



Mobile Pantry Policies and Procedures

Products available from Feeding America West Michigan have been donated to feed and aid people in need. It is each agency's responsibility to ensure the proper storage and distribution of these items. The following policies have been established to facilitate receipt, storage, and regulated distribution of the goods.

Any individual or agency that does not comply with the following policies and procedures could potentially lose services from FEEDING AMERICA WEST MICHIGAN. Any individual or agency involved in distributing products from Feeding America West Michigan in a wrongful manner may face criminal prosecution.

Site Requirements

Agencies must provide a site that meets the following guidelines set by Feeding America West Michigan for Mobile Pantry distributions:

- The site must be at least 55 feet long by 50 feet wide.
- The entrance needs to be at least 10 feet wide, with a minimum of 5 additional feet on one side that is free of obstructions (fences, fire hydrants, trees, signs, parked cars, etc.).
- The truck driver will also need a lane at least 10 feet wide to turn the truck around and exit, since the truck cannot be backed in or out of the entrance.
- Distributions may not take place on the street.
- Clients may not be within 3 feet of the truck entrance or lane.
- If the distribution site is at or near a school, the distribution must take place when there will not be children entering or exiting the school.

Receiving Food

- Agencies will receive an invoice for the items received on the day of delivery.
- Agencies must pay invoices with an agency check only; invoice number(s) should be noted on the payment check. No cash, personal checks, or credit cards are accepted.
- The shared maintenance payment, or handling fee, is required from agencies **before the bill is 30 days past due. Any agency that is over 60 days delinquent in payment will be suspended.**
- The cost per pound is determined by Feeding America West Michigan, and this fee may be subject to change.

Storage

- Agencies are not permitted to store food from the Mobile Pantry unless their storage site has been inspected and approved by the Agency Relations staff.
- Agencies must take necessary steps to prevent theft of food.
- Agencies may designate one other agency with an approved Feeding America West Michigan storage area to receive leftovers from the distribution.

Food Usage and Distribution

- Agencies must use items drawn from Feeding America West Michigan only for the feeding and aiding of people in need.
- Agencies may serve persons from counties other than their own but may only physically distribute food from the location(s) listed on the program's Feeding America West Michigan application.
- Food and other products cannot be sold or used for fundraising by the agency, or given to a person who has the intention of selling or bartering the product.
- Mobile Pantries are not to be used to sell or market any products or services.
- Agencies must inspect all items before distributing/serving them, and must withhold any product that appears unfit for consumption.
- Agencies must not discriminate between clients on the basis of race, creed, national origin, religious affiliation, gender, sexual preference, age or handicap. Any eligibility restrictions must be stated in the agency's Feeding America West Michigan application.
- **Agencies may not receive any money, property, or services from clients in exchange for goods drawn from Feeding America West Michigan.** Products received may not be given to persons in exchange for their labor. Any fees, dues, gifts, or payments that are made to the agency by clients must be stated in the Feeding America West Michigan application. Posting signage about or otherwise encouraging a specific donation amount is never allowed. If at all possible, volunteers who also need food should receive it from a different Mobile Pantry distribution; if they must be served at your distribution, they should not be served first, and they should have the opportunity to receive as much but no more food than the other clients being served.
- Any and all contributions made to the agency by clients must be completely voluntary, and should be made anonymously. These contributions cannot serve as payment for the goods received. Selling Feeding America West Michigan food to anyone is a direct violation of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code Section 170(e)(3). It is considered theft of US Government property to sell USDA commodities.
- It is against the law to distribute Feeding America West Michigan food to anyone who is not in need. The Internal Revenue Service defines a person in need as *"one who lacks the necessities of life, involving physical, mental or emotional well-being, as a result of poverty or temporary distress."* Examples of people in need include, but are not limited to, those who are victims of natural disasters, those experiencing severe personal crises, the unemployed or underemployed, refugees and immigrants, seniors on fixed incomes, children from low-income households, and those with disabilities.
- The agency organizing the distribution is required to provide adequate staffing for the distribution; at a minimum there should be 12 volunteers, although 20 would be optimal. Our truck drivers will not always be available to assist throughout the distribution. They are sometimes required to leave the trailer in order to deliver a trailer to another location.
- Clients are prohibited from entering the cab or the trailer. Volunteer staffing the distribution may enter the trailer to assist with unloading, but only with the supervision of our driver.

Record Keeping

- Food programs must keep a record of clients served. These records must be kept for at least 24 months. Records should include: the client's name, dates served, address, telephone number (if any), family size, and the cause of their need for food assistance. Contact information is essential, in case there is ever a product recall. Records are mandatory and if not in place could result in closure of an account. Computerized records and/or generic rosters of program participants may be acceptable in certain circumstances; please consult Agency Relations staff for details.

- Agencies are required to keep their invoices for at least 12 months. Feeding America West Michigan retains the right to review agency records to ensure compliance with these policies and procedures.

Site Visits

- Agencies must permit, with or without an appointment, site visits to their food distribution program by Feeding America West Michigan. Such visits are designed to verify proper food usage, handling, and distribution as stated in these policies and procedures.

Logistical Tips for Hosting a Mobile Pantry

Adapted from a handout created by Muskegon County Cooperating Churches (MCCC).

Supplies

10-12 tables 6 feet or longer to display food; 1 table for registration

Work gloves for those unloading the truck

Food handling gloves for bagging produce

Waterless hand sanitizer

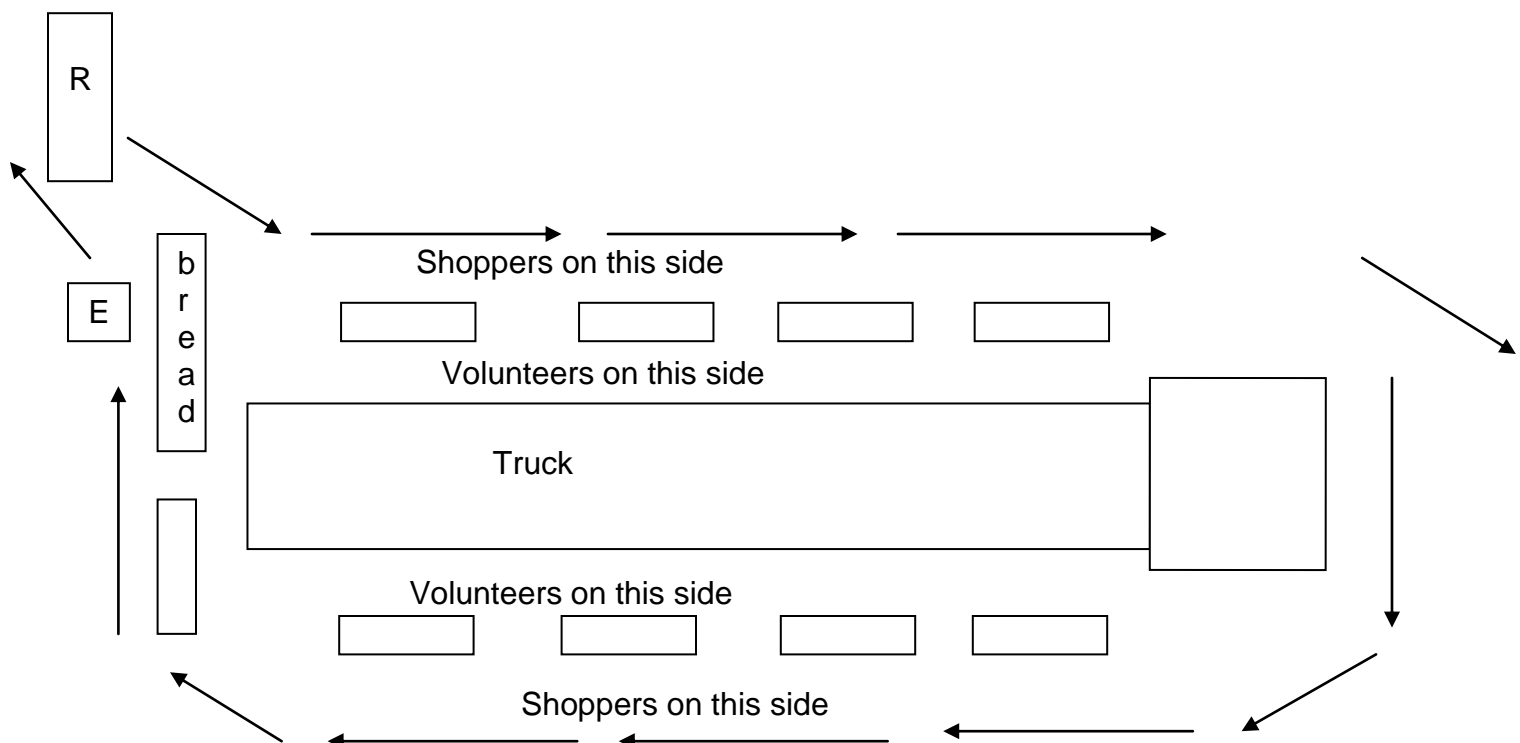
Paper towels (several rolls)

Pocket knives or box openers

Clean, new grocery sacks for food (check with stores for donations)

Suggested Physical Set Up: Traditional Beverage Truck With Roll-Up Sides

Place a display table in front of each roll-up bay door and use it to hold the food from that bay (note you probably will not be able to unload the whole bay immediately). "Shoppers" sign in at the registration table [R] (generally farther from the truck than depicted), then proceed around the truck to the outside of the tables. Volunteers stand between the truck and the tables, where they can unload and repack product if necessary, and help shoppers with their choices. We recommend displaying the bread last, at the rear of the truck. [E] is the Exit where shoppers leave the distribution area.



Clean Up

Any remaining whole boxes, along with broken-down recyclable cardboard boxes (not waxed), should be sent back to Feeding America West Michigan on the truck. Separate other trash and Feeding America West Michigan will dispose of it. Feeding America West Michigan will also repurpose any usable food products if you are not authorized to store them for distribution at another time.

Suggested Physical Set Up: Straight Truck Mobile Pantries

Place a line of tables wherever it is most convenient for you — to one side of the truck, or behind the truck are typical locations. The pallets will come off the truck from shortest to tallest, and you can arrange them in whatever order you like (by weight or popularity for example). Some products will be suited for distribution directly from their pallets; you can place these items (like bagged potatoes) where you would normally put another table. "Shoppers" will still sign in at the registration table [R] (generally farther from the truck than depicted), then proceed in a line on one side of the tables. Volunteers stand between the truck and the tables, where they can unload and repack product if necessary, and help shoppers with their choices. We recommend displaying the bread last. [E] is the Exit where shoppers leave the distribution area.

