



PARTNER
AGENCY
**REFERENCE
GUIDE**

2025 - 2026

fighting
hunger. feeding
hope.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Introduction to Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida.....	5
Chapter 2	Partnership Requirements.....	9
Chapter 3	Types of Programs Eligible for Partnership.....	11
Chapter 4	Disclaimer and Neighbor Rights.....	13
Chapter 5	Record Keeping Requirements.....	15
Chapter 6	Site Visits with Food Bank Partner Agencies.....	19
Chapter 7	Storage and Handling of Product	21
Chapter 8	Unauthorized Use of Food Bank Product.....	23
Chapter 9	Communications.....	25
Chapter 10	Partner Agency Training Opportunities.....	27
Chapter 11	Food Bank Operations.....	29
Chapter 12	Past-Due Balances & Returned Checks.....	31
Chapter 13	Code of Conduct.....	33

Chapter 1**Introduction to
Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida**

Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida is a nonprofit organization dedicated to collecting, storing, and distributing donated food to over 870 feeding partners across seven Central Florida counties: Brevard, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Volusia. Through a network of emergency food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, senior nutrition programs, group homes, afterschool initiatives, in-school pantries, and daycare centers, Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida ensures that food reaches those in need across the region.

**Mission**

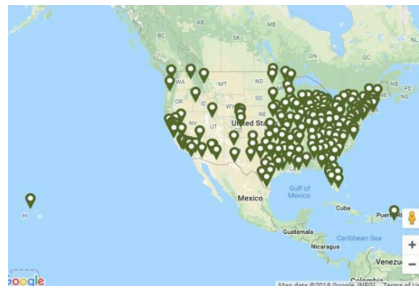
To create hope and nourish lives through a powerful hunger relief network, while multiplying the generosity of a caring community.

Vision

Inspiring and engaging our community to end hunger and help our neighbors thrive.



Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida is a proud member of Feeding America, the nation's largest hunger-relief organization. Feeding America collaborates with food banks, pantries, and local programs to provide food to those experiencing hunger. In addition to its direct efforts, the organization advocates for policies that foster lasting solutions to hunger. Its network spans all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.



Feeding Florida is the state's network of nine food banks united in the fight against hunger. Our mission is to end hunger by advocating for effective policies, engaging key stakeholders, and mobilizing resources for our members. We support more than 2,400 local agencies that distribute food directly to those in need, working to create a hunger-free Florida.



Second Harvest Food Bank Locations



Mercy Kitchen



Orlando



Ocala

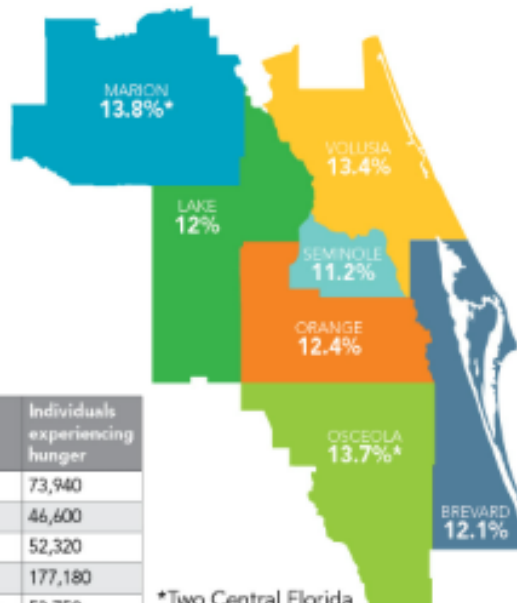


Daytona Beach



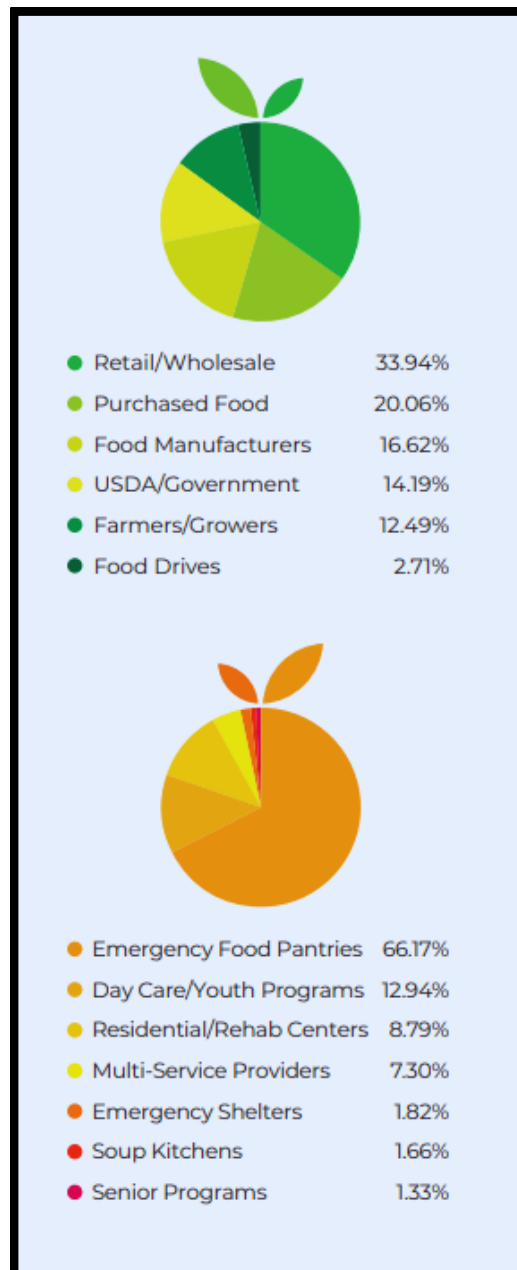
Melbourne

Food Insecurity Rates IN CENTRAL FLORIDA



County	Individuals experiencing hunger
Brevard County	73,940
Lake County	46,600
Marion County	52,320
Orange County	177,180
Osceola County	53,750
Seminole County	53,020
Volusia County	74,900
Total	531,710

*Two Central Florida counties have higher rate of food insecurity than the national average of 13.5%.

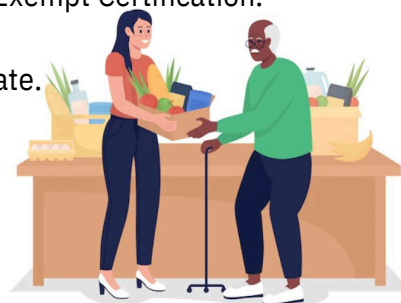


Chapter 2**Partnership Requirements**

- 1) To be a partner agency, the agency must have qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as a tax-exempt organization or be a church as described in Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code to which deductible contributions may be made and be chartered in Florida as a non-profit corporation. Other religious organizations such as synagogues and mosques may also fall under the “church” classification.
- 2) Must be located in Central Florida area in the counties we serve.
- 3) Feed the needy, the ill, or infants (infants all children under the age of 18) year round with a focus on feeding the community at least monthly.
- 4) Supply food directly to neighbors in the form of meals or food boxes at regularly scheduled hours. The schedule must be made and displayed publicly, so the community is aware of the program.
- 5) Agency shall not discriminate in the provision of services on the basis of National Origin, Color, Age, Race, Disability, Sex, Veteran Status or Gender Identity.
- 6) Have the capacity to receive, store, and distribute food safely and efficiently according to Second Harvest Food Bank standards.
- 7) Agree to support Second Harvest Food Bank with a per pound shared maintenance contribution and shop at the agency’s assigned branch at least every 60 days.
- 8) Allow monitoring by Second Harvest Food Bank representatives (staff or volunteer) as requested.
- 9) Limit food requested to an amount that can be distributed or consumed within a period of 60 days.
- 10) Keep distribution logs on food distributed. Submit number of households, individuals, and meals served monthly by the 10th of each following month.
- 11) Notify Second Harvest Food Bank of any changes in programs, personnel, addresses, contact phone numbers, and e-mail addresses in writing within 48 hours.
- 12) Agree NOT to sell food or non-food received from the Second Harvest Food Bank.
- 13) Agree to keep food within the location that the agency distributes. Product cannot leave the county, state or country that the agency resides in.
- 14) Agree NOT to exchange food or non-food received from Second Harvest Food Bank for goods, services or donations.
- 15) Ensure that at least one active member of the Feeding Program has an active Safe Food Handling Certification.

Any violation of the policies listed may result in agency suspension or termination.

- 1) Charging fees for meals, food boxes or individual products from Second Harvest Food Bank.
- 2) Failing to meet Health Department and/or Second Harvest Food Bank standards governing food storage, preparation, handling and security.
- 3) Allowing substantial balances due to Second Harvest Food Bank to remain after repeated requests for payment have been made (please note that agency statements are a form of request for payment) and/or writing checks with insufficient funds to pay Second Harvest Food Bank.
- 4) Failure to be available for **three** consecutive scheduled monitoring appointments.
- 5) Selling, bartering or exchanging food bank product for profit or gain.
- 6) Having food distributed and delivered in a location / manner not approved by Second Harvest Food Bank. (Product cannot ever leave the county, state or country).
- 7) Falsifying records and/or agency distributions.
- 8) Lack of security at the agency site which could cause Second Harvest Food Bank product to be lost or stolen.
- 9) Mistreatment of food recipients/neighbors.
- 10) Using food bank or other donated product (i.e. retail recovery items and food drive received from retailers) for personal gain or personal use.
- 11) Failure to have the Memorandum of Agreement signed by the Highest Authority, and returned to Second Harvest Food Bank in a proper time frame.
- 12) Failure to retain current Safety Food Handling Certification and Tax Exempt Certification.
- 13) Failure to record and report monthly statistics to SHFB by the due date.



Chapter 3

Types of Programs Eligible for Partnership

Emergency Food Pantry: An emergency food distribution program that provides food assistance on a regular schedule to people in need of emergency food. Food is consumed off-site.

Soup Kitchen/M Meal Program: An agency that serves emergency meals to neighbors on-site and on regularly scheduled days and hours.

Shelter: An agency that provides on-site meals in addition to emergency housing and other services (e.g. homeless shelter or domestic violence shelter).

Group Home: On-site programs specializing in a specific area in regard to neighbor needs.

Rehabilitation Facility: An agency that provides in house or outpatient assistance to patients need support.

Community Action Program: An agency that provides food assistance as well as other support to certain segments of the community.

Sheltered Workshop: An agency that provides work/vocational rehabilitation opportunities to developmentally and physically disabled people.

After School Program: A program that provides services to school-age children (tutoring and enrichment programs) after school hours. Summer programs are included in this category.

Elderly Nutrition: Any program that provides services on-site for the elderly where meals or snacks are served. This includes councils on aging, congregate meal sites and adult day care centers.

Other: These agencies do not fall in the above categories. Whether or not these agencies may become Second Harvest Food Bank partners will be handled on a case-by-case basis according to the guidelines set forth by Feeding America and Second Harvest Food Bank.

Note: The Food Bank does not serve foster parents, associations, private schools or religious academies.



Chapter 4

Disclaimers and Rights

DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTIES AND LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

Second Harvest Food Bank (SHFB) provides its agencies food and other grocery products on an “as is” basis and **does not make any express or implied warranties** of the food or grocery products that it distributes. Further, SHFB believes that it qualifies for the liability limitations of the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act (P.L. 104-210, 110 Stat. 3011 (1996)) when it distributes donations of apparently wholesome food and apparently fit grocery products. This federal law is applicable so long as the Food Bank is acting in good faith, but it does not apply if damages are the result of intentional acts or gross negligence.

The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act also applies to Partner Agency liabilities depending upon the facts and circumstances.



NEIGHBOR RIGHTS AND AGENCY AVAILABILITY

A. Notice to the Public of Availability

- 1) Partner agencies that provide emergency services to the community must have signage with **days and hours** of operation listed in a visible location on the outside of the building.
- 2) If a **scheduled** distribution must be changed, the agency should notify the public via **visible signage** on the outside of the building and on the outgoing message on the voicemail box/answering machine.

B. Neighbor Rules and Rights

- 1) Any rules or regulations that neighbors must adhere to must be in the form of a **written policy** to avoid discrimination or inconsistencies in how neighbors are treated.
- 2) We strongly encourage to post any **rules and expectations** that the agency has of its neighbors and that neighbors should expect of the agency. These should be placed in very visible and well-trafficked areas at the agency.
- 3) Neighbors must **not** be discriminated against. Any agency found in violation of this policy will be **terminated** as a Second Harvest Food Bank partner agency.

Chapter 5

Record-Keeping Requirements**Food Pantries**

Food pantries are required to maintain accurate records of the number of families and individuals served at each distribution on file at pantry.

Additionally, they must keep on file Temperature Logs, Safe Food Handling Certifications, Pest Control Certifications, a Memorandum of Agreement with Second Harvest Food Bank, and any other relevant contracts or agreements for 3 years plus the current year. They must also maintain copies of the agency's 501(c)(3) status and current Tax-Exempt certificates.



These can be kept on index cards, in computer databases, in individual neighbor files or in any other organized system. Records must be legible. Keep these records on file for 3 years and the current year. Also, if using computer make sure to have adequate backup capability.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) Pantries

Food Pantries that distribute The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) commodities received from Second Harvest Food Bank must keep separate TEFAP records. These records include TEFAP Eligibility Forms, Distribution Logs, TEFAP Contracts, TEFAP Monthly Report, Food Storage Temperature Charts and the other required paperwork. TEFAP records must be kept on file for at least 3 years plus current year.

Food Pantries

- Temperature Logs
- Safe Food Handling Certificate
- Distribution Logs
- Certified Pest Control Documentation
- Memorandum of Agreement
- 501C3
- State Tax Exempt Certificate

Additional Documentation

- Certificate of Eligibility Form
- TEFAP Contracts
- TEFAP Distribution Logs
- USDA Poster/Signage
- Number of Meals & Snacks served at each meal



On-Site Agencies

All agencies serving meals and snacks on-site only need to record the **number** of meals and snacks served at each meal. It is helpful, but not required, for soup kitchens/meal programs to have meal recipients sign in before eating.

Monthly Reporting

In addition to the record keeping requirements, all agencies must complete the appropriate monthly reports for their program type(s).

Partner agencies must submit monthly statistics via the partner website monthly by the 10th of the following month. This reports the total number of **households** and **individuals served** for food pantry programs and meals/snacks by on-site agencies.

Meal programs will be required to submit the number of meals served only per month.

Partner agencies that do not submit monthly statistics by the 10th of each following month may have their agency inactivated until the reports are received.

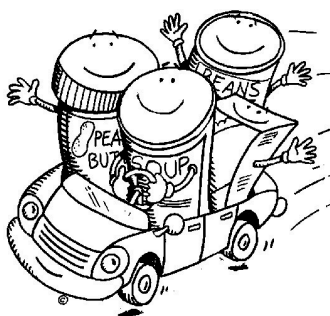
Social Security Numbers

The Food Bank **prohibits** any partner agency from using Social Security numbers (SSN), Passports or Birth Certificates as a screening tool. We have taken this stance for two reasons:

- 1) We believe that the risk of **identity theft** far outweighs any benefit of using a SSN to identify neighbors and to verify how many are in the household.
- 2) The process of using a SSN to screen/identify neighbors may be discriminatory since some individuals without documentation and experiencing homelessness may not have a SSN or Social Security card.

Partner agencies must use the same processes or requirements when conducting neighbor intake and screening for all including regular neighbors, first time neighbors and pantry volunteers.

Partner agencies **cannot** use neighbor tracking platforms to deny food access based on distribution history from other agencies.



Invoices

Partner agencies are provided an itemized invoice after their Second Harvest Food Bank shopping is completed. Check this invoice for accuracy before leaving the warehouse. Once the invoice is signed, you have agreed that your agency has received the product listed on the invoice. After you leave with your agency's product, nothing may be added to or deleted from your invoice.

Also, refer to these invoices when you receive food recall notices from the food pantry to ensure the recalled product is not being stored at or distributed from your agency.

All agencies must keep Second Harvest Food Bank invoices on file for at 3 years and the current year. Food Bank representatives will ask to see these invoices when they conduct site visits.

Surveys

Partner agencies are expected to respond to periodic Second Harvest Food Bank surveys in a timely manner. Some of these surveys are meant to gather up-to-date information on each partner agency while others help to determine the quality of service provided by Second Harvest Food Bank or allow us to find out what your needs are. As per the Second Harvest Food Bank Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), all agencies must participate in the annual partner agency survey.



Chapter 6

Site Visits With Food Bank Partner Agencies

Site Visits: Purposes, Frequency & Process

Feeding America's assurances to its donors that food bank partner agencies are certified and are visited regularly by food bank staff has contributed to its growth and credibility as a network. The site visit demonstrates accountability, and accountability is what national manufacturers and grocers ask for in return for their contributions of food and non-food essentials.

Each Second Harvest Food Bank (SHFB) partner agency will be visited by a SHFB representative a minimum of **once every 12 months**. Agencies that need to improve program implementation, record keeping or storage may be visited more often until conditions are improved. Site visits serve other purposes besides meeting SHFB, IRS and Feeding America requirements.

Site Visits:

- a. give agencies an opportunity to share concerns they may have about the services we provide. SHFB can address those concerns only if our staff is aware of them.
- b. are used to share information on new food bank programs and about other local partner agencies in your area.
- c. allows agencies an opportunity to share the good work they are doing in the community.

An Agency Relations Coordinator will call the agency, or send an e-mail message to inform the agency contact that a visit needs to be scheduled.

What to Expect During a Site Visit

1. The Agency Relations Coordinator will talk to you in detail about your agency.
 - a. We will cover the programs your agency operates, the populations it serves, service area, hours of operation, the number of individuals or meals provided, the agency's referral system, funding sources, and food providers (this list is not exhaustive).
 - b. We will explore how the Food Bank aligns with your agency's plan and identify the resources your agency needs to enhance its capacity to serve the community.
2. Storage and food preparation areas will be **inspected** to see if they meet SHFB specifications.
3. **Records** such as invoices, TEFAP forms, pantry distribution forms and other required paperwork will be checked.
4. The SHFB Representative will inquire about ways to improve our support to your agency and will also review SHFB programs that may be beneficial to your organization.
5. The SHFB Representative will inquire if there have been any updates to your agency's information, such as contacts, shoppers, hours of operation, phone numbers, mailing addresses, email addresses, and more.

If Something Needs Improvement

If the SHFB Representative finds something that needs improvement during the visit:

1. If a storage or record-keeping violation is minor:
 - a. If a follow-up is required, the agency contact will be notified in writing and provided with a designated timeframe to correct the issue(s). During this period, the agency may be temporarily inactivated until situation is resolved.
 - b. A follow-up visit may be conducted, if necessary, to assess whether the issue has been resolved. If the issue is corrected, the agency's status will be reinstated to "active." If not, the agency may face suspension or termination.
2. Major storage, record-keeping or other violations may result in immediate suspension or termination by the Agency Relations Coordinator.
 - a. The agency will be notified in writing of action to be taken.

Limited Nature of Site Visits

The site visit is primarily conducted to ensure that partner agencies are in compliance with SHFB rules and regulations and to satisfy SHFB contractual responsibilities to Feeding America. It is not intended to be a substitute for the agency's internal controls or supervision.

Storage and Handling of Product

Dry Storage

- Agencies must be able to store food at least **six** inches off the floor, **two** inches away from the walls of the storage area and **four** inches from the ceiling.
- Acceptable shelving must be made of non-porous materials. Metal shelving is preferred since it's easier to clean but wood can be used as long as it is painted or coated with non-porous material).
- Additional storage is acceptable on pallets as long as it is **six** inches off the floor.
- The storage area should be locked and secured to limit access to authorized personnel in emergency food pantries, soup kitchens and homeless shelters. This can be accomplished by locking the storage room or padlocking cabinet.
- Dry Storage temperatures need to be tracked on a regular basis to ensure that the temperature is 80 degrees F or below and all areas must be climate-controlled.
- Temperatures must be tracked before every distribution, **at least once a week**.
- All cleaning items and chemicals should be stored separately from food products to prevent contamination.
- Chemicals and cleaning items may never be stored above or on the same shelf as food items.
- There should not be signs of pest infestation in the storage area.
- Food may not be stored at a private residence or building that is on an individual's personal property.
- All food storage must be either at the agency's facility or in a designated off-site storage area.
- The agency must notify SHFB if food is stored at any additional locations, as these locations will also need to be inspected during the monitoring.

Refrigerated & Frozen Storage

- Refrigerators and freezers must be clean and in working order.
- SHFB product must be stored in a refrigerator or freezer **ONLY** used for the feeding program.
- Personal items or items from other groups or ministries at the agency may **not** be comingled with SHFB product at any time.
- Temperatures must be monitored with refrigerator/freezer thermometers to ensure equipment is cooling properly.
- **Refrigerator** temperatures must be at **40°F or colder** and **freezers** must be at **0°F or colder**.
- Temperatures should be monitored before each distribution or at least weekly to ensure food is being stored at a safe temperature.

Transport of Refrigerated and Frozen Food Bank Products

- All refrigerated and frozen food items must be transported covered with a freezer blanket, in coolers or in a refrigerated vehicle to prevent thawing or spoilage. Freezer blankets can be purchased online from Second Harvest Food Bank.
- All open top trailers, trucks, pickups, etc. must be covered with a suitable tarp that is secured for travel.
- All food must be covered to prevent loss, damage or spillage during transport.



Chapter 8

Unauthorized Use of Food Bank Product



SHFB product is donated for the **sole** purpose of feeding the needy, ill or infants (defined by the IRS as children younger than 18) according to guidelines set forth by the Internal Revenue Service and Feeding America. Using SHFB product in an unauthorized manner will result in suspension or termination of Food Bank shopping privileges.

- A. Religious organizations may **not** use SHFB product for any religious functions, including, but not limited to church dinners, Sunday school classes or vacation Bible schools.
- B. Program staff in group home, shelter, soup kitchen or other on-site agencies may consume SHFB product only when neighbor meals and/or snacks are served. Primary service must be to neighbors.
- C. SHFB products may **not** be used for the purpose of fundraising either as prepared food (such as spaghetti dinners or bake sales) or as “prizes.”
- D. Agencies **cannot redistribute** donated products to other SHFB member agencies, non-food bank member agencies, organizations or business entities.
- E. Agency volunteers may not receive food in exchange for their service. Volunteers should NEVER receive food as a “thank you” for their service. They also may not “cherry pick” product or set it aside before distribution to other food recipients. If volunteers need food assistance, they are to follow the same intake and distribution processes as all other neighbors.

If SHFB receives repeated negative reports concerning agency volunteers and the receipt of food or other items, the agency may be required to refrain from serving volunteers at all in order to maintain the partnership.



Chapter 9

Communications

Religious Proselytizing

- Agencies may **not** discriminate against neighbors on the basis of religious preference or status.
- Partner agencies **cannot require** neighbors to pray, worship or to receive religious messages as a condition of receiving food. Partner agencies are welcome to invite neighbors to participate in religious services, but must not tie those services to the food distribution process. If a food recipient does not wish to participate, their decision must be respected.
- Exceptions to this are programs in which neighbors voluntarily reside at an agency in which religion is a part of its stated mission (e.g. rescue missions).

Contributions from Food Recipients

Partner agencies must not request that neighbors provide “donations” or in any way infer that donations are required to receive food, it might be construed as payment for food.

Communicating Changes in Programs or Personnel

- Notify SHFB of any operational changes in your program that may affect your shopping volume or frequency. These types of changes include changes in days and hours of service, additions or terminations of programs and additions of facilities.
- Always report changes in shoppers or contacts for your agency. This ensures that information is directed to the appropriate staff and that only authorized people are allowed to shop for your agency.
- Notify SHFB concerning address, phone number and e-mail address changes. This will ensure that the appropriate person receives all pertinent information.
- If distribution is stopped, even if only temporarily, notify SHFB. This ensures that distribution days and times are updated or agency is inactivated, if necessary, to prevent neighbor referrals to agencies not open for distribution.



Chapter 10

Partner Agency Training Opportunities

SHFB strives to be a good steward of the food and other items that are donated to it. In order to be good stewards, we must ensure that partner agencies follow the rules and guidelines that have been put in place to ensure that donated products are used properly. To support this goal, SHFB provides mandatory training or optional training.

- A. Food Safety Training-mandatory (Online)
- B. Orientation Training for **new** Agencies or **new** staff/volunteers at existing agencies – Mandatory
- C. Yearly TEFAP Program Training (Mandatory for **TEFAP Agencies** only)
- D. Mobile Drop trainings (Mandatory for Agencies hosting Mobile Drops)
- E. Periodic enrichment trainings at Food Bank or at Partner Agency Conference

Partner Agency personnel who are trained are expected to share the training information with the necessary staff and volunteers at their agency.

All new agency contacts at existing partners must attend an Agency Orientation within 3 months of any change, and ensure proper staff are trained, have a current Safe Food Handling Certificate, and attend any other mandatory trainings.

Agency is responsible for keeping contracts and certificates current and updated for shoppers, main contact, and highest authority.



Chapter 11

Food Bank Operations

Warehouse Guidelines

1. Shopping is by appointment only. Agency must keep their assigned appointment.
2. Each agency is allowed **one hour** to complete their shopping experience (15 minutes for loading and 45 minutes for shopping in the Agency Mart .
3. Please notify SHFB 48 hours prior if you need to **cancel the** appointment.
4. SHFB is open to shoppers from Monday–Friday from 7:00a.m.-2:00p.m. If it is necessary for you to change an assigned shopping time, call the warehouse to change. We will try to accommodate each agency's shopping needs.
5. Must place order 2 business days prior to **shopping** appointment.
6. Must place order 3 business days prior to **delivery** of order.
7. Agencies must notify SHFB of authorized shoppers (not including highest authority and agency contact). Only two shoppers are allowed in the Agency Mart up to four loaders can assist with loading of food.
8. Do not take more product than your agency can distribute. This prevents product hoarding and gives all agencies more equitable access to food items. Also, do not take more products than you can load in your vehicle. We will not be responsible for items that you select but leave in the SHFB warehouse.
9. Do not open cases in the Agency Mart. This prevents damage to SHFB product and keeps the warehouse neat. Take whole, sealed cases only or choose individual product in designated bins.
10. Load your cart with the heavy items on the bottom for stability. Also, keep like items together; Produce with Produce, and No Shared Maintenance product separately in order to speed up the checkout process.
11. Produce and bakery items are always distributed without a shared maintenance fee. Agency shoppers may take as much as their program can distribute before spoilage sets in unless limits have been imposed due to inventory.

12. Once an agency receives an invoice, no new items may be added. Check your invoice for accuracy before signing it.
13. Follow the Partner Agency Code of Conduct at all times.
14. Remember that your agency is one of many that utilize SHFB. Share the resources that are available, and be helpful to your fellow agencies. We are all in this together.

Agency Shopper Safety Guidelines

1. Agency shoppers **must** wear closed-toe shoes.
2. Do not stand on pallets. This will prevent tripping and falling; prevent getting your foot caught between the slats; and prevent your foot from breaking through the wood.
3. Do not “under pick”. Please select product from the **top of the pallet**. Picking from under other cases may cause cases to fall. If you need assistance while shopping please notify staff.
4. Be aware of “**honking horns**”! This will alert you that a **forklift** is nearby. Shoppers are not allowed to operate power driven equipment.
5. Park in designated parking areas and abide by 5 mile-per-hour speed limit while on SHFB property.
6. In the event you are involved in an accident/incident we require that you report it to the staff and complete an accident/incident report.

SHFB reserves the right to limit the amount and type of product the agency may receive.

SHFB has the right to adjust the agency’s order accordingly and limits on products may be necessary due to inventory.



Chapter 12

Past-Due Balance & Return Check Policy

SHFB must be a good steward of our resources. We also must be fiscally responsible.

Any partner agency that owes **any** balance that is more than 30 days past the due date may have its shopping privileges suspended. If an agency is suspended the agency will not be able to shop or receive any SHFB services until any balance more than 30 days past the due date is cleared. We will provide copies of open invoices as requested, unless these invoices pre-dated our current database.

Note: Agencies are required to pay invoices within 30 days of shopping. New agencies must pay as they shop during the first 90 days of partnership.

Any agency with a returned check will have its shopping privileges suspended as well. Payments must always be made with an agency check. SHFB does not accept cash, personal checks, money orders or counter checks.

Any partner agency that is placed on suspension because of a past-due balance or a returned check may be required to **pay as it shops indefinitely**.

“Shopping” means any receipt of product from SHFB, i.e., receiving items through warehouse shopping, the purchase program, etc.

Please remember that any partner agency that is suspended for more than six months will have to reapply.

Chapter 13

Partner Agency Code of Conduct

Always be aware of your surroundings and act safely.

Always follow the directions of Second Harvest Food Bank staff.

Act with honesty and integrity at all times.

Treat others with respect and others will respect you.

Always SHARE available product.

Be patient and considerate of other agencies and our staff while shopping and loading.

Use kind words and gestures when communicating.

Always dress comfortably and appropriately and be wearing closed toed shoes.

No Food, Drink or Cellphones allowed in Warehouse.

