Food Bank Distribution and Sorting Volunteer Orientation

1 Welcome
Volunteers are essential to fulfilling our mission:

We believe that all deserve adequate food, housing, and respect.
We assist our neighbors in obtaining basic needs that affirm their human dignity and worth.

Thank you so much for choosing to volunteer your time with us. You are helping to keep your neighbors with food on their plates and a roof over their heads.

In order to make your contribution to our organization as successful and positive as possible we have provided a set of helpful guidelines for all volunteers. We will happily make reasonable accommodations for any volunteers needing physical assistance.

2 Hours and Signing In
All volunteers are expected to stay and work the entirety of every shift, including helping to clean up after distribution. If for some reason a volunteer needs to come in late or leave early arrangements need to be made with the Volunteer Coordinator 24 hour notice in advance. This can be done by calling 206-367-3477 or emailing volunteers@northhelpline.org.

Food Bank Volunteer Hours:
- Wednesdays 9:30am-1:30pm
- Thursdays 4:00pm-7:00pm
- Saturday 9:30am-1:30pm

Sorting Volunteer Hours
- Tuesday 10:00am-2:00pm
- Wednesdays 9:30am-1:30pm
- Thursdays 9:30am-1:30pm
- Fridays 10:00am-2:00pm
- Saturdays 9:30am-1:30pm

In order to help us keep track of your hard work and to enable us to accurately report our data, please remember to sign in and sign out of every shift. There is a sign-in sheet on the front counter where all volunteers should be sure to write legibly and use the name you provided on the volunteer application.

If your hours need to be documented, please allow 3-5 business days for forms to be completed. It is the volunteer’s responsibility to follow-up on documentation requests.

After signing in, please make a nametag from the box on the counter. Long term volunteers have permanent nametags that can be found hanging next to the door to the warehouse.

3 Client Volunteers
Many of our clients are also volunteers. We love the community this builds. With this in mind, it is important that all clients receive equal access to all of our services. Client volunteers will have the same access to food as all other clients. Only registered clients of North Helpline will be eligible to receive food available for distribution. Eligible volunteers must complete the North Helpline client registration process in order to benefit from food bank services. Volunteers are allowed to go through the food bank line before the doors open in order to get back in position before distribution begins. All food received from the distribution line must be stored in the cooler or dry storage space. Absolutely no food is to be taken off of the line outside of the volunteer distribution time. Any food taken during general distribution time is considered theft.
4 Safety Requirements

- Before being put in position, all volunteers (except those on cart duty) must wash hands and put on gloves.
- Hands must be washed and gloves must be changed after eating, touching hair or face, handling meat, and using the bathroom.
- Restocking requires lifting crates that can be heavy. Use caution with items on high shelves or heavy containers, follow your own limitations. Volunteers may be asked to lift items up to 40 pounds; please inform us if you have a condition and cannot lift heavy items.
- Refer to the proper lifting techniques that are posted for any heavy lifting.
- Volunteers must wear sturdy closed-toed shoes.
- Please do not hesitate to ask a staff member for help!

5 Expectations

- Volunteers are expected to arrive at least 30 minutes before distribution starts.
- Volunteers are expected to stay for the entirety of the shift, including cleaning up after distribution has ended.
- If a volunteer must be late or leave early, arrangements must be made 24 hours in advance with the Volunteer Coordinator (barring emergencies). We might work with you to find a shift that better fits your schedule.
- Volunteers are expected to adhere to all of the above safety requirements.
- All clients must be treated with respect.
- Only distribute items in the distribution line—clients and/or volunteers should not be taking items in the back crates, freezer or cooler.
- Respect other volunteers in our team environment. Enjoy your volunteer experience.
- Flexibility is encouraged regarding volunteer assignments from day-to-day.
- No profane, abusive or threatening language is allowed.
- No horseplay or running is permitted.
- Weapons, use of alcohol or drugs are prohibited in the facility. Any volunteers under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be asked to leave.
- Smoking only allowed in designated smoking areas and must take place before or after distribution.
- Dress appropriately in clean work attire. Volunteers should also dress accordingly to the weather as duties may require being outside. The warehouse is not climate controlled.
- Volunteers who are ill, infected with a communicable disease, have infected wounds, sores or respiratory infection, can NOT work with food. Volunteers will be asked to leave if they are ill.
- Volunteers are welcome to take short breaks and eat the snacks in the volunteer break room but must make sure their position is covered before taking a break.
- Only staff is able to select the snacks available for volunteers in the volunteer break room. Please do not open anything from the warehouse to put in the break room. You are encouraged to bring a lunch!
- Client information is confidential. Client information may not be shared under any circumstances. Volunteer Applications include a confidentiality agreement.
- No distributable food may be taken off the premises that was not received during distribution by registered clients. This is considered theft. All clients, including volunteers, are to receive equal access to available foods.
- Any food that is not fit for distribution and would otherwise be composted may be taken home by volunteers with prior staff approval. Please check with the Food Bank staff about each item.