

Shared Harvest Foodbank, FFY 2022 Regional Plan for Local Distributors

Definitions

For purposes of this plan, Shared Harvest Foodbank, Inc. (SHF) defines our terms as follows:

Regional Agent: (RA): An organization which contracts with the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services (ODJFS) to receive commodities directly from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA); to distribute TEFAP commodities to Sub-Regional Agents (SRA) or Local Distributor (LD) in the RA's defined service region; and to administer the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) according to this regional plan and the Ohio Food Programs Manual.

Local Distributor (LD): A private or public 501(c)3 organization which contracts with an RA or SubRA to receive and distribute commodities to eligible persons, such as a food pantry, soup kitchen or shelter.

Food Pantry: A part of a foodbank network that distributes food and grocery products to low-income households, including food from sources other than USDA, to relieve situations of emergency and distress. It is housed in a standing facility that distributes commodities, among other food and grocery products, on a regular basis.

Choice Pantry: A food pantry that allows clients a choice in determining the groceries received at the food pantry. The method of allowing client choice may vary based on product availability and/or limited physical space at the pantry.

Full Service: Client has access to all foods available from the LD at least once per month.

Household: A single person or group of related or non-related individuals living as one economic unit who buy and cook food together.

Households With Minor Children: A group of related or non-related individuals living as one economic unit, with children aged 0 – 17 years old, who buy and cook food together.

Households Without Minor Children: A single person or group of related or non-related individuals, with no one under the age of 18, living as one economic unit who buy and cook food together.

Homeless Shelter: A facility that is part of a foodbank network providing temporary or transitional shelter for homeless individuals and families in general or for specific group populations (i.e. battered women, run-away youth).

Partial Service: Only produce, bakery, excess inventory or difficult to move products are available to clients as often as the LD allows.

Soup Kitchen: A facility that is part of a foodbank network that is a clean, secure environment that offers prepared meals free of charge to predominately needy people. Soup Kitchens serve

nutritious meals in a congregate setting or take-home meals without charge, for homeless persons, transient persons and/or others in need.

Acronyms:

TEFAP: The Emergency Food Assistance Program which provides USDA commodities for distribution to LD's providing food to eligible program participants.

OFP: Ohio Food Purchase which provides food commodities purchased through a state funded program to LD's providing food to eligible program participants.

ACP: Agriculture Clearance Program which provides fresh produce purchased through a state funded program to LD's providing food to eligible program participants.

VCM: Virtual Case Manager which is a web based central registration and referral software program LD's may use for the electronically keeping the required client records of TEFAP, OFP and ACP.

THE PLAN

Allocations

SHF may receive up to 5.13% of the total TEFAP commodities allocated to the State of Ohio. To ensure equitable distribution of TEFAP, OFP, and ACP commodities to the SHF service region, we have identified and contracted with local distributors in each County to distribute food through. In counties that have few local distributors with limited capacity to adequately distribute the counties' fair share, SHF will distribute food directly to eligible applicants in those counties.

Each month, SHF will analyze the total percentage of TEFAP, OFP, and ACP food distributed by county and adjust available quantities to each county for the following month if necessary, in effort to maintain equitable distribution. The target percentage of food distributed to each county is based on a formula that ODJFS uses to allocate commodities, based on population living at or below 200% of the poverty level. The target percentage of commodities distributed to each county is as follows:

County	200% Pop	% Share
BUTLER	104341	52.67%
DARKE	18715	9.45%
MIAMI	32307	16.31%
PREBLE	6938	3.50%
WARREN	35816	18.08%

LD Contractor Eligibility

All LD's, served by the RA must meet the following contractor eligibility:

Food Pantries: TEFAP & OFP commodities are to be incorporated into the food pantry inventory and provided to all eligible persons as part of the food package. **TEFAP & OFP commodities are not to be the singular source of food supply at a pantry.** Other sources of food may include foodbanks, donated food, food drives or food purchase programs. All Food Pantries are encouraged to establish a client choice model of distribution.

Food pantries receiving TEFAP & OFP commodities must allow clients to access to all food available, at a minimum of once a month to be counted as a full service, or until such time the client no longer needs to visit a food pantry. **A once-a-month give-away of only TEFAP & OFP commodities is prohibited.** A once-a-month food give-away that includes TEFAP & OFP commodities as part of the food package is discouraged. Pantries should establish regular hours of operation (at least one day each week) and set procedures for referral and/or on-call access. **Pantries should prominently post at the entrance their days and hours of operation.** Posting of documents customers are required to bring, and geographical area served is recommended but NOT required. This policy will help to eliminate confusion and maintain a statewide minimum level of service.

Soup Kitchens/Shelters: These LD's must provide regularly scheduled on-site or home-delivered meals which may use TEFAP & OFP commodities in the meal preparation. **TEFAP & OFP commodities must not be the singular source of food supply at a meal site.** Other sources may include foodbanks, donated food, food drives or food purchase programs. Soup Kitchens may be open to the general public or be located in a shelter that provides meals to only sheltered individuals or families. They may provide up to three regularly scheduled meals and a snack each day but must provide at least one complete meal each day they are open. **Soup Kitchens and Shelters should prominently post at the entrance their days and hours of operation or intake for sheltering.**

LD's may choose to provide distributions of produce, bakery or other surplus items to clients as often as their inventory allows. This is considered a partial service. **This partial service must be tracked separately on the Eligibility to Take Food Home Form and reported separately on the monthly statistical report.**

Civil Rights Training

The RA must conduct annual civil rights training for all LD's front-line staff and volunteers who have contact with the

general public. Pursuant to this, SHF has developed a training module and will conduct 'Train the Trainer' sessions online this year. This 'Train the Trainer' session will provide the necessary materials and information to train other staff and volunteers at the LD. The LD is required to document staff and volunteer participation in and completion of the training by **completing** the Civil Rights Training Checklist, **retaining** a copy of the signed checklist for the LD record, and **sending** a copy of the checklist no later than June 30, 2022 by email to Partner Relationship Manager at nikki@sharedharvest.org or mail to Nikki Jennings, Shared Harvest Foodbank, 5901 Dixie Highway, Fairfield, OH, 45014.

Transportation

SHF will distribute food directly to qualified applicants and/or through partner organizations by means of coordinated distribution methods. These methods include direct delivery, direct pick up from SHF headquarters at 5901 Dixie Highway Fairfield, OH 45014, or coordinated centralized drops in designated locations. Delivery fees will be assessed to partner organizations on a sliding scale fee schedule as determined by the weight of product ordered. SHF reserves the right to refuse delivery based on organizational capacity. Delivery and picks ups are coordinated in advance and are agreed upon by both parties. Questions concerning transportation of products should be directed to the SHF Partner Relationship Manager.

Local Distributor Ordering

Each local distributor has access to the SHF on-line ordering system and is provided a unique account login to place orders. All the TEFAP, and OFP food products will be made available through this on-line platform. Local distributors may call Amberlee Finkes, SHF Supply Chain Manager at 513-874-0114 x106 to request ACP product or take what is available at the monthly delivery drops in their respective counties. Amberlee may on occasion coordinate specific deliveries with local distributors in counties where the percentage of commodities distributed is less than the targeted amount. Additionally, SHF may distribute directly to people in need in underserved counties.

TEFAP & OFP Commodity Receipt and Storage

Receipting: LD will check commodities for damage at time of receipt. LD will count commodities at time of receipt and verify the amount shown on the RA's invoice. If a discrepancy is found, LD will notify RA within 48 hours of receipt of the product.

Storage: When physical delivery of TEFAP & OFP food product is taken, the LD assumes responsibility for the safekeeping of product. Premature deterioration of food

products is often the result of improper storage conditions and practices.

LD's should make every effort to distribute allocated TEFAP & OFP commodities in a timely fashion. LD's should distribute TEFAP and OFP no longer than 60 days from receipt.

Every effort must be made to reduce loss due to spoilage, pest infestation and theft by following accepted warehousing and storage methods.

Temperature logs should be maintained for all storage areas, including freezer, cooler and dry. The log should document the date and time, the registered temperature, signature or initials of person checking the temperatures and any actions taken if temperatures are found to be out of range. **Temperatures for all storage areas should be checked and documented daily if you are there, but not less than three times per week.** This log is an important document to support the ongoing maintenance of proper storage conditions. A Daily Temperature Log is available on the Member Resource page of Shared Harvest Foodbank's website. Hard copies can also be provided upon request by LD to the Partner Engagement Manager.

LD must maintain a good pest control system with a qualified person on staff or contract with a licensed firm to handle pest control management.

To assure the quality and freshness of TEFAP & OFP food products, the inventory practice of First In/First Out (FIFO) must be followed. Food must be stored so cases with the oldest pack dates are used first. All TEFAP food products have the pack date on the cases.

LD should date the cases of product based on their receipt date as an easy way to keep track of the FIFO inventory requirements.

Commodities must be stored pursuant to all federal, state and local health codes. In addition:

Dry food products must be stored:

- At 50 - 70 degrees F.
- Away from direct sunlight.
- A minimum of 4" off the floor.
- At least 4" away from walls.
- Stacked on shelving or pallets
- Non-Food is to be stored separately from food, or at the minimum, stored below food products on shelving or in cabinets.
- Storage area must be clean, secure and inspected regularly.
- Stacked or shelved away from potential damage by heat, steam or water.
- Thermometers must be visible and functional.

Refrigerated Food products must be:

- Refrigerated at temperatures of 35 - 40 degrees F.
- Stored to allow for proper air circulation.
- In a refrigerator that is clean and inspected on a regular basis.
- Thermometers must be visible and functional.

Frozen food products must be:

- Stored in freezer that can maintain a temperature at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below.
- Stored to allow for proper air circulation.
- Stored in a freezer unit that is clean, secure and regularly inspected.
- Thermometers must be visible and functional.

Shared Maintenance Contribution

All TEFAP commodities SHF distributes directly to LD's will carry a shared maintenance fee of 0¢ to 10¢ per pound. The fees will be detailed on the on the website as LD's confirm their orders or on the invoice at time of receipt. OFP commodities and ACP produce will be distributed at no fee.

Client Eligibility

Eligibility for receipt of a food package containing TEFAP & OFP commodities or distribution of ACP produce is established at 200% of the current federal poverty level as formulated by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. **No proof of income is required.**

Clients must provide following documentation:

- **Picture ID:** Anytime they receive federal and state funded commodities
- **Proof of Residency:** At least once a year when a new TEFAP application (Eligibility to Take Food Home form) is completed and signed and anytime the client has an address change.
- See VCM and Pantrytrak sections for electronic requirements)
- A new program to conceal the home address of an Ohioan who fears for their safety was implemented by the Ohio Secretary of State. Substitute House Bill 359 created an address confidentiality program called "Safe at Home" that allows victims of domestic violence, stalking, human trafficking, rape or sexual battery to apply to the Secretary of State for a temporary address to serve as their mailing address. When an individual shows a copy of their Safe at Home Participant Card to substantiate their residency, the LD must use the address designated by the Secretary of State as the program participant's mailing address and accept self-attestation as to the individual's residency within the service area; no

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other information regarding that person's address or residency may be required. For more information about this program please contact Nikki Jennings at 513-874-0114 x110

In documenting household size or composition, LD's should remind clients that the entire (single or multiple family) household income must be considered when the client certifies household income eligibility. **Proof of family size or household composition is prohibited.**

Clients do not have to **prove** their income eligibility, with any type of documentation **or provide their social security number**. They can review the income eligibility guidelines and "self-declare" their eligibility as long as they sign The Eligibility to Take Food Home form. **Clients must sign The Eligibility to Take Food Home form each time they receive either federal or state funded food which includes TEFAP, OFP and ACP.** LD's must retain these records for five years.

Eligibility to Take Food Home Form

ALL pantries distributing TEFAP and/or state program food (OFP or ACP), must use the the "Eligibility to Take Food Home" form and may not alter in any way, which includes editing, deleting, or adding any additional wording or images. If additional information is required for other programs or funders, a separate form should be used IN ADDITION to this form.

LD's are encouraged to utilize the desk guide provided by the RA to insure proper completion of the Eligibility to Take Food Home Form.

If LD uses the same form month to month, the information recorded on the form must be verified. If any information for the client's household has changed, a new Eligibility to Take Food Home form must be started. **Do not make changes on the current form.** File the form no longer being used with the client records.

If the LD is a soup kitchen or a shelter and uses TEFAP & OFP commodities or ACP produce in the meals served, clients do not have to sign for their meals but may at the LD's request, nor does this type of LD have to maintain any type of records on self-declaration of income. However, Soup Kitchens and Shelters must track the number of meals served and the number of people served at each meal.

Additionally, clients do not have to live in a community for a given period of time before they can receive TEFAP & OFP commodities or ACP Produce. Homeless persons or people who have just arrived in the area may not be able to provide an address and cannot be refused TEFAP & OFP commodities or ACP Produce because they have no address.

If a client cannot sign their name on the Eligibility to Take Food Home form because of a disability, the client can place an X on the form in the signature line as long as a pantry staff or volunteer initial and date the form.

If the client is unable to pick up their own food due to a disability, they may appoint a proxy by providing a letter identifying the person they authorize as their proxy. **The proxy must provide a picture ID for themselves and the client as well as proof of residency for the client for whom they are picking up food if a new TEFAP application is being completed at time of their visit.** The proxy can sign their name and write the word proxy after it. Be sure the proxy dates the form.

LD must maintain completed Eligibility to Take Food Home forms for a period of five years and develop a process for destroying those forms older than five years in a safe way to protect program participants information contained on the form.

All LD's must display the 'And Justice for All' posters in their lobby or waiting area. Additionally, pantries must display the income guideline fliers in all three languages in their lobby or waiting area.

Any LD's that are religious organizations must also display 'The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) – Written Notice of Applicant and Recipient Rights' in their lobby or waiting area.

Approved Electronic Client Records

If an LD chooses to utilize Virtual Case Manager (VCM), VESTA, or Pantrytrak to maintain client records, services and referrals, and has the option to add the web cam, scanner and electronic signature capability for the Eligibility to Take Food Home Form, the following waivers have been granted by ODFJS and the Ohio Association of Foodbanks:

Waiver 1: The requirement for a program participant to show picture identification each time they receive TEFAP, OFP or ACP foods. This requirement can only be waived if the LD utilizes the option to upload an image of the client into the electronic record.

Waiver 2: The regulation to allow client self-declaration of being under the income limit. The LD is permitted to ask for actual income amounts to be input into the electronic record, however, no proof of income will be required.

Waiver 3: Electronic signatures to the Eligibility to Take Food Home Form are allowed when LD's use the electronic signature pad available in the VCM or VESTA system.

Waiver 4: For LDs using Pantrytrak, client initials replace signature requirement.

The LD may issue bar-coded ID cards to each head of household registered in the VCM or VESTA system. This card (like an EBT card) is the client's pantry access card, presented

and scanned when they request food, which brings up their electronic record.

Once all the information in the record is complete or verified, a food basket is provided. The program used will auto populate all of the required information on the Eligibility to Take Food Home form based on the head of household in the system, and auto generates the date next to the client's signature or initial line.

LD must have a laminated copy of the Eligibility to Take Food Home form for the client to review. The Eligibility to Take Food Home signature box appears on the computer screen and the client signs a signature pad if using VCM or VESTA or types in initial if using Pantrytrak. Each form can be signed 12 times.

However, if any information about the client has changed (like address or if a household member has aged into another age category) a new form will be generated, and the old form with all previous signatures will be e-archived in the clients record and the newly populated form is used for signatures until information has changed again – or all 12 lines have been completed or the form itself changes.

Any adult household member that is part of the participating household receiving TEFAP, OFP or ACP foods can sign their own name to the Eligibility to Take Food Home form provided they also list the relationship to the head of household (like spouse, brother, aunt...) because they are part of the client record which can be verified by looking at the record in VCM or VESTA.

The TEFAP, OFP or ACP participant unable to pick up their own food commodities may designate a proxy to pick up their food for them. The proxy must present the clients bar-coded pantry access card or a picture ID and a signed note authorizing the proxy to pick up food for them. Currently, the proxy authorization note can be scanned into the client's record in VCM and proxy signs their own name to the Eligibility to Take Food Home Form and writes the word 'proxy' after their signature. The proxy must present a picture ID to verify they are the person identified in the clients authorization note.

It is the LD's responsibility to verify client record information and/or complete the record in VCM, VESTA, or Pantrytrak each time the client requests services. When the RA audits the electronic Eligibility to Take Food Home forms for a particular LD, any mistakes on the form for the time period being audited will be the responsibility of the LD that is being audited regardless of which LD instituted the original electronic client record.

If at any time VCM, VESTA, or Pantrytrak is not fully functional, the LD must switch to using current paper Eligibility to Take Food Home forms and must follow all requirements as detailed in section of regional plan titled: *Eligibility to Take Food Home Form*

Distribution Guidelines

LDs are not required to track how many cans, boxes or bags of TEFAP & OFP commodities or ACP Produce given to each client since the commodities are part of a bag of groceries provided. There are no TEFAP, OFP commodity or ACP Produce distribution guidelines, the LD may give as much or as little as deemed necessary to meet the clients need. Additionally, LDs may give TEFAP & OFP commodities or ACP Produce as many times as deemed necessary in a given month to the same person or family. The philosophy is to try to give the needy person or family as much as the LD reasonably can, to help them through the crisis that landed them in the LDs office in the first place.

Loss or Damage of Commodities

All instances of loss or damage of commodities in excess of two cases must be reported to the RA by telephone upon the discovery of the loss.

If the loss is due to spoilage, contamination or tampering and is 10% or more of the total commodities received that month:

- a. The product must be inspected by the local health department to determine if it is fit for human consumption. LD must submit the health departments report with a report of loss or damage.
- b. If disposal of the product is required, the LD will return all product found out of condition to the Regional Agent at the LD's expense.
- c. If the loss is due to theft, the LD will report the theft to the local police and submit a copy of the police report to the Regional Agent.
- d. If losses by LD exceed ten percent of the amount of commodities received within the month during which the loss occurred, and if the LD is at fault for the loss or damage, the RA may request reimbursement or replacement in-kind equivalent to the value of the lost or damaged commodities.

In any instance, the LD must provide the following information when reporting loss or damage of USDA commodities:

- Organization name, address, contact person and phone number.
- Product name, Sales Order Number and quantity affected. (The Sales Order number will look like this: 50000XXXXX. The 5 X's will be the numerical digits that identify the commodity **and can be found on the invoice.**)
- Date damage/loss discovered.
- Explanation of damage/loss.
- Disposition of product.

Statistical Reporting

All LD's are required to submit statistical reports listing the number of **households with minor children, detailing the number of adults 60+ years, adults 18-59 years, children 0 to 17 years and total people; and households without minor children detailing the number of adults 60+ years, adults 18-59 years and total people; and total households served, adults 60+ years, adults 18-59 years, children 0 to 17 years and total people** served in pantries. A separate report is required for Full Service and Partial Service. Soup Kitchens and Shelters report the number of **people and meals** served.

These reports are due the 15th of the month following the month to which the report pertains. **Reports must be filed online through Primarius.**

If an LD chooses to utilize VCM, VESTA, or Pantrytrak to maintain client records, services and referrals, the electronically there are reports that can be generated and used to complete the statistical report available in Primarius.

If the LD chooses to provide Partial Services in addition to Full Services, this can also be set up in all three approved electronic client programs to be tracked separately by adding it as a separate service. For Pantrytrak, LDs must contact the Partner Engagement Manager to have the service added. The LD can then select which service is being provided to clients and can select which service to run a combo report on.

LD's that do not file their statistical reports on time may be put on product hold until reports are up to date. SHF does not want to take punitive measures (like holding allocated product) against those LD's not submitting statistical reports in a timely fashion. However, the importance of reporting accurate numbers cannot be stressed enough. **To save this program for future years we must be able to prove its viability. This can only be done with the statistics of people and meals provided by this program.** You will be notified if you are falling behind on your statistics.

Ceasing Operations

If an LD plans to cease operation for any reason they are required to notify SHF in writing 30 days prior to closing. Written notifications should include:

- a. Name of Organization
- b. Date of closure
- c. Plan to return unused TEFAP, OFP and/or ACP commodities to SHF including an inventory count and date of delivery or plan to transfer to another USDA contracted LD approved by RA with receipt signed by both parties.
- d. Plan to turn over five years of signed Eligibility to Take Food Home forms and the date of delivery.
- e. Upon the satisfactory completion of a – d listed above the RA may reimburse the LD for the portion of

inventory for which the LD had previously paid shared maintenance contributions if product is returned to RA.

Terminating Contract

In certain instances, the RA may decide to immediately terminate the TEFAP contact. Those instances would include:

- a) RA discovers any illegal conduct by LD
- b) LD has violated any provision of section's 2 a. & b., 6, 8, 11 or 15 of the TEFAP Contract.

If the RA terminates the TEFAP Contract, a termination letter will be delivered at the time the RA appears at the LD to recover any TEFAP, OFP or ACP inventory and five years of records relating to the distribution of TEFAP, OFP or ACP commodities.

Monitoring

SHF will conduct an annual site review of one tenth or 20 (whichever is fewer) of all LD's contracting directly with SHF.

Monitoring will include a review of inventory and storage, policies and guidelines, cleanliness, proper posting of required information, availability of current food programs manual, an audit of Eligibility to Take Food Home forms, pest and fire control, a review of temperature logs, civil rights training verification and other such items as may be required by USDA, ODJFS, the Ohio Association of Foodbanks or Feeding America.

Prohibited Activities

Recipients may not be charged fees for commodities, nor may they be asked for donations of any type.

LD's will not display any type of donation canister in the area where clients are being served; nor distribute voluntary donation envelopes at meals sites or pantries.

Recipients will not be required to be a member of any organization or participate in any religious services or prayers as a condition for distribution or receipt of commodities.

Recipients will not be required to perform any services for LD, attend any meetings or classes as a condition for distribution or receipt of commodities.

Recipients will not be required to have a referral from any other entity as a condition for distribution or receipt of commodities.

LD's may not sell, exchange, use for personal gain or in any fraudulent manner any TEFAP & OFP or ACP commodities received by the RA.

LD's acknowledge that in accordance with Federal laws and USDA policy, they are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, and disability.

To file a complaint alleging discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at

http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992.

Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

fax:

(202) 690-7442; or

email:

program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Unless the LD is a soup kitchen or shelter, COMMODITIES MAY NOT BE OPENED OR ALTERED by any LD.

Complaints

USDA and RA make every effort to ensure that commodities provided through TEFAP & OFP or ACP Produce are nutritious and of the highest quality. However, as in the food business, if there are concerns with the quality or safety of any commodity food, recipients may file a complaint.

ODJFS has developed a process (found in the Food Programs Manual) which is to be used by LD's when filing a complaint or receiving a commodity complaint by a program recipient. The complaint is to be submitted to RA, who will then forward the complaint to ODJFS. **If replacement product is being sought, you must keep the product until you have been notified what to do with it.**

The information needed to file the complaint is the:

- Sales Order Number
- Contract number (may be stenciled on the outer carton)
- A description of the problem
- Date the product was received
- Location of the product
- Quantity of product involved

The Sales Order number will be on the invoice you received with the commodity, or you can contact the RA to obtain it. USDA needs the Sales Order number to determine which vendor produced the product and to resolve the complaint. The Sales Order number will look like this: 50000XXXXX. The 5 X's will be the numerical digits that identify the commodity in question.

Authority

SHF is granted authority to develop this plan by the State of Ohio, through The Ohio Department of Job & Family Services Food Programs Manual.