)
TEFAP Commodity Distribution Record
Statistic Reporting Guide
"And Justice for All" Poster
Written Notice of Beneficiary Rights