



Volunteer Guidelines

1) **First take care of yourself.**

Please wear comfortable shoes that are closed in front (not flip flops or sandals). Wear clothes appropriate for being outdoors and allow you to be able to move and work with ease.

You will be working a 2 hour shift so please bring what you need to be successful during that time period. That might include reading glasses, gloves, sunscreen, a hat, water or a snack. We sometimes have bottled water and snacks on hand but that varies.

BE COVID SAFE. Please wear your own mask or we will provide you with a disposable one. We have disposable gloves and hand sanitizer. ALWAYS ADHERE TO THE 6' DISTANCE RULE - INDOORS AND OUTSIDE. No more than 2 people should be in a closed room indoors. Please move aside to allow for 6' of distance if you see someone coming towards you carrying anything heavy or moving shelving or other items.

2) **Sensitivity and Discretion**

Please wear a name tag or label so clients and other volunteers can address you by name.

Our goal is to treat everyone with respect and kindness so please choose your words carefully when you interact with our clients. Consider these questions or phrases to help our clients get what they need, such as "How can I help you?" or, "I'm sorry I don't understand your question." or, "What language do you speak? I will find someone to help you."

Please refrain from commenting about clients - their car, family size, clothing, the amount of food they need or anything personal about them - while you are volunteering.

Feel free to wish our clients well before they leave with, "We hope you have everything you need," or just a simple, "Thank you for coming today."

You can give our clients a positive feeling by waving or giving a thumbs up, since your smile can't be seen under a mask!

3) **Patience and flexibility**

Be patient with yourself, your co-volunteers and clients as groceries are assembled and placed by client cars curbside.

Please be flexible as our needs sometimes change before you start your shift or even during your shift for any number of reasons. If the pantry manager or volunteer supervisor asks you to do something different than you expected, you may decline but we hope you will agree and be patient to follow new instructions for a task.

Please be considerate and patient with our staff and volunteer supervisor(s). They are often multi-tasking but do want you to feel welcome, busy and successful!

4) **Cell Phone Use**

We discourage the use of cell phones while volunteering at Centre Street Food Pantry. If you must take a call, please walk away from the clients into a discrete location.

5) **Taking Breaks**

Helping in the pantry can be tiring work. If you need a break, please let a staff member know.

If we are not busy, you might be asked to:

- Help clean/tidy up
- Pack grocery bags or other bags with food or essential items
- Take inventory of our supplies

You might be asked:

1) **How do we decide what to put in the grocery bags for clients?**

We try to provide households with at least three days worth of food for their family size. We include proteins, dairy, a variety of shelf stable goods, as well foods suitable for families with children in our Kids Club bags. The plastic bags include at least 3 personal care/household cleaning items. We always have diapers, feminine products and pet food available.

2) **Why can people come just once per month?**

Our pantry is intended as an interim (emergency) source of food. By allowing client households to receive food once a month we can best serve the number of families visiting every week so that we can always offer enough food, in good variety, for each household.

3) **What if a shopper wants substitutions, something extra or wants to give something back?**

If you aren't sure of an answer just check in with the volunteer supervisor for your shift or a staff person.