



**HARVESTERS**  
**COMMUNITY FOOD NETWORK**

# AGENCY HANDBOOK

## Terms and Conditions

Updated 2018

# Table of Contents

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This partner agency handbook will familiarize your agency with the policies and procedures of being a Harvesters partner agency.

<b>1. <u>HARVESTERS OVERVIEW</u></b> .....	<b>1</b>
• <a href="#">What is Harvesters?</a> .....	1
• <a href="#">Mission and Vision</a> .....	1
• <a href="#">Harvesters' 26-County Service Area</a> .....	1
• <a href="#">Initiatives and Programs</a> .....	2
<b>2. <u>AGENCY SERVICES</u></b> .....	<b>4</b>
• <a href="#">Agency Services Department</a> .....	4
• <a href="#">What is a Partner Agency?</a> .....	4
• <a href="#">Strategic Recruitment of Agency Partners</a> .....	4
• <a href="#">How to Become a Partner Agency</a> .....	5
• <a href="#">Partner Operations</a> .....	5
• <a href="#">Agency Support and Customer Care</a> .....	6
• <a href="#">Forms and Resources</a> .....	6
• <a href="#">Agency Grouping Structure</a> .....	6
○ Benefits Unique to Each Agency Network Group .....	7
• <a href="#">Innovative ideas for additional service models or partnerships</a> .....	7
○ Healthy Pantry Partnership .....	7
○ Milk2MyPlate .....	7
○ Grocery Store Recovery .....	8
○ School Pantry Program .....	8
<b>3. <u>AGENCY GUIDELINES</u></b> .....	<b>9</b>
• <a href="#">Appropriate Use of Products from Harvesters</a> .....	9
• <a href="#">Client Eligibility Guidelines</a> .....	9
○ Definition of Ill.....	10
○ Definition of Needy.....	10
○ Definition of Infants .....	10
○ Serving Clients .....	10
• <a href="#">Serving Volunteers</a> .....	10
• <a href="#">Agency Product Use</a> .....	10
• <a href="#">Posted Guidelines</a> .....	11
○ Guideline Requirements .....	11
• <a href="#">Pest Control</a> .....	11
○ Recommendations for Pest Prevention .....	11
○ Recommendations for Pest Infestation .....	11
• <a href="#">Advocating for Favorable Food Policies</a> .....	11
• <a href="#">Additional Resources and Guidelines</a> .....	12
<b>4. <u>UTILIZATION OF GOVERNMENT NUTRITION PROGRAMS</u></b> .....	<b>13</b>
• <a href="#">The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)</a> .....	13
• <a href="#">Women, Infants &amp; Children (WIC)</a> .....	13
• <a href="#">Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP)</a> .....	13
• <a href="#">Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)</a> .....	14
• <a href="#">The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)</a> .....	14
• <a href="#">National School Lunch Program (NSLP)</a> .....	15
• <a href="#">Other Government Programs</a> .....	15

<b>5. <u>FOOD SAFETY</u></b> .....	<b>15</b>
• <a href="#">Mandatory Food Safety Training</a> .....	15
• <a href="#">Additional Food Safety Requirements</a> .....	15
o Transporting Food .....	15
o Insulated Blankets .....	16
o Temperature Logs .....	16
• <a href="#">Is This Food Still Good?</a> .....	16
• <a href="#">Food Recalls</a> .....	17
<b>6. <u>ORDERING FOOD</u></b> .....	<b>18</b>
• <a href="#">Harvesters Express</a> .....	18
• <a href="#">Other Perishable Foods</a> .....	18
• <a href="#">Item Limits and Handling Fees</a> .....	18
<b>7. <u>RECEIVING FOOD</u></b> .....	<b>20</b>
• <a href="#">Delivery</a> .....	20
• <a href="#">Standing Delivery Appointments</a> .....	20
o Delivery Times .....	21
• <a href="#">Order Tracking</a> .....	21
o Route Tracking Timetable .....	22
o Poundage Restrictions .....	22
o Curbside Delivery .....	22
o Paid Delivery .....	23
o Questions About Deliveries .....	23
• <a href="#">Order Pick-up</a> .....	23
o General Shopping Floor Policies, Procedures and Guidelines .....	23
o Item Limits .....	23
o Age Limit .....	23
o Shoes .....	23
o Frequency of Visits .....	23
o Time Limits .....	24
o Shopping Carts .....	24
o Loading Orders .....	24
o Hand-loaded Orders .....	24
o Pallet-loaded Orders .....	24
o Safety .....	24
o Insulated Blankets .....	24
• <a href="#">Pick-up and Shopping Floor Appointments</a> .....	25
o Kansas City Building .....	25
• Kansas City Check-in .....	25
o Topeka Building .....	25
• Topeka Check-in .....	26
• <a href="#">Order Accuracy</a> .....	26
• <a href="#">Rescheduling Order Pick-Up or Delivery</a> .....	26
<b>8. <u>PRODUCT STORAGE</u></b> .....	<b>27</b>
• <a href="#">Refrigeration</a> .....	27
<b>9. <u>FOOD ALLERGIES</u></b> .....	<b>29</b>
• <a href="#">What is a Food Allergy</a> .....	29
• <a href="#">Common Symptoms of an Allergic Reaction to Food</a> .....	29
• <a href="#">What Foods Cause the Majority of Allergies</a> .....	29

<b>10. <u>AGENCY FILES</u></b> .....	<b>30</b>
• <u>Record Keeping</u> .....	30
○ Sign-in sheets .....	30
○ Electronic Records .....	30
○ Temperature Logs.....	30
○ Pest Control Logs.....	30
○ Correspondence.....	30
<b>11. <u>MONTHLY REPORTS</u></b> .....	<b>31</b>
• <u>Monthly Reporting Policy</u> .....	31
• <u>Requirements</u> .....	31
• <u>Delinquent Reports</u> .....	31
• <u>How to Complete the Monthly Report</u> .....	32
○ Pantries .....	33
○ Onsite Feeding .....	33
○ Reporting for Multiple Programs (TEFAP, CSFP, Mobile Distributions) .....	34
○ Electronic Records .....	34
<b>12. <u>FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS</u></b> .....	<b>35</b>
• <u>Credit Limits</u> .....	35
• <u>Invoicing Process</u> .....	35
• <u>Monthly Statements</u> .....	35
• <u>Payment Methods Accepted</u> .....	35
• <u>Returned Checks</u> .....	36
• <u>Past Due Accounts</u> .....	36
• <u>Late Fee</u> .....	36
• <u>Suspension or Inactivation</u> .....	36
• <u>Account Balance Discrepancies</u> .....	36
<b>13. <u>MONITORING VISITS</u></b> .....	<b>37</b>
• <u>Purpose of a Monitoring Visit</u> .....	37
• <u>Advance Notification and Preparation</u> .....	37
• <u>Unannounced Monitoring Visits</u> .....	38
• <u>The Monitoring Visit</u> .....	38
• <u>Maintaining Contact</u> .....	39
<b>14. <u>NOTABLE POLICIES</u></b> .....	<b>40</b>
• <u>Return to Stock Policy/Restocking Fee</u> .....	40
• <u>Missing or Returning Product Policy</u> .....	40
• <u>Scheduled Closures</u> .....	40
• <u>Inclement Weather</u> .....	41
• <u>Disaster Response</u> .....	41
• <u>Food Repackaging Policy</u> .....	41
• <u>Food Re-boxing Policy</u> .....	41
• <u>Redistribution Policy</u> .....	42
• <u>Food Safety with Non-Harvesters Food</u> .....	42
• <u>Multiple Locations</u> .....	42
• <u>Shopping Floor Policies</u> .....	43
• <u>Pet Food</u> .....	43
• <u>Communications Policy</u> .....	43
• <u>Behavior Expectations</u> .....	43

<b>15. <u>NON-COMPLIANCE</u></b> .....	<b>45</b>
• <a href="#">Violations</a> .....	45
• <a href="#">Compliance Violation Procedures</a> .....	45
o Resolution of Violations 1-6 .....	45
o Resolution of Violations 7-9 .....	46
o Suspension .....	46
• <a href="#">Agency Grievance Process</a> .....	47
<b>16. <u>AGENCY ADVISORY COUNCIL</u></b> .....	<b>48</b>
• <a href="#">Key Responsibilities of Council Members</a> .....	48
• <a href="#">Structure and Membership</a> .....	48
• <a href="#">Application and Selection</a> .....	48

## Section 1: Harvesters Overview

### ► What is Harvesters?

Founded in 1979, Harvesters—The Community Food Network is a food bank. Food banks operate as clearinghouses for the collection and distribution of donated food and related household items. Harvesters is a certified member of Feeding America®, a nationwide network of more than 200 food banks, serving all 50 states.

### ► Mission and Vision

Harvesters' mission is to feed hungry people today and work to end hunger tomorrow. Our mission is accomplished through collaborative relationships with a network of more than 620 nonprofit agencies across 26 counties in northeast Kansas and northwest Missouri. Harvesters refers to this network of nonprofit agencies as its "partner agencies". Every month, Harvesters' network feeds 141,500 individuals which is the equivalent of one in seven people in our region. In fiscal year 2017, Harvesters distributed more than 52 million pounds of food through its network.

Additional information about Harvesters can be found at [www.harvesters.org](http://www.harvesters.org). Additional information about Feeding America can be found at [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org).

### ► Harvesters' 26-County Service Area

Harvesters' service area includes 10 counties in northwestern Missouri (Bates, Cass, Carroll, Clay, Henry, Jackson, Johnson, Lafayette, Platte and Riley) and 16 counties in northeastern Kansas (Clay, Douglas, Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Marshall, Miami, Nemaha, Osage, Pottawatomie, Riley, Shawnee, Washington, Wabaunsee and Wyandotte).



**HARVESTERS' SERVICE AREA**



## ► Initiatives and Programs

In addition to the collection and distribution of food and household items to partner agencies, Harvesters offers many other programs designed to assist agencies in providing nutritious food and serving targeted populations. Harvesters' programs are based off our four strategic initiatives – Feeding Children, Feeding Families, Feeding Seniors and Healthy Eating.

To learn more, visit our Agency Resources webpage at

[www.harvesters.org/agencies/harvesters-programs](http://www.harvesters.org/agencies/harvesters-programs).

### ***Feeding Children Initiative***

To address the issue of childhood hunger, Harvesters offers multiple programs

- **Kids Cafe** provides free after-school and summer meals to children age 1-18.
- **Kids in the Kitchen** is an age-appropriate, four-week curriculum that focuses on food preparation, food safety skills, nutrition and the importance of making healthy food choices.
- **BackSnack** provides backpacks of food to low-income children on the weekend. BackSnack involves a partnership between Harvesters, a participating school and a community agency.
- **School Pantry** provides grocery items for families in need through their child's school. Parents can shop the pantry when they pick up their students, or pick up a bag of groceries during a school event.

### ***Feeding Families Initiative***

Harvesters' network of agency partners helps families in need of emergency food assistance. These partners include food pantries and kitchens. In additions, families may receive assistance through The Emergency Food Assistance Program and mobile food pantries.

- **Food Pantry** - A pantry is where individuals visit the program site and receive groceries to prepare at home. The groceries could also be delivered to the clients. (Food pantries cannot prepare meals for clients to be consumed onsite.)
- **Onsite** - An onsite is where individuals receive a prepared meal to consume onsite. Prepared meals also can be delivered to home bound clients. Programs are referred to as "onsite feeding programs" and could include:
  - **Community Kitchens** – Charitable feeding programs that provide prepared meals served at the kitchen to needy clients who do not reside on the premises. In some instances, kitchens may also provide lighter meals or snacks, such as sandwiches, for clients to take with them when the kitchen is closed. Kitchens are open to the general public. Sometimes referred to as "soup kitchens".
  - **Residential Program** - A meal that serves residents of an in-house program.
  - **Shelter** - Facilities include family shelters, shelters for battered women, homeless shelters, and other facilities whose primary purpose is to provide temporary residential shelter to homeless families with or without children.
- **The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)** - Harvesters distributes government food commodities through the TEFAP program. TEFAP provides low-income adults and families with groceries.
- Harvesters' **Mobile Food Pantries** distribute large quantities of nutritious produce, other perishable food items and household items on a regular basis to designated agencies across our 26-county service area.

### ***Feeding Seniors Initiative***

With limited mobility, health problems and limited resources, seniors may not receive the nutritious food they need. Harvesters responds to this need through the following programs:

- Harvesters' **Senior Mobile Food Pantries** deliver perishable foods to low-income and homebound residents at senior housing sites.
- **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)** - Harvesters distributes government food commodities to seniors through food boxes (assembled at Harvesters) containing a variety of nutritious items.

### ***Healthy Eating Initiative***

Harvesters strives to provide the most nutritious food possible to our neighbors in need. In addition to providing nutritious food, Harvesters offers a variety of nutrition services to its agency partners.

- **Project Strength** This six-week program for adults on low and fixed incomes covers important nutrition basics, food safety and hands-on cooking. Participants also receive a bag of groceries at the end of each class.
- **Milk2MyPlate** is a partnership with local dairy companies to provide fresh dairy items to agencies at a set cost.
- **Food Drives** specifically food drives in which agencies can participate such as Our Community Can and Souper Bowl, bring in the most important source of nutritious, shelf-stable foods including canned fruit and vegetables, peanut butter and other proteins.
- **Health Pantry Partnership** Harvesters and agencies team up to promote healthy eating. Harvesters' Healthy Pantry Partnership program pairs a staff member from Harvesters' Nutrition Services team with a pantry for several months to assist with projects

## **HOW CAN MY AGENCY PARTICIPATE IN THESE PROGRAMS?**

For more information on any of these programs, please contact Customer Care at 816-929-3220 or 877-653-9519 (toll free). Or email [customer care@harvesters.org](mailto:customer care@harvesters.org).

Learn more at [www.harvesters.org/agencies/harvesters-programs](http://www.harvesters.org/agencies/harvesters-programs)



## Section 2: Agency Services

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### ► Agency Services Department

The Agency Services Department exists to support Harvesters' network of more than 620 nonprofit partner agencies by focusing on these key activities:

- **Building New Partnerships:**
  - Strategically recruit agency partners.
  - Pursue pilot programs and innovative ideas for additional service models or partnerships.
- **Maintaining Agency Compliance:**
  - Train agencies on all aspects of program operations.
  - Train agencies on compliance requirements.
  - Train agencies on safe food handling.
  - Conduct regular monitoring site visits.
- **Sustaining a Strong Network:**
  - Implement and support the Agency Network grouping structure.
  - Understand the unique needs, challenges, and opportunities in each county of our service area.
  - Coach agencies for program improvement and capacity-building.
  - Support agencies with quality customer service.
  - Encourage agencies to participate in additional programs.

### ► What is a Partner Agency?

To become a Harvesters' partner agency, an agency must have an established onsite feeding and/or emergency food assistance program or should be a reputable organization with a history of helping those in need for six months or longer. In addition, the agency must have its own 501(c)(3) designation from the IRS or operate under the umbrella of another 501(c)(3) designated agency. Unincorporated churches meeting the IRS definition of a church also are eligible to apply to be a partner agency. Partner agencies may include, but are not limited to, emergency food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, children's homes, homes for the mentally disabled and domestic violence shelters. Harvesters provides access to food and household items, so agencies can focus on serving their clients.

Agencies must utilize partnership in Harvesters' network to serve the ill, needy or infants (minor children). Agencies must have documented criteria for determining need and procedures for ensuring that those who receive assistance meet the criteria. Client eligibility guidelines can be found in Section 3 of this manual.

Client eligibility guidelines must be posted in a place where prospective clients have the ability to view the criteria prior to receiving services. Hours of operation also must be posted. Agencies may not solicit contributions from clients.

### ► Strategic Recruitment of Agency Partners

- Food pantries must serve 100 or more households a month.
- Onsite feeding programs must serve 200 or more meals a month.
- If an Agency is within five miles of another Agency operating a similar outreach program, Harvesters suggests that the agencies collaborate to better serve the community with a team effort. The applying agency may or may not be approved if providing the same

service in close proximity to an existing partner agency. Exceptions may be considered. Contact Harvesters to discuss.

## ► How to Become a Partner Agency

Applications to become a partner agency are accepted throughout the year. Harvesters Agency Services team reviews applications and offers new agency trainings regularly.

We realize not all feeding programs are exactly the same. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions after reading application information.

**Please note:** Completion of the application does not guarantee partnership. We reserve the right to refuse partnership to programs not meeting our criteria. An application may be put on a waiting list if there are no partnership openings in your geographical area at the time of application.

Harvesters does not partner with organizations for events or special occasions, such as one-time distributions, special dinners, or “carnivals” or fairs. Harvesters focuses on partnerships with organizations who provide long-term service to the community, and food distributed by Harvesters is intended for people in need. Exceptions may be considered, so call Customer Care with questions or special requests. There may be other ways that Harvesters can partner on an event.

The application to become a partner agency can be found online at:  
[www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources](http://www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources).

## ► Partner Operations

Harvesters will conduct an inspection of your site prior to partnership approval to review how the agency’s programs operate, how food is stored and distributed, and to answer questions. After this initial visit, a monitoring visit is required annually. Harvesters reserves the right to visit a program site at any time.

A full Agency Orientation is offered regularly for new partners.

Agencies must agree to share in Harvesters’ cost to acquire, transport, sort, package, store and distribute donated food. The current shared handling fee is \$0.16/lb. This handling fee is applied to shelf-stable, nonperishable items ordered through Harvesters’ Express, the online ordering website.

Agencies must submit a Monthly Activity Report to Harvesters about the service provided. Reports are due by the 5th business day of the month for the prior month’s activity.

Agencies must maintain records at the program site for three years, in addition to the current year, including all written policies, procedures and records that relate to food that has been given to clients. An agency must have two contacts with working emails and phone numbers.

Agencies offering seasonal programs which provide services a few times a year must complete Monthly Activity Reports during their periods of service. For example, an agency providing summer camp services would report during their summer months of operation respectively. Seasonal programs are subject to the same operational requirements as a year-round program. The administrators of such programs should contact Harvesters and request that their account be made inactive until their next service period to prevent their account from being placed on hold for non-compliance.

## ► Agency Support and Customer Care

Harvesters provides a toll-free phone line that connects partnering agencies directly with the Agency Services Department. The phone line number is answered Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. If an agency leaves a message on the Customer Care line, it can expect a call back within 48 hours of the time the message was initially left. Agencies would call this number for a variety of reasons – perhaps if they needed help with a billing/invoice item, online order questions, or delivery or cancellation questions.

**Contact Customer Care at 816-929-3220 or 877-653-9519 (toll-free). Or email [customercare@harvesters.org](mailto:customercare@harvesters.org).**

Agencies also can contact their designated Agency Services Coordinator directly. Locate your county on the chart to find the correct contact.

Kansas Counties		Missouri Counties	
Agency Coordinator 816-929-3219	Agency Coordinator 785-861-7707	Agency Coordinator 816-929-3046	Agency Coordinator 816-929-3049
Johnson – KS	Clay – KS	Jackson - MO	Bates – MO
Miami – KS	Douglas – KS		Carroll – MO
Wyandotte - KS	Franklin – KS		Cass – MO
	Jackson - KS		Clay – MO
	Jefferson – KS		Henry – MO
	Marshall – KS		Johnson – MO
	Nemaha – KS		Lafayette – MO
	Osage – KS		Platte – MO
	Pottawatomie – KS		Ray - MO
	Riley – KS		
	Shawnee – KS		
	Wabaunsee - KS		
	Washington - KS		

## ► Forms and Resources

Templates for all required forms are posted on Harvesters Agency Resources page at [www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources](http://www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources). Agencies can review and utilize these forms to maintain agency compliance and operate under recommended promising practices.

## ► Agency Grouping Structure

Harvesters works with agencies based on an agency grouping structure. This structure individualizes program partnership, thus strengthening the Agency Network and increasing capacity throughout Harvesters’ service area. This grouping structure, along with an agency’s dedicated partnership, moves Harvesters closer to feeding more hungry families, children and seniors in our community.

Goals of Agency Network Groups:

- Strengthen our Agency Network.
- Provide practical support to those partners best able to increase capacity to serve more people.
- Empower all agencies to further explore how they address hunger in their communities and enhance their impact.
- Improve product throughput.
- Work in collaboration to resolve issues and limitations for clients and agencies including access, transportation, capacity, and nutritional needs.

**Benefits Unique to Each Agency Network Group**

	Pantry Group A	Pantry Group B	Pantry Group C	Kitchen Group D	Onsite Group E
<b>Free Delivery</b> (minimum order amount of 600 pounds)	Available bi-weekly	Available monthly	No delivery	Available bi-weekly	Available monthly
<b>Case Availability</b>	3x case quantity	2x case quantity	Standard case quantity	2x case quantity	Standard case quantity

Benefits available to ALL Agency Network Groups:

- Agency Pick-up available.
- Access to Shopping Floor.
- Access to Harvesters Express online ordering.
- Access to training events and material.
- Invited to participate in other programs and activities (SNAP, nutrition, advocacy, focus groups).

**► Innovative Ideas —  
Additional Service Models or Partnerships**

**Healthy Pantry Partnership**

Harvesters and agencies team up to promote healthy eating. Harvesters’ Healthy Pantry Partnership program pairs a staff member from Harvesters’ Nutrition Services team with a pantry for several months to assist with projects such as creating a client-choice model, re-arranging the pantry to feature healthy items, adding signage to educate about food safety and nutrition, recipe demonstrations, conducting client satisfaction surveys, teaching nutrition classes, and providing recipes and food prep advice. Agencies can apply to participate in the long-term option (6-8 months long), or the short-term option (2-3 months). The partnership is highly collaborative and based on projects that the agency selects.

**Milk2MyPlate**

Milk is one of the most desired staples for those who have a hard time affording groceries. However, it is often difficult for agencies to stock dairy items because of transportation and storage issues. Harvesters has teamed up with a local dairy to provide a weekly supply of fresh 2% low-fat milk at a consistent, affordable price to Harvesters’ agency partners. The milk delivered to agencies has 17 days until the stated “use by” date. Since the milk is coming directly from the dairy to the agency, there is plenty of time to distribute it to clients. Milk is delivered by the dairy and agencies are invoiced through Harvesters.

### ***Grocery Store Recovery***

Harvesters can designate partner agencies to pick up and distribute store donations from retail donors. This program allows Harvesters to more efficiently use our resources for larger donations and delivery of product to our agencies, while allowing donated product to stay in the community in which the retailer is located. Harvesters is still the primary point of contact for the retailer and is responsible to monitor the compliance for all empowered agencies. Safe food handling and storage guidelines must never be compromised in the process. Donations can include products such as meat, deli, dairy, produce, bakery and dry/canned items. Partner agencies sign a yearly contract, receive ID badges, report pounds donated and agree upon a pick up schedule with the assigned retailers.

### ***School Pantry Program***

Along with the BackSnack Program, the School Pantry Program helps provide food to families in need. While BackSnack provides easy open, easy to prepare items for students, School Pantry offers supplemental grocery items. This can include shelf stable items such as: canned fruit, dry pasta, nut butters, or canned beans. Families also receive fresh produce when they take home their items. Each school is different, but most schools either allow the families to shop the pantry or sort the items into grocery sacks and allow for the families to pick up as needed. This can help fill any gap for families, especially toward the end of the month when resources can be scarce.

## Section 3: Agency Guidelines

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### ► Appropriate Use of Products from Harvesters

The community donates food and household products to Harvesters with the expectation that it will be utilized to assist people in need. As such, the terms and conditions of agency partnership describe, in detail, what constitutes appropriate use of the products an agency obtains from Harvesters. In summary, food obtained from Harvesters:

- Must be used to serve the ill, needy, or infants and children.
- Must be distributed to clients free of charge, with absolutely no conditions levied or implied.

Products obtained through Harvesters may not be:

- Given as thank you gifts to volunteers or others affiliated with the agency.
- Sold or used for fundraising, or for non-program related activities (funerals, carnivals, birthday parties, daycares).
- Shared with non-Harvesters agencies.

### ► Client Eligibility Guidelines

Harvesters leaves client eligibility criteria to the discretion of the partner agency, however all partner agencies must provide written documentation of their criteria and outline the procedure that is used to determine whether clients of their onsite feeding and/or emergency food program(s) meet the criteria.

Criteria for service should not be overly burdensome for the client. If the agency determines to collect identifying information (such as birthdates or social security numbers) proper security protocols should be in place to protect this client data. Examples of possible eligibility guidelines may include:

- Declaration of need by client.
- Income eligibility (show bank statement or equivalent).
- Residence eligibility (show proof of address or ID).
- Designation of which geographical region is served (for example, if agency serves only specific zip code or school district).

The criteria must be posted in a place where prospective clients have the ability to view the criteria prior to receiving services.

Hours of operation also must be posted.

Agencies may not solicit contributions from clients.

Partner agencies must utilize some criteria for ensuring that products distributed by the program(s) will be received by the ill, needy, or infants as outlined in Section 170(e)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

### ***Definition of Ill***

Some examples of ill persons include:

- A person suffering from a physical injury.
- A person with an existing handicap, whether from birth or later injury.
- A person suffering from malnutrition.
- A person with a disease, sickness, or infection which significantly impairs physical health.
- A person partially or totally incapable of self-care (including incapacity due to old age).

### ***Definition of Needy***

A needy person is a person who lacks the necessities of life, involving physical, mental or emotional well-being, as a result of poverty or temporary distress. Examples include a person who is financially impoverished as a result of low income and lack of financial resources.

### ***Definition of Infant***

An infant is a minor child as determined under the laws of the jurisdiction in which the child resides.

### ***Serving Clients***

Harvesters' primary purpose is making donated product available to all eligible ill, needy, or infant individuals without regard to religious or political preference. Involvement in religious or political activities or requiring recipients to listen to a presentation that is religious or political in nature cannot be a prerequisite or condition for receiving the donated product. Involvement in religious or political activities must be voluntary on the part of the recipient and ideally would be separate from the service at the pantry/kitchen.

Product obtained from Harvesters must be distributed to clients with absolutely no conditions levied or implied.

Agencies may use non-food items (i.e., hand soap, toilet paper, cleaning supplies, etc.) for use in the agency's pantry distribution program.

## **► Serving Volunteers**

Agencies may provide food to ill or needy volunteers and/or staff. This is not to be a regular supplement. Volunteers and staff in need on a regular basis should be referred to another agency for regular services. If a referral causes hardship for the agency staff or volunteers seeking assistance, they may continue to receive pantry services from the agency where they work or volunteer. Regular intake procedures (such as obtaining a signature and accessing product during open times) must be followed for volunteers if they are receiving services. Volunteers may not be served first.

Agencies may not "thank" volunteers for their labor with food obtained from Harvesters. Agencies must find other methods of expressing appreciation to volunteers.

## **► Agency Product Use**

Agencies may prepare samples of Harvesters' food products for clients to consume or take home a minimal amount of certain food products in order to become more familiar with them. Food and/or non-food products may not be used for the purpose of fundraising either as prepared food (such as spaghetti dinners or bake sales) or as prizes.

## ► Posted Guidelines

Harvesters requires that all programs maintain a current list of all guidelines in writing and available for review. Pantry programs are required to have this information posted and available for clients in a place that is easily readable.

### ***Guideline Requirements***

Days, Hours of Service, Contact Information, Service Area Limitations, Any other requirements to obtain services (utility statement, ID, etc.). Sample pantry guidelines can be found at: [www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources](http://www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources)

## ► Pest Control

Pests carry germs and disease. Partner agencies must take reasonable precautions to protect against pest infestation. Pest prevention and control programs can be maintained by agency staff, volunteers and/or a contracted source—whatever is determined as most appropriate by the partner agency. Agencies with a history of pest infestations must contract with a licensed pest control company to inspect and treat the site at least every two months.

### ***Recommendations for Pest Prevention***

The food storage area should be kept clean and free of debris, ensuring that all stored products are sealed properly.

Inspect the food storage area every 30 days for signs of pest infestation. We recommend you document findings on the Harvesters Pest Control Log available for download at [www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources](http://www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources).

Poison-free devices must be used in the storage area to ensure that area remains free of pests. Electronic pest repellents are not a permissible form of pest control.

### ***Recommendations for Pest Infestation***

Inspect food storage area to determine the type of pest and the level of treatment needed to resolve the infestation and take immediate action to treat the area accordingly.

Food products should be removed from the storage area, if there is a possibility of toxic pesticide exposure to stored products during treatment.

Inspect stored products to ensure no damage or infestation has occurred once evidence of pest has been determined, and discard any damaged products.

Agencies with a history of pest infestations must contract with a licensed pest control company to inspect and treat the site until the pest control company confirms that the infestation has been remedied. Generally, this is after two pest control monitoring's with no notable pests. These agencies are required to have a pest control log book from the pest control company that will track all of the pest control company findings.

## ► Advocating for Favorable Food Policies

Advocacy is the act of speaking out on issues of concern or on behalf of a person or group affected by a public policy and/or economic trend. Through involvement with Harvesters, agencies have the opportunity to amplify the voices of clients and help legislators at all levels of government understand how policies and trends impact clients. Harvesters' advocacy efforts focus on ensuring the availability of government nutrition programs and adequate participation



in the programs by those who are eligible. To learn more about Harvesters' advocacy efforts and how to help, visit [www.harvesters.org/give-voice](http://www.harvesters.org/give-voice).

## ► Additional Resources and Guidelines

**Power Up Your Pantry:** The University of Missouri Interdisciplinary Center for Food Security has guides available to assist the agency with a variety of guidelines. Please review this information at [www.foodsecurity.missouri.edu/power-up/](http://www.foodsecurity.missouri.edu/power-up/).

Power Up Your Pantry is a series of bite-sized educational guides for food pantries and other hunger relief groups looking for ways to enhance their current operations and better meet the needs of the people who use their services.

Topics range from the essential – including working with volunteers, fundraising, and communications – to partnering with farmers and gardeners, starting a community garden, and implementing a Client Choice food distribution system. Most guides include a **Spotlight** that highlights the work of food pantry directors or community partners who put the ideas in to action.

### **In the series:**

- Supporting Client Choice
- Communication
- Community Gardening
- Cultivating Self-reliance
- Fundraising Options
- Grant Writing
- Helping People Grow Their Own
- Harvesting and Handling Produce Safely
- Partnering with Farmers and Gardeners
- Raising Money from Individuals
- Volunteers

### **Did You Know**

If your agency is struggling to maintain compliance or you have any additional questions about compliance please contact Customer Care or your Agency Services Representative to discuss options for your agency. Phone numbers can be found on page 6 of this handbook.

## **Section 4: Utilization of Government Nutrition Programs**

Although Harvesters' network is effective, as privately funded nonprofit organizations, we simply do not have the capacity or funds to act as the first line of defense against hunger for all local residents who need food assistance each year. The government's nutrition assistance programs are the fastest and most direct way to reduce hunger. The charitable response to hunger is designed to be a supplement to these programs, not a replacement for them.

In many instances, agencies may be serving clients who are eligible for one or more of the government's nutrition programs, but are not participating in them. Getting these clients connected to the programs for which they are eligible will be of great service to your clients and will allow the agency to stretch its limited resources farther.

### **► The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP - formerly known as Food Stamps)**

SNAP provides low-income individuals with a monthly food allowance. All states administer the program through Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards, which work like debit cards. Of all the government's nutrition programs, it is the most extensive and widely known. Harvesters has a team of SNAP outreach staff who can assist agency clients with benefits application as well as visit an agency to do outreach.

**For more information, call Harvesters' SNAP hotline at 877-653-9522 or email [snap@harvesters.org](mailto:snap@harvesters.org)**

To locate the SNAP office nearest you, visit the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) website at [www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/map.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/map.htm).

### **► Women, Infants & Children (WIC)**

The WIC program provides supplemental food vouchers and/or EBT cards, nutrition information, and medical referrals to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, as well as to children up to age five. To qualify, applicants must be at nutritional risk. Participants in the WIC program are automatically eligible to participate in the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), which provides coupons redeemable at approved farms, farmers markets and roadside produce stands. FMNP also collaborates with the WIC program to provide nutrition education. WIC benefits are typically issued through local health departments. To find the nearest WIC office, visit the USDA website at [www.fns.usda.gov/wic/](http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/).

### **► Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP)**

CACFP provides aid to child and adult care institutions and family or group day care homes for the provision of nutritious foods that contribute to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children, and the health and wellness of older adults and chronically impaired disabled persons. To learn more visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program> or contact Harvesters at [kidsafe@harvesters.org](mailto:kidsafe@harvesters.org)

### ► **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)**

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) ensures that low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. To learn more visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program> or contact Harvesters at [kidsafe@harvesters.org](mailto:kidsafe@harvesters.org)

### ► **The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)**

These programs provide food supplies—USDA commodities—rather than cash benefits or vouchers to low income populations. Harvesters serves as the local distributor for commodities provided through these programs. For more information on the programs, please visit: [www.fns.usda.gov/tefap/emergency-food-assistance-program-tefap](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tefap/emergency-food-assistance-program-tefap) or [www.fns.usda.gov/csfp/commodity-supplemental-food-program-csfp](http://www.fns.usda.gov/csfp/commodity-supplemental-food-program-csfp).

A limited number of organizations in each state are allowed to distribute these commodities. To learn more about availability, contact Customer Care toll free at 816-929-3220 or email [customercare@harvesters.org](mailto:customercare@harvesters.org).

### ► **National School Lunch Program (NSLP)**

The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. For more information on the program, please visit: [www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-nslp](http://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-nslp).

### ► **Other Government Programs**

Utilization of government programs that provide assistance with other basic needs like housing and healthcare can help clients maximize their resources. Learn more about the government benefit and assistance programs agency clients may be eligible for and help them get connected at [www.GovBenefits.gov](http://www.GovBenefits.gov).

## Section 5: Food Safety

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Food safety is an important public health issue. Harvesters must ensure all food and household products distributed to agencies are handled, transported and stored in a safe and appropriate manner and are in compliance with the Food and Drug Administration, Feeding America, state, county, and city regulations and guidelines. In turn, agencies must ensure this same level of food safety in their service to the community. Partner agencies must implement specific food handling measures to ensure that product being distributed is safe.

### ► Mandatory Food Safety Training

To maintain the highest level of food safety compliance, Harvesters requires all partner agencies complete food safety training or obtain a food handler permit through your local county (or in some cases such as Kansas City, Mo., your city). Each agency is required to have at least one regular volunteer or staff person who picks up, transports and or distributes food donations, or a person who supervises those activities, complete regular food safety training. When trained representatives turn over or the license expires, food safety training must be completed as soon as possible.

Often these permits are good for one to four years and will need to be obtained and renewed at the agency's expense. In the event the food handler card does not have an expiration date, agencies will be expected to renew the training every four years.

All onsite feeding programs (serving prepared meals) must meet local commercial food safety training requirements. For most counties, that usually means having at least one person at a manager level of training. Contact your county for more information.

Harvesters currently has a food safety course posted online for staff and/or volunteers to complete to maintain compliance. Harvesters Food Safety courses can be found online at [www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources](http://www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources).

### ► Additional Food Safety Requirements

#### **Transporting Food**

- **Dry Product** – All product should be transported in a clean dry vehicle or trailer. Enclosed modes of transport are preferable, but not required. If your agency transports product in an open truck bed or trailer, all product must be properly secured. *NOTICE: Agencies that do not properly secure their loads before leaving Harvesters are not eligible for credits for product missing from their order after they leave Harvesters.*
- **Temperature Controlled Product** – Food safety guidelines require the use of active or passive temperature controls when picking up product from Harvesters. Harvesters' staff will not load your orders until they verify your agency representative has appropriate active or passive temperature controls. Passive controls include insulated blankets or coolers. Active controls include refrigerated vehicles. Vehicle air conditioning does not qualify as active or passive refrigeration. If your agency is eligible for free delivery, we encourage you to consider this benefit.
- **Insulated Blankets** – Harvesters has insulated blankets available for agencies to purchase on Harvesters Express. Search for "Blanket" or "Insulated Blanket". Blankets are also available to agencies to borrow from the Shopping Floor but must be returned the same day they are used.

This is Harvesters standard for transporting food safely. If your agency has questions or concerns, you must let Harvesters know, so that we can work on a timeline to fully implement any changes needed at your site.

### ***Insulated Blankets***

Food safety guidelines require the use of insulated blankets during product pick up at Harvesters. Harvesters' staff will not load your orders until they verify your agency representative has appropriate active or passive temperature controls. Insulated blankets are not required if you pick up with a refrigerated vehicle. If your agency is eligible for free delivery, we encourage you to consider this benefit.

### ***Temperature Logs***

Temperatures must be checked and recorded for each refrigerator and freezer at least twice per day when the agency is in service. Harvesters' temperature logs are available for download at [www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources](http://www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources).

## **► Is This Food Still Good?**

The codes and dates printed on food packages have different purposes. If a food appears to be "outdated" it does NOT automatically mean the food is unsafe or unusable. The USDA states "Best By" dates are intended to tell you how long the product will retain its best flavor or quality. It is not a safety date. Foods may be eaten after the date if they have been properly stored and handled.

- **Code Date:** Manufacturers may stamp numbers on products so they know when and where they were produced. This is helpful if there is a recall and foods need to be taken off the shelf.
- **Manufacturing or Packing Date:** Product may be stamped with a date preceded by "MFG." This date can be used along with recommended shelf life for guidance on how long a product will have its best flavor and quality.
- **Best If Used By Date:** This is the date by which the product is at its highest quality, but can still be safely consumed for a period of time after the date. The length of time is dependent on the product and its storage.
- **Expiration Date:** This is the date the manufacturer recommends the product be used by for best quality (flavor, color, texture). If stored properly, items remain safe and wholesome. However, flavor, color, and texture may change slowly.
- **Pull or Sell-By Date:** The manufacturer recommends this be the last day the product be sold in a retail store. The product will remain safe and wholesome for a reasonable amount of time for use after purchase. The amount of time depends on the product type and storage conditions.
- **Freezing:** Many products can be frozen to extend the acceptable storage time. Freezing a product holds it in its present state. Bacteria cannot grow in the freezer. However, freezing will not kill bacteria, if it is already present.

## **The Food Keeper**

The FoodKeeper helps you understand food and beverage storage. It will help you maximize the freshness and quality of items. By doing so you will be able to keep items fresh longer than if they were not stored properly. It was developed by the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, with Cornell University and the Food Marketing Institute. For more information, please go to: [www.foodsafety.gov/keep/foodkeeperapp/](http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/foodkeeperapp/).

## **► Food Recalls**

Harvesters and the partner agency will use the following process for recalled products:

1. When Harvesters receives notification of a product recall from the FDA or Feeding America, it will remove that product from the shelves within 24 hours.
2. Harvesters will notify (via email and signs on the Shopping Floor) partner agencies of the recalled products within 24 hours.
3. Partner agencies will remove from their shelves and dispose of recalled products within one business day of the recall notice and notify clients to the best of their ability to make them aware of the recalled product.

## **Recommended Best Practice**

Harvesters recommends partner agencies keep track of their food recall notices for at least 12 months to verify that newly received donated product has not been recalled.

Harvesters maintains a list on the Shopping Floor of all previous recalls.

# Section 6: Ordering Food

## ► Harvesters Express

Harvesters makes nonperishable and frozen food items, as well as fresh produce by-the-case, available to our partner agencies on an online ordering system called **Harvesters Express** ([www.agencyexpress3.org/AgencyExpress30/NewLogin.aspx](http://www.agencyexpress3.org/AgencyExpress30/NewLogin.aspx)). As food items become available to Harvesters or donated from the community, they are added to the online ordering system. From there, agencies can view products, order items in the quantities that are needed, and schedule an appointment to pick up or have the order delivered.

- Partner agencies must have a valid email associated with their program(s) to access Harvesters Express.
- Agencies may not modify an order in Harvesters Express after 6 a.m. three business days prior to their scheduled pick-up or delivery day. For example, the last opportunity to submit or modify an order for a Thursday pick-up or delivery would be 6 a.m. on Monday of that week. Modifications to an order to be picked-up/delivered on Monday would need to be submitted by 6 a.m. on Wednesday of the previous week.

### Delivery/Pick Up Time Tables

Kansas City Area Agencies	
Order Placed or Modified by 6 a.m.	Order Received
Monday	Thursday
Tuesday	Friday
Wednesday	Monday
Thursday	Tuesday
Friday	Wednesday

Topeka Area Agencies (KDC)	
Order Placed or Modified by 6 a.m.	Order Received
Monday	Thursday
Tuesday	Friday
Wednesday	Monday
Thursday	Tuesday
Friday	Wednesday

For more information, refer to the Harvesters Express Learning Program (H.E.L.P) guide at [www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources](http://www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources) or contact Customer Care for training.

## ► Other Perishable Foods

Additional perishable food items also are available at Harvesters. The selection varies daily, but generally includes bread, dairy and produce. Partner agencies may select perishable items while at Harvesters to pick up an order.

## ► Item Limits and Handling Fees

Harvesters may place limits on certain items of which we have limited quantities. Limits and handling fees are clearly indicated when placing online orders via Harvesters Express or when selecting items from the Shopping Floor.

Harvesters does not sell food. The nominal handling fees for costs incurred are regulated by Feeding America and allowed by the IRS. Handling fees help offset some of the costs of collecting, sorting, packaging, handling, and storing food and household products. Agencies should not use the term “buy” when referring to Harvesters’ handling fees. The current fee is \$0.16/lb. The handling fee may be adjusted by Harvesters’ board of directors based on changes in need, product availability, and product storage and product transportation costs.

Additional costs may be incurred by partner agencies who select products acquired through co-operative (co-op) purchase. As a convenience to partners, Harvesters may purchase products that a majority of partners have indicated are high priority items, if we do not receive donations of these items. In these cases, we pass the wholesale cost along to those partner agencies who access the product. We can generally secure the items at a competitive price and can provide the added convenience of one-stop shopping. Examples of items purchased co-operatively include canned fruit, peanut butter, beans and tuna.



## Section 7: Receiving Food

Agencies can receive food from Harvesters in two ways; delivery and/or pick-up.

### ► Delivery

Harvesters' drivers provide door-to-door or curbside delivery. Please have staff and/or volunteers prepared to assist with unloading items and preparing them for distribution or storage.

Harvesters is pleased to offer free delivery for agencies who are eligible for delivery under the Agency Group Structure.

All delivery locations must be large enough and safe enough for our trucks to deliver to. If a lot does not meet our requirements, the agency will need to make other arrangements to receive their product.

Harvesters must abide by all local laws and ordinances around the operation of our trucks and deliveries.

### ► Standing Delivery Appointments

Based on Harvesters agency grouping structure, standing delivery appointments have been set for all qualifying agencies in Group A, B, D and E.

Agency Group	Delivery Frequency
Pantry Group A	Bi-Weekly
Pantry Group B	Monthly
Pantry Group C	Not Available
Kitchen Group D	Bi-Weekly
Onsite Group E	Monthly

To access these standing delivery appointments on Harvesters Express, go to **Order Options** (see right).



Select **Shopping List**, or if you have already created an order, go straight to **Check Out** and select **Delivery** (see right).



Your available delivery appointment (if you are within the 14 day ordering window) will show in green (see right).

### Delivery Times

Delivery appointment times listed in Harvesters Express are default delivery times and do not reflect the actual delivery time for the agency. Please think of these as place holders only. For more accurate delivery times, agencies must use the Order Tracking Tool (see below).

### ► Order Tracking

Harvesters uses an advanced delivery routing tool to help us optimize delivery efficiency. Agencies can preview when their order is scheduled to be delivered online at [harvesters.routetracking.com/](http://harvesters.routetracking.com/)

Program types that utilize Route Tracking include BackSnack, CSFP, Pantry, TEFAP and Onsites/Kitchens.

**Step 1 – Click on the CUSTOMERS: TRACK YOUR ORDERS button**

**Step 2 – Enter your account number (this is the same as your user name when logging in to Harvesters Express)**

**Step 3 – Click Submit**

## Did You Know?

All delivered orders from Harvesters can be tracked on the route tracking tool except for Senior Mobiles and Mobile Distributions.

### **Route Tracking Timetable**

The routing process begins two business days before you are scheduled to receive your delivery (see table below). The time shown on the tracker two business days before your delivery will be accurate to within two hours.

Delivery Day	Route Tracking Begins	Route Tracking Finalized
Monday	Thursday	Monday 7 a.m.
Tuesday	Friday	Tuesday 7 a.m.
Wednesday	Monday	Wednesday 7 a.m.
Thursday	Tuesday	Thursday 7 a.m.
Friday	Wednesday	Friday 7 a.m.

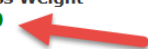
The day of your delivery you can check the route tracker after 7 a.m. to see the most accurate delivery time. Any delays after this point would be due to circumstances largely beyond the control of Harvesters, such as weather or traffic.

### **Poundage Restrictions**

All delivery orders are limited to a minimum of 600 pounds of product. There is no maximum delivery limit. Please ensure that your Shopping Cart has a minimum of 600 pounds in it before submitting your order. Agencies with underweight orders will be notified at the beginning of the routing process that they will need to make arrangements to pick up their order from Harvesters.

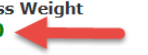
In the example to the right, you will notice that the gross weight is more than 600 pounds. If eligible, this order would be delivered.

Shopping Cart	
Total Line Items <b>6</b>	Total Due <b>\$94.50</b>
Available Credit Limit	Gross Weight <b>620</b>



In the next example, you will notice that the gross weight is less than 600 pounds. This order would not be delivered.

Shopping Cart	
Total Line Items <b>10</b>	Total Due <b>\$71.78</b>
Available Credit Limit	Gross Weight <b>580</b>



### **Curbside Delivery**

When delivering product to an agency, Harvesters requires an agency to have a current (less than two years old) signed delivery waiver. Without this waiver, Harvesters requires that our drivers must not enter your building with their power equipment (this includes both finished or unfinished spaces). Drivers will need to leave the delivered product outside your building. With the signed waiver, our drivers will use their judgment to move pallets anyplace the power jack

can safely go. Harvesters will repair damage incurred due to gross negligence on the part of our drivers. The delivery waiver can be found at: [www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources](http://www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources).

### ***Paid Delivery***

Agencies are not able to pay for additional deliveries. If an agency feels the volume of food they are receiving warrants additional deliveries, please contact Customer Care.

### ***Questions About Deliveries***

If you have any questions about deliveries please contact your agency services representative or contact Customer Care at 816-929-3220 or 877-653-9519 (toll free) or email [customercare@harvesters.org](mailto:customercare@harvesters.org).

## **► Order Pick-up**

### ***General Shopping Floor Policies, Procedures and Guidelines***

Our goal is to provide a pleasant, clean and safe experience for everyone who visits Harvesters' facility. Harvesters provides many trash receptacles throughout the facility. If you see something that needs to be thrown away, i.e. spoiled food, cardboard, plastic wrap, and you have the opportunity, please do so. If you see something that presents an unsafe situation, please notify a member of Harvesters' staff immediately.

Harvesters will not tolerate individuals who become abusive verbally, physically or in any other way toward Harvesters' staff, volunteers or other member agencies. If this occurs on the Shopping Floor or in any other instance while conducting business with Harvesters, progressive disciplinary action will be taken against the agency which the individual represents. Agencies are expected to adhere to all posted guidelines and instructions by Harvesters staff.

### ***Item Limits***

From time to time we may place limits on certain items of which we have limited quantities. This is in an effort to ensure the most equitable distribution as possible. Furthermore, there may be items that will occasionally carry a small handling fee. In both of these cases, we will have signage posted alerting you to these situations. Please be aware of any special signage or notices as you shop.

### ***Age Limit***

All people on the Shopping Floor must be at least 16 years of age. If children under 16 years old accompany a shopper, the children can wait in the lobby of the Shopping Floor, or in your vehicle. Adults must accompany anyone under the age of 16 at all times. Minors should not be left unattended in the building or in the parking lot. If your agency requires special considerations, please contact the Shopping Floor Coordinator.

### ***Shoes***

Because we operate in a warehouse environment, closed-toe shoes are required for shopper safety.

### ***Frequency of Visits***

Agencies may only visit the Shopping Floor once per day based on appointment availability, so that more agencies will have access to Shopping Floor product.

### ***Time Limits***

Agencies are given 30 minutes from the time they check-in to shop and check-out with their order and not more than an additional 30 minutes to load their order including the Shopping Floor items. Agencies should plan on their visit to Harvesters not taking more than 60 minutes from check-in to departure.

### ***Shopping Carts (Kansas City Only)***

Carts are available for your convenience, and an agency may utilize up to three carts at once. If you find after having filled three carts, you still need to shop for more, we ask that you checkout and load those items into your vehicle. After loading your product, if time still remains, you may go through the Shopping Floor again. (The 30-minute Shopping Floor time limit still applies.)

## **Did You Know?**

The Shopping Cart Summary on Harvesters Express shows how many cubic feet your order will occupy. This is useful information when picking up your order to help you ensure you have enough space in your vehicle to pick up the order. One pallet of product would be approximately 96 cubic feet.

### ***Loading Orders***

When you pick up product at Harvesters, we expect you will be able to pick up your entire order at once. The average pick-up from Harvesters includes two pallets of pre-ordered products and two carts of perishable items from the Shopping Floor. To accommodate an order of this size, a truck or van is generally needed, as well as two or three able-bodied persons to move the product from the pallets and carts into the vehicle in a timely manner.

If you have a vehicle (typically a truck) that can transport the product while still shrink-wrapped on the pallet, we will be able to load the pallet by forklift for you at your own risk of damage to your vehicle. Harvesters will repair damage incurred due to gross negligence on the part of our staff.

Product cannot be stored on shopping carts while your agency makes multiple trips.

### ***Hand-loaded Orders***

Use your invoice as a checklist to double check your order. If you discover a discrepancy as you are loading your order, we ask you to stop loading and notify a Harvesters staff member immediately.

### ***Pallet-loaded Orders***

Harvesters encourages agencies to ask Shopping Floor attendants about getting items by the pallet, if they are in need of large quantities of a particular item.

### ***Safety***

Safety is important—please do not overload your vehicle. Harvesters reserves the right to not load any vehicle it deems to be unsafe or not roadworthy. Harvesters will not knowingly overload any vehicle beyond its capacity to operate safely.

### ***Insulated Blankets***

Food safety guidelines require the use of insulated blankets during product pick up at Harvesters. Harvesters' staff will not load your orders until they verify that your agency representative has appropriate active or passive temperature controls. Insulated blankets are

not required if you pick up with a refrigerated vehicle. If your agency is eligible for free delivery, we encourage you to consider this benefit.

Harvesters has insulated blankets available for agencies to purchase on Harvesters Express. Search for “Blanket” or “Insulated Blanket”. Blankets are also available to agencies to borrow from the Shopping Floor but must be returned the same day they are used.

## ► Pick-up and Shopping Floor Appointments

### ***Kansas City Building***

If your agency wants to access the Shopping Floor in Kansas City, and you are not picking up an order, you must make a Shopping Floor appointment, and your agency representative must show up within 30 minutes of the appointment time in order to keep it.

You are automatically scheduled for a Shopping Floor appointment when you make an appointment to pick up product ordered via Harvesters Express (i.e. pick-up appointment). If you'd like to visit just the Shopping Floor, without picking up an order, you may do so by making a “Shopping Only” appointment using the scheduling function of Harvesters Express.

Shopping Floor appointments must be entered by 6 a.m. two days prior to the date an agency desires an appointment.

### **Check-in (Kansas City)**

It is the responsibility of all agencies to check in at the Shopping Floor kiosk upon arrival.

- No agency representatives may enter the Shopping Floor until they have signed in on the register and the Distribution Coordinator verifies the agency's appointment.
- If an agency representative enters the Shopping Floor without checking in and does not have an appointment, they will not be allowed to take Shopping Floor product even if they have already loaded it into carts.
- If an agency representative comes to Harvesters because they believed they had an order to pick up but they do not have a pick up, they will not be allowed to shop without a previously scheduled Shopping Floor appointment.
- If an agency representative comes to pick up an order a day or more late, they will not be allowed to shop without a previously scheduled Shopping Floor appointment.
- Agencies may bring up to three people to shop in the Shopping Floor.
- Any changes in authorized shoppers should be communicated in writing to Harvesters' Agency Services department.

### ***Topeka Building (KDC)***

If your agency wants to access the Shopping Floor in Topeka you must contact the KDC Front Desk Coordinator to place your order 24 hours prior to your scheduled pick-up. Your agency representative must show up within 30 minutes of the appointment time in order to keep it.

**Please Note: All KDC Shopping Floor orders are distributed on a first come, first distributed basis. This is done to ensure that all product is distributed as quickly and efficiently as possible.**

### **Check-in (Topeka)**

- No agency representative may enter the loading area until they have signed in on the register with the KDC Front Desk Coordinator, and the agency's appointment is verified.
- If an agency representative enters the loading area without checking in and does not have an appointment, they will not be allowed to load Shopping Floor product.
- If an agency representative comes to Harvesters because they believed they had an order to pick up but they do not have a pick up, they will not be allowed to shop without a previously scheduled Shopping Floor appointment.
- If an agency representative comes to pick up an order a day or more late, they will not be allowed to shop without a previously scheduled Shopping Floor appointment.
- Any changes in authorized shoppers should be communicated in writing to Harvesters' Agency Services department.

### **► Order Accuracy**

Please verify the accuracy of your order upon receipt. If there are any discrepancies, please review the Missing or Returning Product Policy. If you discover a discrepancy in your palletized order once you return to your site, it must be reported to Harvesters within three business days in order to receive any credit.

### **► Rescheduling Order Pick-Up or Delivery**

If you need to reschedule a pick-up appointment, you must notify Harvesters by calling 816-929-3220 prior to your scheduled pick-up time. We will be happy to re-schedule your pick-up within a week of your original appointment. See also Return to Stock Policy/Restocking Fee in Section 14 of this handbook.

## Section 8: Product Storage

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Once product (both food and non-food items) are received from Harvesters, it generally must be stored by the partner agency for a period of time before it is distributed to the agency's clients.

The following food storage guidelines highlight practices partner agencies should follow:

- All product must be stored in a clean storage area, free of dirt, bacteria, pests and other contaminants.
- The storage area for nonperishables should be dry, and the temperature should ideally be between 50 and 70 degrees (temperature controlled). (According to the USDA)
- All product must be kept off the floor, at least 6 inches from the ground and 4 inches from walls by utilizing shelving or tables.
- The storage area should be orderly and organized in a manner conducive to efficient distribution and product rotation.
- The rotation of nonperishable food items stored in your pantry should take place each time you restock the pantry with new products or every 30 days, whichever is first. The *First In First Out* (FIFO) product rotation method is the practice of moving older currently stocked products to the front of the shelves, while storing newer products behind. The *First Expired First Out* (FEFO) product rotation method is the practice of moving products with earlier expiration dates to the front of shelves, while storing products with later expiration dates behind.
- Nonperishable food should be distributed within 90 days of receiving it from Harvesters.
- Baby food and formula should not be distributed after the expiration date. All baby food and formula products stored that are beyond date of expiration should be discarded and not distributed to clients.
- Household products, like cleaners, should be stored in an area separate from food.

**For additional information on product storage, please visit:**

[www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources](http://www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources).

### ► Refrigeration

To properly handle perishable and frozen food items, partner agencies must have adequate refrigeration equipment and utilize thermometers in each unit to ensure temperatures remain consistent.

- Refrigerators must be kept between 32 and 40 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Freezer temperatures must be at 0 (zero) degrees Fahrenheit or below.

Temperatures must be checked and recorded for each refrigerator and freezer at least twice per day when an agency is in service. Harvesters' temperature logs are available for download at

[www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources](http://www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources).

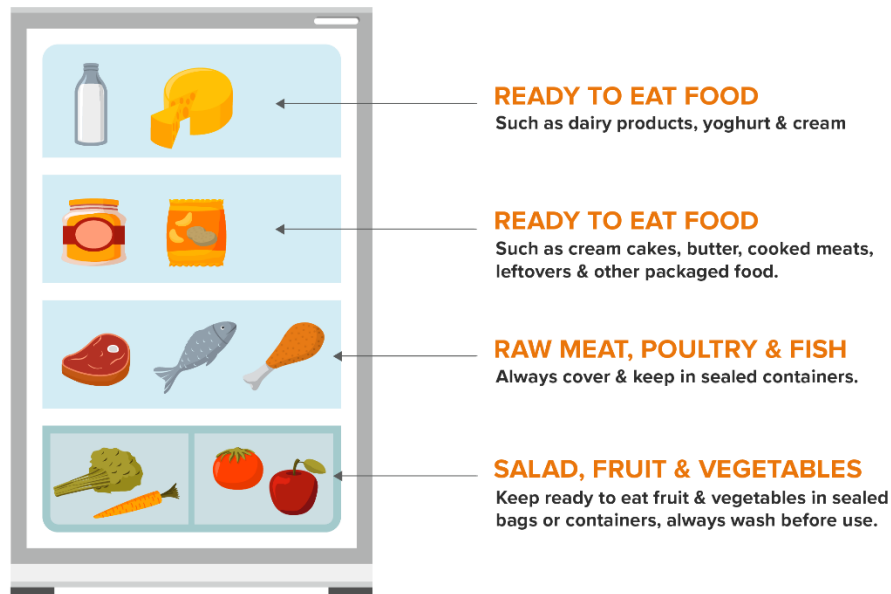


In addition:

- Clean refrigerators regularly especially before restocking food.
- Clean spills immediately.
- Do not place your refrigerator thermometer in the door as temperatures can vary greatly.
- Freezers should be defrosted regularly.

When placing food in the refrigerator, you must ensure that the food remains safe to eat. The diagram below shows how food should be placed in a domestic refrigerator that has vegetable drawers.

- In general, ready to eat food such as dairy products, yogurt, cream, butter, cooked meats, leftovers and other packaged food should be placed on the top two shelves.
- Ready to eat foods must be stored away from raw foods so that harmful bacteria cannot transfer from the raw food to the cooked food.
- Raw meat, poultry and fish should always be covered and kept in sealed containers on the bottom shelf to stop them touching or dripping onto other foods.
- Salad, fruit and vegetables should be kept in sealed bags or containers (with air holes to keep them protected from any contamination) and must be washed before use.



Product stored in refrigeration and freezer units must be kept separate from other programs (i.e. pantry product must be kept separate from kitchen product or pantry product must be kept separate from church product). Personal items such as staff lunches, etc. should not be stored with food pantry or onsite feeding program product.

Harvesters recommends agencies not share refrigeration or freezer space with non-Harvesters programs (i.e., the church kitchen). If space is limited, all product should be clearly labeled and secured from accidental use.

## Section 9: Food Allergies

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### ► What is a Food Allergy?

A food allergy is a specific type of adverse food reaction involving the immune system. The body produces what is called an allergic, or immunoglobulin E (IgE), antibody to a food. Once a specific food is ingested and binds with the IgE antibody, an allergic reaction ensues.

### ► Common Symptoms of an Allergic Reaction to Food

Food allergies are the leading cause of anaphylaxis, a sudden, severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction. Anaphylaxis can be caused by food allergies, insect stings, or medications.

Symptoms of food allergies typically appear from within minutes or up to 2 hours after a person has eaten the food to which they are allergic. Allergic reactions can include:

- Hives
- Flushed skin or rash
- Tingling or itchy sensation in the mouth
- Face, tongue, or lip swelling
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Abdominal cramps
- Coughing or wheezing
- Dizziness and/or lightheadedness
- Swelling of the throat and vocal cords
- Difficulty breathing
- Drop in blood pressure

### ► What Foods Cause the Majority of Allergies?

While more than 160 foods can cause allergic reactions in people with food allergies, the [Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act \(FALCA\)](#) has identified the eight most common allergenic foods. These eight foods account for 90 percent of food allergic reactions. They are: milk, eggs, fish (such as bass, flounder, cod), crustacean shellfish (such as crab, lobster, shrimp), tree nuts (such as almonds, walnuts, pecans), peanuts, wheat, and soybeans. These eight, and any ingredient that contains protein derived from one or more of them, are designated as "major food allergens" by the FALCPA, which was passed by Congress in 2004 and became effective in 2006.

## Section 10: Agency Files

### ► Record Keeping

Partner agencies must maintain records relating to the food received from Harvesters and how it was distributed. The following records must be maintained at the program site (point of distribution) for a period of at least three years, in addition to the current year:

#### ***Sign-in/Meal Count Sheets***

These documents provide information about the meals and clients served by the program. Sign-in sheets must be signed by clients prior to receiving service. Volunteers or staff may not sign on their behalf. See chart below for sign-in sheet requirements.

<b>Food Pantry (Including Mobile Pantry)</b>	<b>Onsite Feeding Program</b>
Date of Service	Date of Service
Self-Declaration of Need	Self-Declaration of Need
Household Name	Number of Breakfasts
Number of Adults (age 18-64)	Number of Lunches
Number Children (age 0-17)	Number of Dinners
Number of Seniors (age 65 and over)	Number of Supplemental/Snacks

For more information, please see **How to Complete the Monthly Report** in Section 11.

#### ***Electronic Records***

If your agency utilizes electronic records, you must be able to print them in a manner that shows the individual households receiving food in a month. If you are unable to provide these records, your agency must utilize a separate sign in sheet for Harvesters.

#### ***Temperature Logs***

Each refrigerator and freezer in service at your agency should have a functioning thermometer in the unit at all times. Agencies are required to take temperature recordings twice per day for each day of operation. Temperature log forms can be found at:

[www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources/](http://www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources/).

#### ***Pest Control Logs***

Records should be kept each time the agency is monitored for pests. Agencies may perform their own pest control services or hire a professional company. Agencies with a history of pest activity will be required to hire a professional company to monitor for pests no less than every other month. (See Pest Control in Section 3 for more details.)

### **Recommended Best Practice**

Keep track of the number of pests trapped per month and take immediate action if you see an increase in activity.

#### ***Correspondence***

Copies of pertinent correspondence between Harvesters and the program also should be kept on file (agency agreement, safe food training, credit increase notifications, and recall information).

## Section 11: Monthly Reports

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### ► Monthly Reporting Policy

Harvesters is committed to being the leading source of information related to hunger issues in its service area. To obtain certain information, Harvesters relies on its partner agencies.

This policy is developed to give Harvesters' partner agencies a clear understanding of what is expected from them in the completion of monthly reports. With this policy, Harvesters clearly defines the role a partner agency plays in educating the community about hunger.

### ► Requirements

ALL active partner agencies must complete a report showing client activity on a monthly basis, for each active Program Number, whether or not food was picked up at Harvesters or any Harvesters' services were used. This report is known as the "Harvesters' Monthly Report".

**These reports are due no later than the 5th business day of the month following the reporting month.**

They should be completed via the online reporting tool at [www.harvesters.org/Agencies](http://www.harvesters.org/Agencies). For example; a January report is due no later than the 5th business day of February, a March report is due no later than the 5th business day of April, etc.

Agencies may complete and submit their reports any time after their last working day of the month but before the 5th business day of the following month.

### ► Delinquent Reports

Reports are delinquent on the 6th business day of the following month. Programs delinquent one to 60 days will receive a warning letter. At 90 days past due, programs delinquent in their reporting will be placed in HOLD status, which will prevent any activity, including but not limited to, picking up food at the warehouse, food deliveries and nutrition classes.

If a partner agency becomes delinquent in submitting monthly reports for 120 days or more, the agency will be placed in INACTIVE status. The agency will not be able to receive any food or services from Harvesters until reinstatement occurs. Reinstatement at this point includes completion of all outstanding monthly reports, a \$25.00 reinstatement fee, all outstanding balances due to Harvesters, and a monitoring visit by a Harvesters staff member.

All agency holds will be documented by Harvesters in the agency's permanent file. Should delinquency occur twice within an 18-month period, the partnership of the agency may be terminated for non-compliance with Harvesters' policies.

Harvesters will make copies of all reports and notices available. Partner agencies may view these reports during normal business hours or request a copy of the report be emailed, mailed or faxed to them.

Agencies must submit a monthly activity report for every food program managed by the agency. The report is due by the 5th business day of the month following the service month. The report provides Harvesters with the information the agency has collected on the sign-in sheets, plus a few additional questions. A report must be filed each month; this includes months when an

agency does not distribute any items. (The number of households or individuals reported as served would be zero.)

Agencies offering seasonal programs which provide services a few times a year based on holidays or special events must complete Monthly Activity Reports during their periods of service

## ► How to Complete the Monthly Report

Agencies' monthly activity reports must be completed via Harvesters' online reporting tool, which can be accessed at [www.harvesters.org/Agencies](http://www.harvesters.org/Agencies). Each program should log on under their program number and submit a monthly activity report. Multiple programs cannot report under one login; you must log out after completing the reporting for one program (or month) and then log in under the next program number to report that program's activity.

All partner agencies will answer questions number one and two.

## Harvesters Monthly Reporting for Affiliates

**Program code:**

**Program name:**

**Login ID:**

**Submitted by:**

**E-mail:**

**Report month:**

**1** Did you have enough food to adequately feed all those you wanted to feed?

Yes  No

**2** What percentage of food distributed by your agency came from Harvesters?

%

### Food Pantry

Households:  Adults:  Children:  Elderly:

USDA households:

### On-site

Breakfast:  Lunch:  Dinner:  Supplemental:

Reminder: Reports are due by the 5th of the month following that which you are reporting on, regardless of activity!

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## **Pantries**

Pantries are defined as location where participants visit the program site and take bags of groceries to prepare at home or groceries are delivered to the participant.

Pantries are not able to serve clients prepared meals.

To complete the report, a food pantry will record the total number of households it served for the month. A household is defined as a family of any size residing together. A family of six living together is a household. A person living alone is a household.

Of those households, the pantry will track the number of ADULTS (ages 18-64), the number of CHILDREN (ages infant to 17), and the number of ELDERLY (ages 65 and above). These numbers should be reflected on the report.

<b>Did you have enough food to adequately feed all those you wanted to feed?</b>							
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Yes	<input type="radio"/>	No				
<b>What percentage of food distributed by your agency came from Harvesters?</b>							
<input type="text"/>	%						
<b>Food Pantry</b>							
Households:	<input type="text"/>	Adults:	<input type="text"/>	Children:	<input type="text"/>	Elderly:	<input type="text"/>
USDA households:	<input type="text"/>						

A household counts as each time a person visits your pantry. If your client John Smith can come to your pantry weekly, then he would count as four households served because he would sign in at each visit.

## **Onsite Feeding**

Onsite Feeding locations are defined as locations where participants eat prepared meals or snacks at the program site; i.e. soup kitchen, group home, etc. or the agency takes prepared food out to needy participants in the community.

To complete the report for an onsite feeding program, the agency must keep track of the number of meals it serves. For example, a community kitchen serving lunch only will keep a running total of the lunches served each day and report the monthly total on the report under lunch. The process is the same for other meals served, such as breakfast and dinner. Each meal served, whether first or second servings, should be counted as a meal.

A supplemental meal is described as a snack, such as a mid-morning or mid-afternoon snack, and should also be tracked and reported.

If John Smith comes to your kitchen for breakfast and goes back for seconds. That would count as two breakfasts (or meals).

<b>On-site</b>							
Breakfast:	<input type="text"/>	Lunch:	<input type="text"/>	Dinner:	<input type="text"/>	Supplemental:	<input type="text"/>
<input type="button" value="Submit Report to Harvesters"/>							

### ***Reporting for Multiple Programs***

These programs include TEFAP, CSFP, Mobile Distributions or other Harvesters programs.

If your program operates multiple programs at the same time, you will need to maintain a separate sign-in sheet for each program type.

For example: Clients coming in to pick up a CSFP box and go through your pantry would need to sign two different sign-in sheets.

### ***Electronic Records***

If your agency utilizes electronic records (like MAAC Link), you must be able to print them in a manner that shows the individual households receiving food in a month. If you are unable to provide these records, your agency must utilize a separate sign in sheet for Harvesters.

### **Recommended Best Practice**

Agencies can print a screen shot of their monthly report and report verification page for their records.

## Section 12: Financial Obligations

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Harvesters would like its agency partnerships to be efficient and beneficial to all parties. Our acquisition and accounting processes have been developed to ensure the integrity of the accounts of partner agencies. Agencies should familiarize themselves with each of the following sections to maintain an account in good status and maximize the benefits of partnering with Harvesters.

### ► Credit Limits

A partner agency receives an initial credit limit of \$500 per program. Agencies may request an increase in the credit line available to their programs by sending a written request which explains why increased credit is needed. The letter should be mailed or emailed to Harvesters. An increase in available credit will be granted or declined after review by Harvesters based on the partner agency's payment record and illustrated need for the increase. Harvesters reserves the right to place an agency on hold when the credit limit has been exceeded.

Agencies may have occasional need to acquire food above typical levels – for example, an agency receiving a one-time grant for food acquisition. While such an event does not necessitate a permanent increase to the agency's credit limit, temporary access to additional credit may be desired. Agencies must make this request in writing. Harvesters will grant or decline the request upon review.

### ► Invoicing Process

Invoices are mailed to the partner agency and/or program address on record once a week, whether or not a copy was provided at pick-up, and whether or not it was paid at pick-up. An invoice represents one transaction.

### ► Monthly Statements

Statements are generated monthly for every active program operated by a partner agency. Statements are mailed by the 10th of the month to the program address on record. Statements reflect open (unpaid) items only, not necessarily the entire activity for the month.

### ► Payment Methods Accepted

Harvesters only accepts organizational checks for payment of outstanding balances. Money orders, cash, and personal checks will not be accepted. Submitted checks need to have the account number, agency number, and the invoice numbers being paid noted on the check or "apply to oldest invoices" written in the memo section of the check.

### Recommended Best Practice

- Pay once per month
- Pay the Statement Balance as listed on the monthly statement
- Include a copy of the monthly statement with the payment



### ▶ Returned Checks

A fee of \$25 will be assessed for a returned check, and the agency account will be put on hold. The agency's account is reactivated 10 business days after the returned check has been replaced and the \$25 fee has been paid.

### ▶ Past Due Accounts

Full payment is due within 30 days of the invoice date. Agencies will receive a notice on their statement if outstanding invoice(s) become 60 days past due. Agencies with balances 90 days or older will be placed on Hold. All programs operated under the umbrella of the delinquent 501(c)(3) will be on Hold until the delinquent balance is paid.

Harvesters reserves the right to place an agency on Hold in any instance when the account balance is past due, and in any case where Harvesters believes collectability to be in question.

### ▶ Late Fee

A partner agency that fails to resolve any of its outstanding balances within 90 days will be assessed a \$50 late fee in addition to the amount due.

### ▶ Suspension or Inactivation

If a partner agency has a history of financial non-compliance, Harvesters reserves the right to terminate the partnership.

### ▶ Account Balance Discrepancies

In the event an agency's accounting records do not agree with the account balance shown on the Harvesters monthly statement, the agency may request a summary of its account history. Upon such request, Harvesters will provide a summarized report of the agency's account activity (invoices, credit memos, and payments) for the previous 12 months.

The agency shall compare this report against its own accounting records. If the agency identifies a potential error or omission in Harvesters' records, the agency shall notify Harvesters and provide appropriate supporting documentation.

## Section 13: Monitoring Visits

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Feeding America food banks are required to monitor all of their agencies once every two years, at minimum. Harvesters will conduct annual monitoring visits. As in other areas of Agency Services, agency monitoring visits can be the vehicle for increased communication and positive interaction between food bank and agency staff, or an overwhelming and frustrating experience. The keys to achieving the first and avoiding the latter are good solid advanced preparation and close attention to the human element of an agency monitor.

### ► Purpose of a Monitoring Visit

It is important to think about the main purpose of an agency monitoring visit before performing one. The most obvious reasons for performing such a visit include the following:

1. To ensure that the high sanitation and food safety standards we are committed to are upheld throughout the Feeding America and Harvesters' network, from the point of donation to the time the gift is placed in the hand of the individual who will use it.
2. To increase communication between Harvesters and the agency partner.
3. To provide the unique perspective a new pair of eyes can bring to the program.
4. To give the agency a chance to showcase their great programs, volunteers, and services.
5. To provide the occasion to brainstorm and fine-tune the program as professionals in an increasingly complicated field.
6. To explore and discuss capacity building opportunities.

### ► Advance Notification and Preparation

Harvesters will notify the agency in advance to schedule the monitoring site visit. Typically, Harvesters will email agencies when their location is due to be monitored by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month for the visit to be scheduled in the following month and it may occur during your regular service hours.

The email will give the agency the information needed to contact their account representative to schedule the monitoring visit.

In preparation for the visit, Harvesters will review the agency file, looking specifically at the following:

1. Review past inspections for prior issues.
2. Review all file notes.
3. Verify 501(c)(3) or Church Qualifier (update documentation for CQ and update 501(c)(3) Group Exemption Letter of Umbrella every 5 years).
4. Verify current Agency Agreement.

5. Verify Safe Food Handling certification.
6. Review Monthly Reports.

## ► Unannounced Monitoring Visits

Occasionally, based on client complaints or other factors Harvesters may make unannounced monitoring visits or send shoppers to agencies to experience the intake and distribution of product first hand.

## ► The Monitoring Visit

It is our goal to make the monitoring visit as helpful and informative as possible. Below is an overview of areas Harvesters may review on the visit.

1. Walk the exterior of the building (checking for holes, pest harborage, and anything blocking the perimeter).
2. Walk the inside perimeter (checking for holes, pest evidence, adequate pest control, and anything blocking the perimeter).
3. Look at the interior food storage and handling areas, (checking for proper sanitation, safety, pest control, and food storage practices).
4. Inspect the refrigerator/freezers in detail, looking for cleanliness, appropriate storage and packaging, and correct temperatures and any food preparation areas, (inspecting for proper procedures and sanitation practices). There should be a thermometer in each refrigeration unit and daily record of temperatures with two readings per service date recorded.
5. Does the pantry have proper signage?
  - Days and hours of operation.
  - Agency guidelines (frequency of visit, boundaries, etc.).
  - Civil Rights Poster (required for USDA sites).
6. Food safety and storage
  - All product off of the floor (this includes non-food items as well as empty boxes, etc.).
  - Thermometers in refrigerators read 32-40 degrees.
  - Thermometers in freezers read 0 degrees or below.
  - Household product is shelved separately (or below) food product (but still 6" off of the floor).
7. Paperwork Review – All paperwork should be maintained on site for a minimum of three years plus the current year. Paper files or electronic files are acceptable as long as Harvesters' staff can review them at the time of service.
  - Temperature log review – There should be two recordings per day of service.
  - Sign-in/meal count sheets.
  - Pest Control Log.

## ► Maintaining Contact

It is very important that Harvesters has the most current contact information for partner agencies and likewise that partner agencies have the most current contact information for Harvesters. This helps us maintain good communication by directing correspondence to the correct person or persons.

Understanding that Harvesters partners with agencies of all sizes, we have created contact types to help us serve your agency better. Harvesters would like to have a contact person for each of the fields listed below. For some large agencies, there may be a different person for each field and for smaller agencies we may only have two contact points total.

All agencies must have two contacts with working emails and phone numbers.

- **Director** – Person entrusted with the overall direction of the agency.
- **Primary/Manager** – The person responsible for day-to-day operations of your program.
- **Secondary** – The backup to the Primary Contact.
- **Billing** – The address Harvesters should send your program statements for payment.
- **Shipping** – The physical address of the facility where you want your orders delivered.
- **Monthly Report** – The person responsible for entering monthly activity reports for your program.
- **Recall** – The person at your organization who handles food recalls. This would include keeping copies of the recalls on hand and checking inventory for recalled product.
- **Advocacy** – The person at your organization who handles advocacy requests and activities.

To update contact information, please fill out the agency contact update form at: [www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources](http://www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources).

## Section 14: Notable Policies

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### ► Return to Stock Policy / Restocking Fee

All orders which have not been picked up by the close of business each day will be returned to stock unless Harvesters has been notified by an authorized agency representative by 2:30 p.m. on the day of your scheduled pick-up. Any partner agency that has an order returned to stock will be assessed a restocking fee of \$40 or 10 percent of the total invoice, whichever is greater.

### ► Missing or Returning Product Policy

If you discover a discrepancy in your order once you return to your site, it must be reported to Harvesters within three business days in order to receive a credit or replacement product. Harvesters' internal processes may take up to three additional days before the agency is notified about the credit or replacement product.

When contacting Harvesters about order discrepancies, please have the following information available:

- Program Number
- AO Number
- Item Number
- Item Quantity Ordered
- Item Quantity Received
- If product is damaged, please attach a photo of damaged product

Agencies with a history of order discrepancies may have orders verified before shipment by Harvesters staff or be required to verify orders before leaving Harvesters.

### ► Curbside Delivery

When delivering product to an agency, Harvesters requires an agency to have a current (less than two years old) signed delivery waiver. Without this waiver, Harvesters requires that our drivers must not enter your building with their power equipment (this includes both finished and unfinished spaces). Drivers will need to leave the delivered product outside your building. With the signed waiver, our drivers will use their judgment to move pallets anyplace the power jack can safely go. Harvesters will repair damage incurred due to gross negligence on the part of our drivers. The delivery waiver can be found at: [www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources](http://www.harvesters.org/agencies/resources).

### ► Scheduled Closures

Harvesters observes the following holidays:

- New Year's Day (January 1)
- Memorial Day (Last Monday in May)
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day (1<sup>st</sup> Monday in September)
- Thanksgiving (4<sup>th</sup> Thursday in November)
- Day after Thanksgiving (Friday following Thanksgiving)
- Winter Break (Observed Christmas holiday and the business day prior)

As a result, agency orders may be released early. Please contact Customer Care to determine how this impacts your agency.

## ► Inclement Weather

In extreme cases of weather, Harvesters may close its facilities. If you have a pick-up or delivery scheduled and have a question as to whether or not we will be open, you can call Harvesters' main phone line at 816-929-3000 any time after 6 a.m. We will leave a message on the phone indicating whether Harvesters' Kansas City and/or Topeka facilities will be closed on that day due to inclement weather. If we do close, we will contact you to re-schedule your appointment on the next business day that we are open.

If you have questions or need to reschedule a delivery or pick-up, you also may contact Customer Care at 816-929-3220.

## ► Disaster Response

In the event of a local natural disaster that has impacted your agency or the clients you serve, please reach out to Harvesters so we can assist your agency with the disaster recovery process.

## ► Food Repackaging Policy

While each county may have their own policies related to food programs repackaging product, Harvesters and our Agency Network are held to higher standards through our contract with Feeding America. Food from all sources can only be repacked if the conditions below are met. These guidelines are to protect the integrity of the food system and maintain the highest levels of food safety measures. These guidelines from Feeding America, which we all agree to abide by, override any county-level guidance.

Each agency which repacks product must have and utilize a **Clean Room** to ensure adequate food safety control and operating practices to prevent potential product contamination.

A Clean Room is a separate, enclosed room that is dedicated to bulk repacking and is designed to the highest standards of sanitation and prevents as many environmental contaminants as possible. It must be designed so that the interior surfaces are durable, non-absorbent and easily cleanable, built to commercial food service construction standards and meet local health regulations.

A commercial kitchen may fit this definition. If an agency does have a space that qualifies as a clean room and decides to repack bulk product, all repacked items must be labeled with ingredients, allergens, nutrition information, and instructions for preparation.

Please note: Fresh produce is exempt from this policy.

## ► Food Re-boxing Policy

In situations where the agency is un-boxing sealed food containers (but not opening the inner packaging), that is permissible however agency partners would be responsible for labeling the individual package with ingredients, allergens, nutrition information and instructions for preparation. Examples of product that this would commonly happen with include saltine crackers, pop-tarts, or applesauce /fruit cups. The inner packaging must not be altered and requires a copy of the nutrition and ingredient label from the original package affixed to the now individual item.

For additional information, please see the Non-Compliance Section, violation number 5.

## ► Redistribution Policy

Product acquired from Harvesters (including Grocery Store Recovery and mobile distributions) is intended to be distributed at the primary agency location. While it is not ideal or encouraged, minor occurrences may happen when you need an option to re-distribute excess product to another agency. Redistribution is strongly discouraged and requires prior approval from Harvesters.

Redistribution of product is discouraged because it increases the risk of the food being mishandled. It becomes impossible to ensure food has been maintained at the proper temperature or in accordance to all food safety standards. It also makes it difficult to trace redistributed food in case there is a food recall.

Product may only be redistributed to another agency if the following conditions are met:

- Product is in excess to the normal distribution, needs to be re-distributed to maintain quality, or be distributed while it is safe for human consumption.
- Product can only be redistributed to approved agencies that are in good standing (contact Harvesters for confirmation of agency status).
- Product may only be redistributed one time.
- All redistributions must be tracked accurately by the redistributing entity to facilitate trace and recall procedures.
- No fees can be charged in relation to redistribution (e.g. handling fees, delivery fees, or other fees paid to the redistributing organization).
- All redistribution activity must be reported to Harvesters by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. The reporting link is available on Harvesters Express at [www.agencyexpress3.org/AgencyExpress30/NewLogin.aspx](http://www.agencyexpress3.org/AgencyExpress30/NewLogin.aspx) under foodbank links.

Agencies should contact Harvesters if they are consistently needing to redistribute product to other sites, so we can work on a plan to reduce the occurrences of this happening.

## ► Food Safety with Non-Harvesters Food

Harvesters and our Agency Network are held to higher standards through our contract with Feeding America. These guidelines are to protect the integrity of the food system and maintain the highest levels of food safety measures. These guidelines from Feeding America, which we all agree to abide by, also impact agency food from all sources, not just Harvesters sourced food. Agencies are expected to handle all food in a safe manner regardless of its origin.

## ► Multiple Locations

Harvesters and Feeding America require that all partner agencies be monitored regularly to maintain food safety. It is for this reason that Harvesters assigns a program number for each location from which product is stored or distributed. Agencies cannot move product to offsite storage facilities or open additional service sites without prior approval from Harvesters.

## ► Shopping Floor Policies

Please refer back to Shopping Floor Guidelines in Section 7 of this handbook.

## ► Pet Food

Pet food should be handled in the same manner as food for human consumption. It should not be repackaged. Pet food must be stored off of the floor, and separate from food items. Any packages that are opened, broken, or torn must be discarded to avoid any potential contamination.

## ► Communications Policy

Harvesters understands the importance of accurate and strong communication pieces and activities within the network, with the community, and local media. Communication activities ranging from flyers to television interviews are a necessary part of meeting our mission to feed hungry people in our community. We use these communication methods to share our message and solicit resources to support our mission.

By applying the following guidelines to your communication activities, partner agencies support the integrity of the network and help present a consistent and effective message to the community we serve:

- Provide advance notice to Harvesters when promoting an event where Harvesters product is involved that may include media coverage.
- If an agency has an opportunity for an interview that includes a mention of Harvesters, please share this information with Harvesters' Communications Manager at 816-929-3071 or Director of Program Services at 816-929-3045.
- When referring to the fee that agencies pay for each pound of food they pickup, please use the phrase "handling fee." As a partner in our network, agencies do not buy food from Harvesters; they contribute to the acquisition and transportation costs of the food distributed in the form of a shared "handling fee." Do not use the term "buy" when referring to the handling fee.
- If a partner agency has contact with a media representative who would like to visit Harvesters' main office for the purpose of interviewing staff, volunteers, or the partner agency, please contact Harvesters' Communications Manager at 816-929-3071 to see if it can be arranged rather than attempting to set up such an appointment independently. Harvesters needs to be able to ensure the availability of staff, volunteers, or other interviewees as well as the availability of the facility for access by the partner agency and media.

## ► Behavior Expectations

There is the expectation that an atmosphere of mutual respect will be part of all dealings between Harvesters representatives and the representatives of partner agencies. Harvesters will not tolerate individuals representing partner agencies that become abusive verbally, physically or in any other way as deemed inappropriate by Harvesters, toward Harvesters' staff, volunteers or other partner agencies. Depending upon the severity of any violation, Harvesters management may take immediate action to suspend the offending agency.



If inappropriate behavior occurs, Harvesters' Agency Services Manager will first issue a verbal warning to the individual and send an advisory letter to the executive director of the agency which the individual represents. A copy of this letter will be provided to Harvesters' Director of Program Services and placed in the agency's permanent file.

If a second offense occurs, the offender will NOT be allowed on Harvesters' premises. The individual will be permanently barred from all Harvesters activities and programs, regardless of their agency affiliation. The agency which the individual represents will be suspended for 30 days from all Harvesters programs and services. Harvesters' Agency Services Manager will issue a written notification to the executive director of the agency which the individual represents advising the agency of the suspension (hold), effective upon receipt of the letter. The Agency Services Manager will forward copies to Harvesters' Director of Program Services and emergency response team and place documentation of all actions in the agency's permanent file. Normal reinstatement practices will apply following the suspension period. In addition, a meeting will be held including Harvesters' Director of Program Services, Agency Services Manager, the partner agency's executive director and any appropriate program representatives.

If any future offenses occur, the agency's partnership in Harvesters' network will be permanently terminated. Harvesters' Agency Services Manager will notify the partner agency's executive director of the termination in writing. The Agency Services Manager will forward copies to Harvesters' Director of Program Services and emergency response team and place documentation of all actions in the agency's permanent file. Collection of all outstanding account balances will be made, including but not limited to any legal action deemed necessary by Harvesters' legal counsel.

## Section 15: Non-Compliance

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If an Agency does not comply with Partnership Terms and Conditions, Harvesters may interrupt service to the Agency temporarily or suspend the agency entirely, depending upon the severity of the violation. Harvesters recognizes these consequences may adversely impact your clients. While our goal is to ensure that clients have access to the food they need, we must maintain the integrity of our network in order to ensure its long-term viability. The following list provides examples of a range of violations.

### ► Violations

1. Monthly Activity Report is not submitted by the due date.
2. Program does not respond to Harvesters' request to schedule a site monitoring visit within 45 days of notification.
3. Agency is delinquent in payment or checks have been returned for one or more programs.
4. Proper records are not maintained at the program site (including falsification of reported data).
5. Donated food or other products are improperly stored, refrigerated, repackaged or transported.
6. Pest infestation at agency.
7. Donated food is used in a manner that is not consistent with serving the ill, needy or infants.
8. Donated food or other products are exchanged for money, property or services.
9. Donated food or other products are removed from program site for private use by program staff or volunteers.

An agency that commits two violations within a 12 month period may have their program(s) inactivated for a year. After a year, the agency may reapply for network partnership. The program will be assessed a \$50 reinstatement fee upon re-application. Payment of this fee does not guarantee partnership; it covers the expenses of training, site monitoring and record keeping incurred by Harvesters.

### ► Compliance Violation/Resolution Procedures

#### ***Resolution of Violations 1-6***

Once any program managed by an agency is more than 30 days past due in areas outlined in violations 1-6 (for violation 3 this means carrying a balance 90 or more days old) or upon discovery of violations 7-9, Harvesters may place the program on Hold until the situation is resolved.

*Agencies placed on hold for critical food safety issues may have their existing orders in Harvesters Express deleted.*

If the agency does not resolve the situation within 30 days of being notified of the problem and the program's service has been interrupted, a \$50 reinstatement fee will be assessed in order to return the program to full service. Once the appropriate action is taken by the agency and any applicable reinstatement fees are paid, the agency shall be reinstated to full service within two business days.

If after a period of six months the situation is not resolved, the program will be suspended, all partnership privileges will be revoked, and the agency must undergo the partnership application process and pay applicable reinstatement fees in order to receive future service from Harvesters.

### ***Resolution of Violations 7-9***

Harvesters considers these violations serious breaches of the network Terms and Conditions of agency partnership and will investigate possible infractions thoroughly.

If an agency is found to be in violation, the offending program(s) will be placed on probation for a period of three months. An agency committing a violation will have their program account(s) placed on probation via a Temporary Hold in Harvesters' system. An agency cannot access products or services for that program while in Hold status. The agency will be notified in writing when this occurs.

The purpose of the probation period is to place the agency on notice that it must bring its program(s) into compliance or it will be suspended. During the probation period, Harvesters' Agency Services Manager shall have the authority to extend the probationary period or to recommend termination of the agency. The agency may appeal this decision as outlined in the Agency Grievance process.

The probationary period ends when one of the following occurs:

- The agency satisfies the Agency Services Manager that the violation has been rectified;  
or
- The agency has been suspended.

### ***Suspension***

A partner agency may be suspended, without first being placed on probation, upon discovery of violations 7-9. All other violations must be preceded by a probationary period for the violation in question, unless the program in violation has previously been on probation.

A suspension shall not exceed six months. Upon suspension, an agency loses all the rights and privileges of a partner agency. At the end of the suspension period, an agency may re-apply to become a partner agency of Harvesters' community network. Depending upon the severity of any violation, other programs managed by the agency also may be suspended.

## ► Agency Grievance Process

It is Harvesters' intention to treat all agencies justly. The Agency Grievance Process may be utilized by any agency that feels it has not been treated in this manner.

### **STEP 1:**

If an agency feels it has been treated unfairly by Harvesters, the agency should notify Harvesters' Agency Services Manager in writing immediately. The Agency Services Manager shall try to resolve the grievance. The Agency Services Manager will inform Harvesters' Director of Programs of the situation and of the actions taken.

If STEP 1 achieves a mutual agreement between the agency and Harvesters, the Agency Services Manager will develop a written report which will include details of the grievance and the actions taken to resolve the grievance. The report will be signed by appropriate representatives of both Harvesters and the agency indicating mutual understanding and agreement. The Agency Services Manager will distribute copies of the written report to the agency and Harvesters' Director of Programs, placing a copy in the agency's permanent file.

### **STEP 2:**

If the issue is not resolved through STEP 1, the agency will request a formal meeting with Harvesters' Director of Programs and the Agency Services Manager in writing. The written request should include details of the grievance and reasons for not accepting the resolution presented in STEP 1. After the formal meeting, the Director of Programs will render a decision within 15 days.

Should this meeting result in a mutual agreement for all parties concerned, the Agency Services Manager will develop a written report and distribute it to the agency and Harvesters' Director of Programs. The report will be signed by appropriate representatives of both Harvesters and the agency indicating mutual understanding and agreement. The Agency Services Manager will distribute copies of the written report to the agency and Harvesters' Director of Programs, placing a copy in the agency's permanent file.

### **STEP 3:**

If STEPS 1 and 2 do not achieve a resolution, the agency may appeal to Harvesters' Chief Operating Officer. The agency should submit a written request to the Chief Operating Officer stating the specific reasons for the appeal. The appeal should be received within 30 days of the date a decision was rendered in STEP 2. The Chief Operating Officer will schedule a meeting with the agency to discuss the grievance. The Agency Services Manager will ensure all parties have copies of all written reports concerning this issue prior to the meeting. The Chief Operating Officer will render a decision on the grievance within 15 days of this meeting and will issue a written letter communicating the decision to the agency with a copy placed in the agency's permanent file.

The resolution or decision regarding the agency's status is final and the grievance process is complete.

## Section 16: Agency Advisory Council

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The Agency Advisory Council is a coalition of network partners who serve as advisors to Harvesters. In addition, the Council provides practical input and feedback on Harvesters' plans to strengthen network capacity to better meet the hunger need in the community. The Council also serves as the connection point between the Agency Network and Harvesters and helps ensure Harvesters' work is not insulated from, but rather, informed by and integrated with the needs of the network.

### ► Key Responsibilities of Council Members

- Work with Harvesters operations teams to build distribution capacity for the network.
- Advise Harvesters' operations teams on agency capacity interests and issues.
- Represent peer agencies within the same Network Partner Group.
- Give meaningful feedback about program development and agency grouping impact for the full network.
- Attend in-person, regularly scheduled meetings and call-in meetings.
- Be available to respond and provide input via email as needed.
- Communicate with peer agencies as directed and as needed.
- Potentially present topics and provide input for agency communications pieces and activities, such as agency newsletters or workshops.

### ► Structure and Membership

- The Agency Advisory Council will consist of 20-25 members.
- We aspire to develop a diverse Council:
  - Representation of all agency groups (A, B, C, D, and E).
  - Representation of multiple program types.
  - Representation from rural, suburban, and metro agencies from across the service area.
- Members must commit to serve for two years, with staggered terms.
- Sub-groups will be formed as needed for specific tasks or identified goals.

### ► Application and Selection

- An application and nomination form will be sent to all agency representatives annually (June or July) to apply to serve on the Agency Advisory Council.
- Selected members will be identified and notified, and new terms will begin with the September meeting each year.