



Food Pantry 101

April 2024



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Needs Assessment: Assessing the Need in Your Community

A food pantry is a community-based program that collects, stores, and distributes food free of charge to low-income families and individuals. These pantries provide a nutritionally balanced supply of food, typically for three to seven days, helping those in need during emergencies. In addition to food, many food pantries are expanding their services to include resources and referrals for programs like SNAP (food stamps), vocational opportunities, medical assistance, housing, and other services that address the root causes of hunger, offering a more holistic approach to community support.

As you read through this manual, you'll discover the challenges involved in starting an emergency food program. With hard work and dedication, you can build a successful program. Food pantries are an essential part of the social services network in your community. Beyond providing food, emergency distribution centers and meal programs have the capacity to offer sustainable, long-term solutions to hunger and poverty. Starting your program off right is crucial for its success and effectiveness within your community. Use this manual to establish a solid foundation for your organization. At Food Bank of Alaska, we are excited to partner with you in our vision for a strong emergency food system and will be here to support you every step of the way. Best of luck!

To develop a successful food program, start by asking yourself the following questions:

- Who do we help?
- How do we notify those in need of our new program?
- How often can we assist individuals and families?
- Where will we source the food?
- What funding and food sources can we tap into?

Every emergency food program is unique and reflects a community's response to the issue of hunger. Whether serving senior citizens, young families, or individuals in need, food pantries must tailor their approach to meet local needs. Below are the key components for success:

1. Evaluate the needs of your community and the population your food pantry will serve.
2. Coordinate with local resources and services within your community and surrounding areas. Talk to other local food pantries about their hours, program structure, and clientele to determine the best times for operation. Ensure that your pantry complements existing services, avoiding competition and oversaturation.
3. Cultivate community support and develop a reliable advertising strategy. Work with nearby food programs to reduce competition and foster healthy relationships. Use word-of-mouth, flyers, and other creative methods to raise awareness about your pantry and encourage volunteers. There are many ways for the community to get involved, whether through volunteering, assisting with financial bookkeeping, or helping with grant writing and fundraising.

By considering these elements, your food pantry will have a solid foundation for serving those in need and becoming a valued resource in the community.

Create a Steering Committee & Board of Directors

Though one person's energy and commitment can get a food pantry started, long-term success requires broad community involvement and support. A food pantry involves significant work and decision-making, so engaging civic clubs, churches, businesses, and other organizations can help share responsibilities and improve cost-effectiveness.

Including representatives from public and private social service agencies can connect your food pantry with other assistance programs. Additionally, consider seeking expertise from professionals such as an attorney, accountant, grocery store owner, or local farmer to help with legal, financial, and food supply aspects.

The Role of a Steering Committee

A steering committee is essential for planning, policymaking, and resource development. In some cases, dividing responsibilities into smaller working groups may be beneficial. The committee's key tasks include:

1. Conducting a needs assessment to identify food insecurity in the community
2. Researching existing food assistance programs
3. Selecting a location for the food pantry
4. Securing resources and funding for the location
5. Recruiting volunteers
6. Raising initial funds
7. Stocking food supplies
8. Promoting awareness of the pantry
9. Establishing policies and operating procedures
10. Determining hours of operation
11. Drafting a budget
12. Deciding whether the pantry will operate under an existing organization or establish its own nonprofit status
13. Forming a Board of Directors

The Board of Directors

A Board of Directors provides oversight, accountability, and strategic guidance for the food pantry. While it may be tempting to fill the board with friends and family, it's important to recruit individuals with diverse skills and perspectives who can challenge and strengthen the organization. An effective board ensures ethical operations and supports the pantry's long-term success.

Board Composition

- **Chairperson** – Leads board meetings and is closely involved in organizational management. Ideally, this person is independent of the Executive Director.
- **Vice-Chair** – Assists the Chairperson and assumes their duties when absent.
- **Treasurer** – Oversees financial matters and ensures fiscal responsibility.
- **Secretary** – Records meeting minutes, manages the board calendar, and facilitates communication.
- **Board Members** – Attend meetings, provide input, and complete assigned tasks.

Purpose of the Board

- Provide oversight and fiscal accountability
- Establish the mission, vision, and long-term goals
- Hire and oversee the Executive Director or program manager
- Ensure transparency and accountability to donors and the public
- Protect donor and community values
- Support fundraising efforts (for smaller organizations)
- Develop Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

Setting Up Your Board

- Determine the number of board members (odd numbers are recommended) and establish term lengths and limits.
- Decide whether you will serve as the Chairperson or appoint someone else.
- Interview potential candidates to assess their interest and contributions.
- Set a meeting schedule and structure for board operations.

Create a Basic Business Plan

Like any small business, a food pantry requires a structured plan to operate effectively. Key components include:

Mission Statement

A written mission statement should clearly define your purpose and the need for a food program in your community. Example:

"Our mission is to reduce hunger in Anchorage by providing wholesome foods to those in need."

Food Program Budget

A budget should outline costs such as rent, utilities, maintenance, supplies, insurance, transportation, food storage, staff (if applicable), and outreach efforts.

Client Eligibility Criteria

Clearly define participation requirements and policies for service denial, ensuring non-discriminatory practices. Agencies serving specific populations (e.g., seniors, youth, people living with HIV/AIDS) are exempt from general eligibility requirements.

Insurance Considerations

Secure insurance to protect volunteers, cover product loss, and meet funding qualifications.

Non-Discrimination Policy

All food programs must serve individuals without discrimination based on race, color, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, age, or any other status.

Food Program Operations

Hours of Operation

Use your needs assessment to determine suitable service hours. Consider evening or weekend availability to accommodate working clients. Coordinate with other local food programs to avoid service gaps.

Securing a Location & Storage Guidelines

A food pantry should be in a safe, sanitary, and accessible location. Consider:

Facility Selection & Setup

- Choose a stable location – The pantry should be in a low-traffic area, easily accessible for clients, and have designated space for food distribution.
- Storage areas – Adequate space for dry, refrigerated, and frozen food storage is essential. Cold storage is highly recommended for perishable items.
- Handwashing & plumbing – Sinks with effective plumbing must be available near food handling areas.
- Fire safety – Fire extinguishers must be installed, inspected, and updated annually.
- Security – The storage space must be secure to protect food supplies.
- Pest control – Professional pest and rodent control services should be utilized regularly. An agency must have a pest control plan, ideally with a contract from a licensed exterminator and an extermination logbook with records of each visit.

Regulatory Compliance

- Ensure the facility meets state and local health codes, fire safety regulations, and food storage/handling requirements.
- Contact the local Health Department for guidance.
- Environmental Considerations
- Windows should be covered to protect food from direct sunlight.
- Room temperature must be monitored using a working thermometer in all food storage areas.

- Accessibility Considerations
- Transportation – Assess access to public transit and parking availability.
- Disability access – Ensure compliance with ADA accessibility standards.
- Separate entrances – If possible, establish separate food intake and distribution areas to improve workflow.

Basic Storage Guidelines

To maintain food safety and compliance:

- Food pantries cannot operate from a home or garage.
- Temperature control – Heating and cooling systems must be adequate for food storage.
- Food placement – Store food at least 6 inches off the ground and away from walls.
- Separation of items – Label and separate different food types from non-food items to prevent contamination.
- Supplies & Materials – Grocery bags and small cardboard boxes are essential for distribution. Seek donations from local businesses, schools, and community organizations for shelving, vehicles, coolers, and freezers.
- Equipment Requirements
- Cold storage thermometers must be placed in each refrigeration and freezer unit.
- Refrigerators should maintain 35-40°F.
- Freezers should maintain -10 to 0°F.
- Daily temperature logs must be kept for all cold storage units.
- Pest-proof containers should be used for beans, rice, grains, and other dry goods. These should have tight-fitting lids to prevent infestations. Acceptable containers include food-grade plastic bins, metal cabinets, or large plastic garbage cans lined with food-grade plastic bags.

Refer to Appendix A for the Sanitation Self-Evaluation Checklist.

Property & Personal Safety

Ensuring the safety of staff, volunteers, and clients is essential when operating a food pantry. Consider these precautions:

Facility Security

- Clear signage – Post a permanent sign outside indicating operating hours and distribution days.
- Controlled entry – Install a wide-angle viewer in the pantry door to check before opening.
- Secure locks – Use a deadbolt and chain lock on the main entrance.

Personal Safety Practices

- Never work alone – Always have at least one other person present during distribution hours. If you must work alone, schedule pick-ups only when others are available.

- Limit access – Do not invite walk-ins or referrals inside the food pantry. Avoid being in an isolated space with an unknown person.
- Protect personal information – Do not share details about your routine arrival/departure times, home address, or personal contact information.
- Emergency readiness – Call the police immediately if you feel your personal safety is at risk.
- Inform someone of your whereabouts – Whether at work or home, always let someone know where you are going. If living alone, leave a note so others know where to find you in case of emergency.

Develop a Food Pantry Model

There are two primary models for a food pantry: Neighbor Choice and Food Box Program.

Neighbor Choice Model

The Neighbor Choice model allows individuals to select their own food during their visit, promoting dignity, reducing waste, and increasing satisfaction. Food pantries using this model tailor it to their space, staffing, storage capacity, and available food supply.

Neighbor Choice pantries require pre-planning and can be structured in various ways:

- **Menu System** – A written menu is provided, and each neighbor checks off the items they want. Volunteers then gather the selected items.
- **Point System** – Neighbors receive a set number of points based on household size (e.g., a household of 2 might receive 20 points, while a household of 5 gets 50). Items in the pantry are assigned point values—such as:
 - 1 point – Canned soup
 - 3 points – Cereal
 - 4 points – Frozen meat

This system allows individuals to shop pantry shelves like a grocery store, selecting items within their point limit.

Point values can be adjusted based on inventory and used to incentivize nutritious choices.

The Food Bank of Alaska and the Alaska Food Coalition promote Neighbor Choice as a best practice because it reduces food waste and empowers neighbors to make choices that best meet their needs.

Food Box

Food Box programs involve developing a nutritional menu for your clients and then pre-packing boxes with a multi-day supply of food for families of different sizes. Pre-packed food boxes or bags are well rounded and nutritionally adequate and distributed to eligible clients on the day of distribution. Food box programs are very common for programs that lack large amounts of space and volunteer help. Consider ways to accommodate culturally diverse and special dietary needs clients when putting together food boxes.

Community Outreach

Public relations is an organized and systematic way of keeping your community informed. Before people volunteer or donate, they need to know about your program and its impact. Here are some key strategies:

- Tell a compelling story – Use statistics and personal anecdotes to highlight the reality of hunger in your community. Create brochures to share your message.
- Engage with community groups – Provide brief updates to local civic clubs, faith communities, and other organizations for their newsletters or bulletins.
- Build relationships with local media – Reach out to newspapers, radio stations, and TV outlets to share your work.
- Maintain a mailing list – Keep track of supporters, volunteers, and donors to stay connected and update them regularly.
- Share a simple newsletter – A short, engaging newsletter (monthly or quarterly) can keep your community informed.
- Acknowledge contributions publicly – Unless requested otherwise, publicly thank volunteers, donors, and partners in newsletters or even through local media.
- Use visuals – Take photos and create slideshows but always obtain a signed photo release before using neighbor images.
- Leverage social media – Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter offer low- to no-cost ways to spread the word. Consider asking a student volunteer to help set up and manage accounts. The Alaska Food Coalition can assist with connecting volunteer resources.

Communicating Hours & Requirements

Clear communication about eligibility and service details is essential from the start. Transparency helps prevent confusion and ensures that neighbors in need know when and how they can receive food.

- Inclusive Service – Food Bank of Alaska requires that food pantries serve the community “at large”, ensuring no discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, sex, age, or any group membership.
- Define service restrictions – Clearly communicate any geographic limits, income requirements, or emergency access policies for those unable to visit during regular hours.
- Post information visibly – Make it easy for people to find your pantry by:
 - Distributing flyers to community centers, schools, libraries, churches, and social service agencies.
 - Registering with 211, a widely used resource for finding services.
 - Posting clear signage at your facility with service hours, eligibility requirements, and entrance details. Signs can be part of a church marquee, printed posters, or door signage to help neighbors locate your pantry.

Taking the time to proactively share information will ensure a well-informed and engaged community, ultimately leading to greater support, awareness, and accessibility for those in need.

Client Intake Procedures

As you begin to design a standard in-take procedure for your food pantry, consider the following questions before committing to a format.

Service Frequency & Capacity

- How often can a household receive food?
 - Some pantries provide food daily, while others operate weekly or monthly, depending on food supply, staffing, and storage capacity.
 - If you have surplus items, consider allowing “partial” visits for neighbors to pick up additional essentials.
- How many families can your program realistically support each month?
 - Assess your resources, volunteer availability, and food supply to determine a sustainable service level.

Neighbor Identification & Outreach

- How will you identify neighbors seeking assistance?
 - Consider privacy concerns—some individuals may hesitate to provide personal information due to domestic violence, stigma, or other reasons.
- What outreach efforts will you implement?
 - Identify why a neighbor needs assistance to connect them with additional resources like SNAP, housing services, or employment support.
 - Keep a referral list of local agencies, including contact details, to provide comprehensive support.
- What geographical area will your program serve?
 - Assess the local need and consider how your program fits within the broader network of food assistance in your area.
- Can you accept referrals from other hunger relief organizations?
 - If so, determine a manageable monthly referral limit based on capacity.

Ethical Standards & Confidentiality

REMEMBER: Food Must Never Be Sold!

- Charging fees, soliciting dues, or requiring donations in exchange for food is strictly prohibited.

Privacy & Dignity Matter

- Decide what information is necessary to collect and keep the process as simple and respectful as possible.
- Only collect data required by funders or helpful for improving services.

- Keep records secure—client information should be locked away or stored in a restricted-access digital database.

Suggested Intake Questions

If collecting information, here are key areas to consider:

- Name
- Address or Zip Code
- Phone number
- Household size

Record-Keeping Best Practices

- Application Form – Neighbors complete a one-time form on their first visit.
- Permanent Record Card / Electronic Database – A secure tracking system helps document visits while protecting privacy.
 - Digital records are recommended for efficiency—Food Bank of Alaska can provide guidance on database options.

By setting clear guidelines and ensuring a dignified, respectful process, your pantry can better serve neighbors in need while operating efficiently.

Name:
Address/Zip Code
Phone
Household Size

Client Resources & Referrals

Meeting the needs of Alaskans experiencing hunger requires a collaborative approach. While providing emergency food is an essential first step, connecting clients to long-term support programs can help them achieve greater stability and self-sufficiency.

Food Bank of Alaska strongly encourages food pantries to offer referrals to other public and private assistance programs. Some pantries even provide one-on-one application assistance, which has proven to be the most effective way to connect clients with essential services.

Our SNAP Outreach Team is available to support your efforts, please reach out to them for more information at snap@foodbankofalaska.org.

Making Effective Referrals

The best time to determine what additional services a client may need is during intake.

- Ask clients about their current challenges (e.g., food, housing, medical bills, childcare).
- Find out which programs they're already enrolled in and what gaps remain.
- Keep a referral list readily available with contact information for local resources.

Key Nutrition Assistance Programs

These programs help ensure families have the nutritional support they need:

- **SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)** – Monthly food assistance via an EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) card to supplement grocery budgets. Help families focus on housing, healthcare, and employment without worrying about food.
- **WIC (Women, Infants, and Children Program)** – Provides healthy foods, nutrition education, and referrals for pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age 5.
- **CSFP (Commodity Supplemental Food Program)** – Monthly food boxes for low-income seniors (60+).
- **School Meal Programs** – Most Alaska schools offer free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch to low-income students. SNAP recipients automatically qualify.
- **Summer Food Service Program** – Ensures kids continue receiving healthy meals during summer break. Pantries can host meal sites or help spread awareness.

Additional Support Programs

Food insecurity often intersects with other challenges. Consider referring clients to these programs:

- **LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program)** – Helps cover winter heating costs for eligible households.
- **Medicaid & Denali KidCare** – Provides health insurance coverage for low-income adults and children up to age 18.
- **TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)** – Offers cash assistance to families with dependent children.
- **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)** – A tax refund available to low-income working households.
- **Childcare Assistance** – The State of Alaska subsidizes childcare costs for eligible working families.

Why This Matters

The food you provide is essential but ensuring that families access all available benefits can significantly improve their overall well-being. By helping clients connect with long-term resources, you play a vital role in breaking the cycle of poverty and building stronger, healthier communities.

Sourcing Funds & Food

The key to fundraising and securing food donations is simple: **ASK!** Enthusiasm is contagious—talk about your pantry, share compelling stories, and don't be discouraged by a "no." It could become a "yes" in the future!

Fundraising Strategies

- **Special Events** – Bake sales, auctions, potluck dinners, and hunger walks can raise funds, but ensure they’re worth the effort.
- **Local Business Support** – Ask businesses to sponsor your pantry through **monthly donations**—it benefits both the community and their public image.
- **Grants** – Seek funding from **private donors, service groups, and foundations**. If you need help with grant writing, visit grantwriters.org.
- **Community Partnerships** – Schools, churches, and workplaces often host **food drives**. Consider friendly competitions or incentives (e.g., discounted event admission for food donations).

Keeping Donations Flowing

- **Host food drives** – Distribute flyers and schedule donation pick-up days.
- **Leverage community events** – Set up collection boxes at concerts, sports games, and church gatherings.
- **Apply for TEFAP** – USDA commodities through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) can help sustain your pantry.

A diverse mix of donations, grants, and fundraising ensures long-term sustainability for your food pantry. Keep spreading the word and seeking new opportunities!

Selecting Food for the Pantry

Malnutrition and hunger go hand in hand. When stocking your pantry, prioritize nutritious, low-cost foods over highly processed options. Encourage donations of low-sugar, low-sodium, and nutrient-rich foods.

Considerations for Food Selection

- **Neighbor Needs** – Are your neighbor families, seniors, or homeless individuals? Stock food accordingly (e.g., pop-top cans for those without kitchens).
- **Dietary Restrictions** – Provide options for diabetics, infants, seniors, and those with food allergies (e.g., peanut-free products).
- **Non-Food Essentials** – Items like diapers, soap, toothpaste, and shampoo can be just as critical as food.
- **Logistics** – Consider portion sizes, packaging, and whether clients can carry heavy items or need ready-to-eat foods.

Balancing Your Pantry’s Offerings

- **Protein Sources** – Stock canned meats, beans, lentils, and eggs as alternatives to perishable proteins.
- **Meal Planning Support** – Share simple recipes using pantry staples (e.g., tuna, rice, and creamed soup for a casserole).
- **Ethnic Diversity** – Offer culturally appropriate foods to reflect your community’s needs.

Ultimately, use your best judgment—thoughtful food selection ensures that clients receive nutritious, practical, and accessible meal options.

Proper Food Handling & Safety

Safe food handling is **critical** in food pantry operations, from transporting and storing food to repackaging and distribution. All staff and volunteers should be trained in food safety procedures.

Food Safety Training

- Food Bank of Alaska offers **online and in-person** Food Safety classes. **To register, contact** programs@foodbankofalaska.org.
- Key staff and volunteers should obtain a **food worker card** through an online course: [Municipality of Anchorage Food Safety Training](#).

Important Food Safety Rules

- **No expired baby food** – It must not be distributed past its expiration date.
- **No home-canned goods** – Only commercially processed items are allowed.
- **When in doubt, throw it out!** – If food looks questionable, don't take risks.

Following proper food safety protocols ensures that all food distributed is safe and nutritious for those in need.

Staff & Volunteer Responsibilities

Dedicated volunteers are the backbone of any food pantry. Whether managed by staff or entirely volunteer-run, a coordinator is essential to oversee operations, scheduling, training, and community outreach.

Key Roles & Responsibilities

- Food Pantry Management – Serves as the primary contact, overseeing pantry operations.
- Financial Management & Accounting – Tracks budgets, expenses, and donations to ensure financial responsibility and transparency.
- Record Keeping – Maintains client intake forms, inventory, volunteer hours, and finances. Feeding America required our partners to:
 - Keep invoices & packing slips for at least one year.
 - Retain client intake forms for three years (six years if receiving state funding).
 - USDA food recipients must keep records for three years
- Fundraising – Secures funds through private donations, grants, and fundraising events.
- Food Resource Management – Oversees food procurement, tracking, and partnerships (e.g., grocery rescue program).
- Food Drive Coordination – Organizes community food drives to supplement inventory.
- Transportation Management – Coordinates food deliveries and pickups.

- Facility & Pest Control Management – Ensures the pantry is safe, clean, and pest-free through regular inspections.
- Neighbor Services Coordination – Develops pantry policies, service hours, and referral programs for additional support.
- Intake Coordination – Greets neighbors, explains pantry services, and maintains confidential records.

A well-organized team ensures the pantry operates efficiently and serves neighbors with dignity. For more information on food safety and volunteer training, contact programs@foodbankofalaska.org.

Developing a Volunteer Program

Volunteer Recruitment and Management

Volunteers are the backbone of most food programs. They assist with unloading food trucks, stocking shelves, and distributing food to clients. A strong volunteer program ensures they are well-managed, appreciated, and motivated to return.

The volunteer manager plays a critical role in:

- Recruiting and screening volunteers.
- Maintaining volunteer contact information and schedules.
- Logging volunteer hours and contributions.
- Organizing appreciation events to encourage long-term commitment.

A well-structured program follows key steps:

1. Planning

Before recruiting, define the purpose and scope of your volunteer program:

- Why does the program exist? What needs does it address?
- What tasks will volunteers perform?
- How will volunteers be supported and supervised?
- What is the budget for volunteer resources and appreciation?
- How will staff be prepared to work with volunteers?

2. Policies & Procedures

Clear guidelines help volunteers understand expectations and ensure consistency. Policies should cover:

- Roles and responsibilities of different volunteer positions.
- Risk management (e.g., background checks, liability coverage).
- Confidentiality, time commitments, and customer service standards.
- Code of conduct and accountability measures.

3. Recruitment & Screening

Recruitment involves attracting individuals who align with your mission. Effective messaging should:

- Highlight the organization's impact.
- Explain how volunteers can make a difference.
- Outline the benefits of volunteering.

After recruiting, screen volunteers to match them with appropriate roles. Conduct brief interviews to assess skills, interests, and experience. Some roles may require background checks. A well-planned orientation and training process ensures volunteers are prepared and confident in their roles.

4. Supervision & Support

Supervisors play a key role in volunteer success. They should:

- Provide clear instructions, materials, and training.
- Be available for questions and support.
- Offer feedback and guidance to improve performance.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of volunteer contributions.

5. Retention & Appreciation

Volunteers are more likely to stay engaged when they feel valued. Retention strategies include:

- Recognizing their efforts regularly (e.g., verbal appreciation, thank-you notes, spotlights in newsletters).
- Creating a positive, welcoming environment.
- Encouraging social interaction (e.g., working in teams, providing refreshments).
- Hosting annual appreciation events or small celebrations.

6. Involvement in Planning

Empower volunteers by seeking their input on improvements and expansion. Many bring valuable insights from their experiences and professional backgrounds. Involving them in decision-making fosters a stronger connection to your organization.

Legal Protection for Food Pantries & the Good Samaritan Act

Good Samaritan laws in the United States are laws or acts protecting from liability those who choose to aid others who are injured or ill. They are intended to reduce bystanders' hesitation to assist, for fear of being sued or prosecuted for unintentional injury or wrongful death. Its purpose is to keep people from being reluctant to help a stranger in need for fear of legal repercussion if they were to make some mistake in treatment. Good Samaritan laws vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, as will their interactions with various other legal principles, such as consent, parental rights, and the right to refuse treatment. Such laws extend protection to individuals when they are acting in a volunteer capacity or donating food.

Appendix A: Sanitation Self-Evaluation Checklist

This tool supports documented self-inspections to ensure compliance with sanitation standards. Regular management-level self-inspections are recommended.

A. Outside Grounds

- Are grass and weeds trimmed at least 2 feet from the building?
- Is the area free of trash, standing water, and rodent/insect evidence?
- Are trash containers sealed and emptied regularly?
- Do gutters and drains function properly?
- Is the exterior free of cracks that allow pest entry?
- Are loading docks clean, sealed, and rodent-proofed?

B. Warehouse Maintenance

- Are walls, ceilings, and floors intact, free of leaks or condensation?
- Are ventilation, heating, and cooling systems operational?
- Are warehouse temperatures monitored daily?
- Are safety signs posted and enforced?
- Is lighting adequate and properly shielded?

C. Housekeeping Practices

- Is there a written cleaning schedule (daily, weekly, monthly)?
- Are spills cleaned immediately, and contaminated products removed?
- Is refrigeration equipment cleaned and maintained regularly?

D. Storage Practices

- Are products stored off the floor, with clear aisles and spacing?
- Are FIFO and expiration tracking systems in place?
- Are food and non-food items properly separated?
- Are freezers and coolers maintained at appropriate temperatures?

E. Safety Rules & Practices

- Are emergency contacts and exit maps posted?
- Are fire extinguishers available, charged, and regularly inspected?
- Are staff trained in first aid and equipment operation?
- Are OSHA regulations posted and followed?

F. Sanitation Maintenance

- Are restrooms clean, stocked, and equipped with proper signage?
- Do restroom doors close automatically?
- Are waste bins covered?
- Is staff trained in sanitary practices?

G. Pest Control

- Is a professional pest control service used and effective?
- Is the facility free of infestation signs?
- Are pesticides stored properly and applied by trained personnel?

H. Receiving Practices

- Are incoming shipments inspected for damage, pests, or contamination?
- Are refrigerated/frozen shipments temperature-checked and logged?
- Are compromised products promptly isolated and handled?

I. Shipping Practices

- Are trucks clean and maintained?
- Are frozen/refrigerated products transported at correct temperatures?
- Are temperature monitoring tools used during transport?

J. Government Compliance

- Has the facility been inspected by regulatory agencies?
- Have identified deficiencies been corrected?
- Are staff knowledgeable about food safety regulations?

K. Salvage Handling

- Are incoming salvage goods isolated and evaluated?
- Are sorting areas maintained, ventilated, and cleaned regularly?
- Are sorters trained and equipped with evaluation guidelines?
- Are spills cleaned immediately, and contaminated products discarded?

If you have any questions we are here to help! Contact us at
programs@foodbankofalaska.org.