

Volunteer Guide

Welcome and thank you for your willingness to volunteer at the Sauk Prairie Area Food Pantry!

We are a not-for-profit social service agency established in 1983 by the Ecumenical Council of Sauk Prairie. We really rely and depend on volunteers like you to help the Food Pantry and we greatly appreciate your help.

This guide is intended to be a helpful tool in getting acquainted with the Pantry and its procedures. If you have questions, ask a Board Member or an experienced volunteer. We hope this will be a pleasant and worthwhile experience for you. Use your common sense and your best judgment and all will be well.

The Sauk Prairie Area Food Pantry Food Safety Policy is also included in this guide. Please familiarize yourself with this policy and follow it. If, in working with the food items, you find anything that seems to be damaged, spoiled or not good, discard it. When in doubt, toss it out!

WHO WE SERVE

Patrons must be residents of the Sauk Prairie School District and meet the financial guidelines to qualify for assistance. Each patron registers with their and their family's information: address, names of family members and the age of each; and any special needs. The chart outlining financial guidelines is printed and displayed at the Food Pantry. By verbally agreeing, the patron states that all the information is correct and that their family income falls at or below the level listed on the poster. A family may register at any time and may update their information at any time. Patrons must bring an ID for every member of the household every September (or when they first come.) A piece of mail showing they live in the Sauk Prairie School District is needed at every visit. If a patron fails to bring an ID they have three chances to bring it. On the third chance, the family member who does not have an ID will be crossed off the card but can be added back upon showing their ID.

In case of emergency, an additional amount of food may be given.

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT!!! All information on these cards (in the computer application) or gathered during a distribution is confidential! No information about any patron should be discussed outside of the Pantry!

Thank you for your help! Please know that your help is greatly appreciated!

Please continue reading.

THE BASICS OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Food Pantry distribution days and hours are:

First Wednesday of the month	5:30pm-6:30pm
Second Wednesday of the month	5:30pm-6:30pm
Third Wednesday of the month	9:30am-10:30am
Third Saturday of the month	9:30am-10:30am
Fourth Wednesday of the month	5:30pm-6:30pm

*Volunteers should arrive at the Pantry 30 minutes before distribution begins.

If you are a new volunteer, volunteers should register in the volunteer computer. The distribution manager will help you get started.

This information is important for three reasons; one it helps the director and the pantry board understand how many hours it takes to keep the pantry open and operational. The second reason is this is where you electronically “sign” the Confidentiality agreement that is required of us to have on site per The Emergency Food Assistance Programs requirements. Finally, the third is if someone were to be seriously ill the director has a way of contacting others who may have been in close contact with the ill person.

*If school is cancelled due to weather, distribution is canceled.

Distribution Volunteers - Pre-distribution task:

- Check shelves to see if foods are properly arranged and accessible. A Board Member/Distribution Manager or experienced volunteer will help determine if any additional items need to be put on shelves.
- Pull out the rolling racks from the walk-in fridge and freezer that are designated for your distribution. **(See notes on the doors to determine which racks to take and what or how much should be distributed.)**
- All volunteers are highly encouraged to wear lanyards with their first names. Lanyards are located in the cupboard behind the registration desk. (Far right side of Pantry by the volunteer sign-in computer.)
- Check availability of plastic and paper bags for patrons’ use.

Volunteer tasks during distribution:

- Patron Registration – for confidentiality issues this task is generally done by a Board Member or a seasoned volunteer. **All** information about patrons is **confidential**.
- After completing registration, volunteers will help patrons make their way through the Pantry to collect their food. The shelves are marked with the amount of each item that can be taken. Grocery carts are used. Volunteers should assist patrons with bagging their items as the patrons shop. Volunteers can help patrons move along by gently leading the cart through the aisles so patrons can shop.
- When the patron is finished collecting their food, volunteers help carry out their groceries and bring the carts back into the Pantry.

Post-distribution tasks:

- Return any undistributed food to the freezer or cooler if necessary.
 - Please make sure freezer food is in the freezer and cooler food is in the cooler.
- Break down any cardboard from boxes that may have been emptied during distribution and place in the dumpster designated as cardboard.
- Be sure all freezers, coolers and the POD doors are tightly closed.
- Bring the “Take a Number” sign back into the Pantry.
- Check all four bathrooms for cleanliness and empty their garbage cans.
- Sweep the dining room and, if needed, wipe down the tables.
- Turn out the lights.
- Confirm and lock all doors.

Restocking tasks- choice shopping distribution :

- Restock and straighten shelves to be ready for the next distribution.
- Check in with that day’s volunteer lead to see if any specific tasks need to be done.
- Look at shelves and see if any areas need to be refilled. Look at the bottom shelf to see if there is food for that area to be shelved. If you can’t find what you are looking for on the bottom shelf, then go to the backstock area and retrieve any items needed.
 - Take note of the TEFAP handwritten number, use the oldest number first.
 - These numbers stand for the month the pantry received the item. Eg. 10 = October received month. If there are cases of green beans with a 5 and a 10 and you are restocking in July, then the older month to be used is 10 (October).
- Make sure labels are facing front so patrons can easily see what the product is.
 - Things to watch for are badly dented, seam dents, rust, offensive appearance, etc. When in doubt throw it out.
 - Keep in mind whether you would eat a particular item that looks off...if you wouldn’t eat it then our patron shouldn’t be asked to.
- Make sure there is a space in between different types of products. There are black magnetic dividers and there should be at least an inch on either side of the divider to help make a clear division.
 - The division is important because the item number can cover one to many items. The divider is a natural way to mark where the number starts and stops for that section.
- Check all produce for spoilage. Compost bins are located outside the walk-in fridge.
 - Again, keep in mind whether you would eat a particular item that looks off...if you wouldn’t eat it then our patrons shouldn’t be asked to.
 - Empty the compost bucket in the compost area
 - Rinse the compost bucket out using the sink in the 6:8 kitchen.
- Refill baskets OR bags in walk-in freezer with meat, veggies, Kwik Trip, etc.
 - The volunteer lead will provide direction on what is needed.
- Refill baskets OR bags in walk-in cooler with eggs, cheese, and fresh produce.
 - The volunteer lead will provide direction on what is needed.
- Baby, cleaning, and health and beauty items PLEASE use a permanent marker and **cross out UPC codes**.
 - Baby food, formula, snacks, etc. if any are past the expiration date the item gets discarded. DO NOT distribute expired baby products.
- Sweep the floor there is a broom in the closet.

- Wipe down counters and shopping carts.
 - There are cleaning supplies under the sink.
- Break down boxes and put in cardboard only dumpster located outside at the north end (toward McFarlane's) of the building.
- In general clean up after yourself

Second Harvest Delivery tasks:

- Same as restocking above, but also...
- Help unload pallets of food and place food in correct areas of the Pantry.
- Take empty pallets outside and stack them neatly next to the dumpsters on the left hand side.

TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) Load tasks:

- Same as restocking above, but also...
- Number each case on the side and end (not the top and bottom) with the numeric month we received the product. Eg. If product is received in September, then the number would be 9 and written on the side and end of each case.
 - We have a requirement to get these, TEFAP, products distributed within three months of receipt. Having the numbers allows us to see at a glance what the oldest TEFAP item is.
- Help unload pallets of food and place food in correct areas of the Pantry.
- Take empty pallets, if they are plastic they go back on the truck, else they go outside and are stacked neatly next to the dumpsters on the left hand side.

Donation tasks:

- Sort items based on food type/group.
- Tray like items, like sizes and place tray on shelf with like items. Green beans with green beans, corn with corn, etc.
 - It is important for like items and like sizes to be trayed together for storage, safety (stacking won't topple if sizes are the same) and packing boxes with like sizes each box can be packed easily and more efficiently rather than having to shuffle items around to make them fit.
- Labels out so they can be read easily.
- Be sure all items have not been opened and are within the pantries date guidelines for distribution.
 - Please see the date guide or ask the lead for assistance. The guides are posted between the cooler and freezer and on the cabinets by the inventory computer.

Thanks for your help!