



Membership Requirements and Application Information

Mission: The Food Bank of Northern Indiana works in partnership with the community to feed the hungry, increase awareness of the effects of hunger and lead programs designed to alleviate hunger. The Food Bank of Northern Indiana serves Elkhart, Kosciusko, Laporte, Marshall, Starke, and St. Joseph Counties and is a member of Feeding America, Feeding Indiana's Hungry (FIH) and United Way.

We are pleased that your agency is interested in becoming a partnering agency of the Food Bank of Northern Indiana. After reviewing the following information you should be able to determine whether or not your agency meets the criteria to request an application for membership.

To be eligible for membership at the Food Bank of Northern Indiana, an agency must be able to:

- Provide a copy of its **IRS 501 (c)(3) letter of nonprofit status from the IRS (not the state tax E.I.N. document) and prove that the primary mission of the agency is charitable service to the ill, needy or infants (minor children).** Please note that it is no longer permissible for an agency to use a fiscal agent if it does not have its own 501 (c) (3).
- The agency must distribute donated products free of charge for use by the ill, needy, or infants and may not sell or use donated products in exchange for money, other property, or services.
- Service must be given regardless of race, color, citizenship, ethnic origin, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, marital status, pregnancy, disability, age, sexual orientation including gender identity, unfavorable discharges from the military or any group membership.
- Programs must be in operation for at least two (2) months and be able to present a detailed operational plan prior to submitting an application.

The location of the agency may determine whether or not membership will be granted. There must be an established need in your community for a new program. The Food Bank of Northern Indiana reserves the right to review the concentration of agencies in your community. If food programs already exist in your neighborhood, then it may be more beneficial to partner with one of them.

Program Definitions:

Emergency Programs:

- Pantry- Provide non-prepared food items to anyone in need. Any agency interested in operating a pantry must allow clients to choose the food items they need and will use. Pre-packing bags is no longer an option (with the exception of an occasional emergency box). Client choice is the most efficient way to provide food because the person taking items will take what they know will be used.
- Shelter- Provide shelter to someone that would otherwise be homeless
- Soup Kitchen- Provide a congregate meal daily, weekly, or monthly

Non-Emergency Programs

- Residential Program- Provide temporary or long time supportive housing for a variety of reasons.
- Internal Pantry- Provide non-prepared food items only to clients in a residential or transitional program.
- Day program- Program providing service to a specific at-risk demographic during the day such as a senior center, day care or after school program. Provide either a snack, meal, or non-prepared food items.

Requirements for all Agencies:

1. Have a written, concise mission (goal) that supports the need for a food program in the community.
2. A financial plan and sufficient budget to support a food program.
3. Must agree to minimum annual purchase of \$500.
4. Transportation plan that accounts for food pick-ups at the Food Bank.
5. Food must be kept in a secure room at room temperature (50-70 degrees). Food and non-food items must be kept separate. All items need to be at least six (6) inches from the floor. We suggest using wire shelving to allow for cleaning. If pallets are used – they need to be changed out every six (6) months and marked with the change date.
6. Must have at least one functioning refrigerator and freezer dedicated to the program (a combo unit is acceptable) with working thermometers in place. There needs to be written temperature logs for each unit with weekly recordings *at minimum*. If there is an out of range reading, there needs to be a documented explanation.

7. Director of the program must have access to the internet and email. **All official correspondence will be sent electronically.**
8. All paperwork, including Food Bank of Northern Indiana invoices, must be kept on file for three (3) years plus the current year. These papers will be needed for site visits.
9. Program cannot be located in private residence of any kind. Food Bank of Northern Indiana items cannot go to a staff or volunteer's residence for any reason.
10. Pantries and soup kitchens must post at minimum 8.5 x 11 inch (letter sized) sign indicating the day and hours of operation along with a contact name and number, and Food Bank of Northern Indiana contact information. Any phone message or website must also indicate the days and hours of operation.
11. Must provide additional resource information. If someone is coming to your program for food assistance, they need other services as well. **At minimum programs must hand out SNAP outreach materials, 211 information, and lists of other programs in the area.**
12. Clients and meals must be accurately tracked and reported. Pantries should utilize the Food Bank of Northern Indiana's "Agency Monthly Reporting" form. It is imperative to properly track the number of separate individuals served each month. Soup Kitchens/Meal Programs must have a consistent meal count method such as people count or plate count.
13. Food Bank of Northern Indiana's "Agency Monthly Reporting" form must be submitted by the 10th of each month for the previous month (for example, the July 2017 report is due by August 10th, 2017). A program will not be allowed to shop if they fall two months behind in submitting the "Agency Monthly Reporting" form.
14. Programs need to be open to Food Bank of Northern Indiana staff visits. We normally schedule our site visits, but we may stop by without prior notice.
15. Program staff and volunteers need to have food safety training. Food safety is a very important aspect of any program. The intensity of training depends on program type:
 - a. Emergency and internal pantries need to have *at least* one person pass " Food Safety for Pantries" – a manual and test provided by the Food Bank of Northern Indiana
 - b. Soup kitchens and programs serving meals must have *at least* one SERVSAFE certified staff member or volunteer on location during meal preparation times. The Food bank of Northern Indiana conducts SERVSAFE certification classes and exam annually. Your program will be responsible for all costs to obtain SERVSAFE certification.
 - c. Soup Kitchens and Meal programs must be approved by the local Health Department. Documentation must be submitted to Food Bank or submit something

in writing form the Health Department stating an inspection isn't required. Inspection records need to be reviewed during the site visit.

16. Pest control plan, either professional or in-house.

In addition to above requirements **Pantries** must also:

1. Allow clients to choose all the items they would like to take. People don't eat the same foods, so they shouldn't have to take something they won't eat. Instead of spending hours packing bags, you can spend that time with the client as they pack their own bag. It's more user-friendly for them and more enjoyable for you.
2. Must be open and allow clients to come at least once per month for the entire year. Ideally programs would be open weekly.
3. Operating hours need to be consistent
4. Must be serving at least **50 households** monthly.

If you feel that your agency can meet all requirements you may contact Agency Relations for an application and review of operational plan. Completing the application does not guarantee membership. Request application electronically at sklingerman@feedingamerica.org

Application Follow-Up

Upon receipt of the Application for Membership, a representative from the Food Bank of Northern Indiana will contact you regarding a site visit. During the visit, we will conduct an interview to gain a better understanding of your organization and inspect the facility to ensure you meet the above requirements.

A successful application and site visit will allow you to begin the required training program.

Together, we can solve hunger.