

FaithWorks Food Pantry Volunteer Guidelines

Mission: To share God's food resource in a way that reflects God's radical hospitality and grace to all people. We welcome others as Christ has welcomed us. (Romans 15:7).

The FaithWorks Food Pantry (FFP) embraces the biblical imperative of hospitality. That means we value each person who enters our doors and strive to make each visit positive and helpful. It also means we serve **'guests'** not **'clients'**. Providing much needed food is important, but hospitality, respect, and the formation of relationships are equally important. Look for Jesus in our guests, for he promises to be there. Matthew 25:40.

Some pointers regarding volunteering at FFP:

- Please check the volunteer schedule and contact Margaret Robinson if you are scheduled for a date or time that doesn't work for you. If for any reason you find you can't volunteer at your scheduled time, please either find a substitute or call Margaret as soon as possible so she can plan accordingly.
- Please arrive at least 20 minutes early so we can set up and pray before opening.
- Try to be flexible about your assigned spot. Especially early on, we'll try to rotate people so you can try out the various spots and see what works best for you.

Some pointers regarding hospitality to our guests:

- Greet guests warmly when they enter, and introduce yourself by name. (First impressions are very important.) Offer coffee or whatever we have.
- Learn a guest's name, and use it often (rather than using numbers).
- Escort our guests through the pantry and offer what we have to share – freely and with grace.
- Speak to guests with respect and avoid entitlement phrases like "you get...", "You're entitled to...", or "you can have...". Instead use kinder and more empowering statements like "you are welcome to choose..." "today we are offering..." or "you have a choice of...".
- Take time to listen to guests and one another.
- Show guests that you appreciate their visit and convey a warm farewell when they leave by, for example, thanking them for coming in or wishing them a good day.
- Do not give money or personal items of yours to the guests.
- Confidentiality is a right of each guest, and is required by our arrangement with the Food Bank and TEFAP. Information may **never** be shared outside of FFP– not even with other food pantries.

Here's the key: Focus on the needs of the guest. Ask yourself frequently, "How would I want to be treated if I were in this guest's shoes?" Treat others as you would like to be treated. (Luke 6:31)

The Pantry Process

When our guests arrive they are ushered to our hospitality area where they are served coffee and cookies or soup or whatever we have. Volunteers answer any questions they may have about our program, and as soon as possible help them fill out the necessary TEFAP and Food Bank Forms. While there is information that we must have for reporting purposes, try to keep the interview process as conversational and positive as possible.

After filling out the forms, guests will have the opportunity to “shop” in the food area and assisted by a volunteer. We’re using a distribution model called Client Choice. It’s by far the most hospitable and effective means of getting food to people that they will actually eat. They will choose their own food based on guidelines for family size and type of food. Remember these are guidelines only – if you are assisting a guest to shop, feel free to modify the guidelines based on our guest’s circumstances.

After completing the shopping process, a volunteer and guest will pack the food and help the guest head on out. Throughout this process, hospitality and respect are key. Get to know your guest and let them get to know you.

Our hope is that this turns out to be a transformative and fun (yes, fun!) experience for our volunteers and guests. We should expect to both be Christ to others and see Christ in others.

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Hebrews 13:2