



Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, Inc.

Regional Food Bank

Guidelines for

Providing Food to Volunteers

Food Pantries rely heavily on their volunteers to conduct their distributions. In many cases, the distribution would not happen without volunteers. While food pantry volunteers are VITAL to these operations, and their service is much appreciated, volunteers cannot have more or different access to food than clients. Volunteers must also qualify for the program that they are taking food from.

This means that:

- Volunteers MAY NOT pick out their food before it is available to clients.
- Volunteers cannot go first once the distribution opens.
- Volunteers cannot take all of the leftovers after the distribution, unless that is also offered to clients.
- Volunteers who don't qualify for a food box cannot get a food box.

We recommend that you draw the names of volunteers randomly throughout the distribution at intervals. This makes it completely random when the volunteers get served and avoids the appearance of favoritism. It also means that you always have some volunteers helping out during distribution. There are legal ramifications here. If a volunteer gets to pick out the best food, it may appear that the pantry is “paying” the volunteer. If the pantry is “paying” volunteers with food, the donations don't meet guidelines of IRS Code 170(e)(3). This is also a violation of the Partner Agency Agreement, which states “Donated product will not be exchanged by the Agency for money, property, or **services...**”