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Instruction Guide

The Healthy Food Pantry Assessment Toolkit



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The Healthy Food Pantry Assessment Toolkit is designed and intended for use by food pantry managers, staff, volunteers, and USDA low-income nutrition program staff. This project was supported by Regional Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Center of Excellence Initiative of the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, grant number 2014-48757-22607. Last Updated October 19, 2017

Part 1 - Instructions



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The Healthy Food Pantry Assessment Tool

Completing the Healthy Food Pantry Assessment Tool

The following pages provide instructions and explanations for questions within the Assessment Tool. The details are meant to provide guidance to help raters complete the assessment and do not represent all possible responses.

Please read through the [Healthy Food Pantry Assessment Tool](#) before completing an assessment on the food pantry environment. This [Instruction Guide](#) is meant to clarify assessment questions and demonstrate how to respond based on common pantry scenarios.

There are no right or wrong answers.

The Healthy Food Pantry Assessment Tool and Instruction Guide are designed and intended for use by food pantry managers, staff, volunteers, and USDA low-income nutrition program partners. This project was supported by the Regional Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Center of Excellence Initiative of the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, grant number 2014-48757-22607.

The example images provided in the instructions were photographed and used with the permission of participating pilot test food pantry sites.

Pantry Information

(This is not part of assessment scoring)

Date of Visit

- a. Record the date of the assessment.

Rater Name

- a. Record the name of the rater conducting the assessment.

Name of Pantry

- a. Record the name of the Food Pantry.

Pantry Address *(if mobile, record the address of “home” location of pantry or mailing address)*

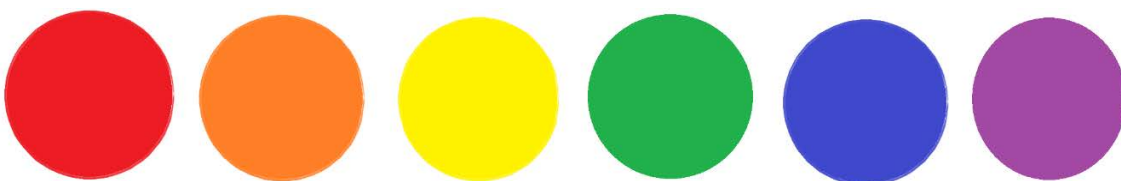
- a. Record the address of the Food Pantry.
- b. If the Pantry is located in a larger, multi-service building or community center, record the address of the larger building.
- c. If the Pantry is a mobile site or located in a school, record the address of the “home” location of the Pantry, or the mailing address. Then, to the lower right, check the box to indicate whether the Pantry is a “Mobile Pantry” or a “School Pantry.”

Pounds of food distributed last month

- a. Record the best estimation of the pounds of food distributed to clients, including food delivered to clients, within the previous calendar month.
- b. If this value is unknown, write “unknown.”
- c. Example: if the assessment is being completed on July 7, record the pounds of food distributed from June 1 to June 30 of that year.

Number of clients served last month

- a. Record the best estimation of the number of individual clients that visited the Food Pantry and received food in the previous calendar month.
- b. If the Food Pantry agency counts individuals in terms of “families,” please list the number of families.



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A. Location & Entrance

1. See attached “Walkability Assessment” to determine the Walkability score. *This number will be subtracted in the score calculation.*
 - a. Before completing the “Walkability Assessment,” read through the list of items on the form.
 - i. Read through questions 2-6 on the Assessment Tool. These questions may be answered during the Walkability Assessment.
 - b. Begin this assessment by walking along the street around the perimeter of the Pantry.
 - i. Try to walk at least 25 yards in at least three directions from the Pantry entrance.
 - c. Place a check mark (✓) by the descriptions within each question as you encounter them.
 - d. For each question (Q) count the number of check marks and select the appropriate rating score. *Lower rating scores indicate safer, more walkable streets.*
 - e. Add the totals from Q1 – Q6.
 - f. Record the score that corresponds to your total score from the “Walkability Assessment.”
 - g. *This score gets SUBTRACTED from your total score for section A.*

Needs Improvement < 15	Okay 16-20	Good 21-25	Great ≥26	
-3	-2	-1	0	

2. **Is there a bus line within one street block of the Pantry?**
 - a. During the “Walkability Assessment” in question 1, look for a bus line or shuttle. You may also look at an online map to locate the nearest bus line or shuttle. Record the appropriate point value.
 - b. If there is not a bus stop within one street block of the Pantry, select “No”
3. **Is the Pantry accessible by persons of all abilities?**
 - a. Walk to the Pantry main entrance area where clients enter the Pantry. Look for signage that indicates accessible parking spaces, a ramp, or other structures to improve accessibility.
 - b. Select “No, No Access” if...
 - i. the lot or entrance space immediately in front of the Pantry entrance is gravel or has an uneven surface.
 - ii. a person with limited abilities would have difficulty entering the Pantry.
 - c. Select “Yes, Limited Access or Alternative Entry” if...
 - i. the lot or entrance space is gravel or has an uneven surface, but there is a smooth surface around the perimeter of the entrance space.
 - ii. the Pantry has an entrance that is accessible for persons of all abilities, but it is separate from the main entrance.
 - d. Select “Yes, Fully Accessible Main Entrance & Exit” if...
 - i. the lot and entrance space have a smooth, even surface, a ramp, AND the main entrance and exit are accessible by persons of all abilities.

4. Does the agency where the Pantry is located *either* have its own parking lot or share a lot?
- Select “No” if...
 - the Pantry only has 1 parking space.
 - the Pantry clients must use street parking.
 - parking is off-site or farther than 1 street block away.
 - Select “Yes” if...
 - the Pantry has a parking lot with at least 2 parking spaces.
 - the Pantry shares a parking lot with another agency.
5. Are the windows of the Pantry free of bars or barriers? *Include the building where the Pantry is located.*
- Select “No” if there are security bars on the windows or doors of the Pantry OR the larger building in which the Pantry is located.
 - Select “Yes” if there are no security bars on the windows or doors of the Pantry, including the larger building in which the Pantry is located.
 - “Yes” indicates that clients do not encounter any bars on their way inside the Pantry.
6. Is there signage indicating the Pantry’s location from the nearest road?
- Assess whether there is a sign indicating the food pantry’s location AND whether that sign is visible from across the street. This may be assessed during the “Walkability Assessment.”
 - Select “Yes” if there is a sign indicating the Food Pantry’s location that is visible from across the street.
 - Select “No” if there is no sign present OR if the sign is not clear from across the street.

Example Images: Signage Visible from Street



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7. **On which days of the month is the Pantry open to serve clients?** *In the calendar below, put an “X” for each day of the month the Pantry is open. This question is NOT scored.*
- For example, if the Pantry is open every Monday and Wednesday, and on the first and third Saturdays of the month, fill out the table like this:

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Week 1		X		X			X
Week 2		X		X			
Week 3							X
Week 4		X		X			

8. **What hours is the Pantry open to serve clients on the days selected above?** *Please describe if these hours are different for different client populations like seniors, refugees, etc. This question is NOT scored.*
- For example, if the Pantry is open to serve clients from 11:00am – 4:00pm on the days recorded in question 7, write “Mon, Wed, Sat 11 am – 4pm.”
 - You may also write “Open Mon at 10am for seniors” if that applies to the Pantry.

9. **What kind of check-in procedure does the Pantry use for FIRST TIME clients?**

Multiple Documents Required (Proof of address, proof of income, ID, etc.)	Some Documents Required (Proof of address & ID ONLY)	One Document Required (Either proof of address OR ID)	
0	1	2	

- Select “Multiple Documents Required” if first time clients must provide more than an ID and proof of income to receive food.
 - Select “Some Documents Required” if an ID and proof of address are the only documents required for first time clients to receive food.
 - Select “One Document Required” if...
 - first time clients are ONLY asked for a piece of mail to verify their address.
 - first time clients are ONLY asked for an I.D.
 - the Pantry does not require any documents to access services or food.
 - the Pantry does not require any documents for individuals who report being homeless.
10. **What kind of check-in procedure does the Pantry use for RETURNING clients or clients ON THEIR SECOND or FOLLOWING visits?**
- Select “Multiple Documents Required” if returning clients must provide more than an ID and proof of income to receive food.
 - Select “Some Documents Required” if an ID and proof of address are the only documents required for returning clients to receive food.
 - Select “No Documents Required” if...
 - returning clients are ONLY asked for a piece of mail to verify address
 - returning clients are ONLY asked for an I.D.
 - returning clients are not required to provide any documents.

11. Does the Pantry have an electronic check-in procedure? Yes or No? If yes, please describe. This question is NOT scored.

- a. In the space provided, briefly describe the method of electronic check-in. For example, a card scanner linking to a client database, or an electronic check-in sheet.

12. Where is the waiting line for CHECK-IN and is there a place to sit down? Choose ONE.

Outside waiting line and NO seating	Outside waiting line WITH Seating	Inside waiting line WITHOUT Seating	Inside waiting line WITH Seating	
0	1	1	2	

- b. Do not count lines that form before the Pantry opens.
- c. Select “Outside waiting line and NO seating” if...
 - i. the ONLY place to wait is outside of the building AND there is no seating area.
 - ii. clients are overflowed from the indoor areas and standing outside *without* a safe place to sit, such as portable chairs or benches.
- d. Select “Outside waiting line WITH Seating” if the weather is pleasant and there is an outdoor waiting area with ample safe seating for clients.
- e. Select “Inside waiting line WITHOUT Seating” if there is an indoor waiting area, but nowhere to sit except the floor.
- f. Select “Inside waiting line WITH Seating” if there is an indoor waiting area with designated seating for clients who are waiting to check-in or receive services.

Outdoor Waiting Area WITH Seating



Indoor Waiting Area WITH Seating



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13. Overall, how long do clients wait to receive food AFTER checking in?

- a. Observe the check-in process for a client. Note the length of time between when the client enters and when they start receiving food. Select the appropriate score.
 - i. Partner agency raters: Check with the Pantry manager to verify if the wait time you observed is a typical wait time for clients. If there are no clients to observe during the assessment, ask the Pantry manager to estimate the typical wait time for clients.

B.1. Food Availability to Clients – Food Distribution

14. Does the Pantry have access to a garden, farm, or farmer’s market that provides fresh produce to the Pantry?
- This may include a produce or grocery rescue program that the Pantry, its parent food bank, or its food distributor has established with a local farm, farmers’ market, or community garden.
 - Select “Yes” if the Pantry receives produce directly from the farmer or gardener.
 - Select “No” if the Pantry only receives produce from a food bank or grocery store.
15. What kind of food distribution does the Pantry use to send food home with clients? Choose ONE. “Client Choice” means that clients remove the items directly from the shelf themselves like they were “shopping” in a grocery store.
- This question addresses how the clients receive food from the Pantry.
 - Pre-Packed Boxes ONLY: the Pantry provides clients with food in boxes packed by volunteers. The boxes may be packed based on the number of people in a client’s household.
 - If this choice is selected, skip to question 19.
 - Mix of Pre-Packed Boxes & Volunteers Select Foods Clients Choose: the Pantry offers clients a pre-made box or bag and then clients may choose from other foods available that day to add to their given foods. Clients can choose about half of the food items they receive.
 - Select “Mix of Pre-Packed Boxes & Client Choice” if the Pantry has designated hours for Client Choice (or “shopping style”) and offers pre-packed boxes at other times.
 - If this choice is selected, skip to question 19.
 - Clients Choose and Volunteers Remove: the Pantry offers clients a selection of foods that they can choose from, however the clients *are not allowed to remove the food themselves*. Volunteers remove food from the shelves and pack boxes or bags for the clients.
 - If this choice is selected, skip to question 19.
 - Client Choice ONLY: the Pantry offers a shopping cart, shopping basket, or a bag that the client may fill by choosing from a selection of foods offered by the Pantry. The Client Choice model can also be referred to as “shopping style.” Clients remove items directly from the shelf or display themselves without assistance or close supervision.
 - “Client Choice” means that clients remove items directly from the shelf themselves. Select “Client Choice ONLY” if this applies to how clients pick-up or choose foods.

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16. Are FRUITS and VEGETABLES placed before other foods in the pick-up line? *Includes FRESH, FROZEN, CANNED, or DRIED fruits and vegetables.*

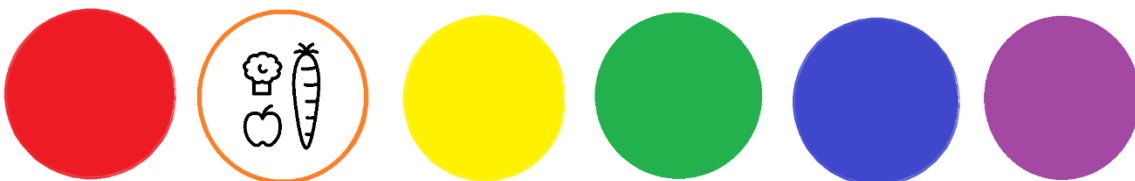
No	Yes, Half of fruits & vegetables are in front of other foods	Yes, ALL fruits & vegetables are directly in FRONT of all other foods in the line
0	1	2

- a. Select “No” if fruits and vegetables are the last option for clients to choose from in the line.
- b. Select “Half of fruits & vegetables are in front of other foods” if about 50% of the produce offered are placed AFTER the other food selections.
 - i. Example: Select this option if all of the fruits are located in the beginning of the “shopping style” line and all of the vegetables are at the end of the line.
 - ii. Select this option if there is no orderly line for choosing foods and clients view all food groups at once.
- c. Select “Yes, ALL fruits & vegetables are directly in FRONT of all other foods...” if fruits and vegetables are the first food groups that clients see and can choose from.
- d. This questions ONLY applies to the Client Choice model. This question should only be completed if “Client Choice ONLY” was selected for question 15.

17. Are fruits and vegetables placed at eye or waist level and easy to reach?

No, Difficult to see and reach	Yes, Somewhat Can see them & difficult to reach	Yes, Both easy to see and reach
0	1	2

- a. Select “No, Difficult to see and reach” if the produce is placed near the floor level and clients must bend over completely or squat to reach them.
- b. Select “Somewhat, can see them & difficult to reach” if the produce is placed 2 to 3 feet off the ground and clients must bend over slightly to reach them.
- c. Select “Both easy to see and reach” if the produce is placed around 4 feet off the ground and clients do NOT need to bend over to reach them.
- d. This question ONLY applies to the Client Choice model. This question should only be completed if “Client Choice ONLY” was selected for question 15.



18. Are there signs that highlight the **LOCATION** of fruits and vegetables within the Client Choice model? *Examples: arrows, item locator signs, daily availability lists, etc.*
- Select “Fewer than 2 signs” if there is 0 or 1 sign that points to the location of fruits and vegetables in the Pantry.
 - Select “2 or more signs” if there are 2 or more signs that point to the location of fruits and vegetables in the Pantry.
 - This questions **ONLY** applies to the Client Choice model. This question should only be completed if “Client Choice ONLY” was selected for question 15.
19. Are there signs that highlight the **NUTRITIONAL** benefits of fruits and vegetables displayed throughout the Pantry?
- Walk through the area where clients may select fruits and vegetables. This includes fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruits and vegetables.
 - Count the number of “shelf-talkers” or small signs that are displayed with specific fruits or vegetables to highlight their nutrients or nutritional value. These signs **MUST** highlight some kind of nutrient (such as fiber, vitamins, minerals, protein, etc.).
 - See examples in the images below.
 - Select “No Signs” if there are 0 small signs matched to fruits or vegetables.
 - Select “1-3 Signs” if there are 1 to 3 signs matched to fruits or vegetables.
 - Select “4+ Signs” if there are 4 or more signs highlighting nutrients in specific fruits and vegetables.

Example Images: Signs Highlighting Nutritional Benefits of Fruits and Vegetables



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B.2. Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

20. Is FRESH fruit available to clients on the day of the Pantry visit?

- a. Select “No” if there is no fresh fruit available during the assessment.
 - i. If “No” is selected, skip to question 23.
- b. Select “Yes” if there is fresh fruit available during the assessment.

21. What is the overall VARIETY of FRESH fruit in the Pantry on the day of the visit? *Count each kind of fruit as one type; for example, yellow apples, red apples, and green apples would only count as ONE type of fruit.*

None Available	Limited 1-3 types	Moderate 4-6 types	Wide Variety 7+ types	
0	1	2	3	

- a. Count the number of different types of fresh fruit that are available in the Pantry (for example, apples, oranges, pears, grapes, etc.).
- b. If you count 7 different types of fresh fruit, you may stop counting and select “3,” as this is the maximum number of points possible.
- c. Select the choice that best matches the number of different types of fresh fruit available in the Pantry.
- d. ONLY answer this question if “Yes” was selected for question 20.

22. What is the overall QUALITY of FRESH fruit in the Pantry on the day of the visit?

- a. Look at the quality of the fruit available. Examine by looking for:
 - i. **Wilting** (leaves or stems are limp)
 - ii. **Decay** (mold or blackening)
 - iii. **Shrivel** (skin has wrinkles)
 - iv. **Brown stems/dry stem cuts**
 - v. **Color changes** (yellowing when item should be dark green)
- b. Look through the whole fresh fruit selection and estimate the proportion that are of good quality.
- c. Select “High Quality” if all or nearly all of the fresh fruit selection is of high quality.
- d. Select “High-Medium Quality” if more than half of the fresh fruit selection is of good quality, but some are of poor quality.
- e. Select “Low-Medium Quality” if less than half of the fresh fruit selection is of good quality.
- f. Select “Poor/Rotten” if all or nearly all of the fresh fruit selection is of poor quality.
- g. ONLY answer this question if “Yes” was selected for question 20.

23. Are FRESH vegetables available to clients on the day of the Pantry visit?

- a. Select “No” if there are no fresh vegetables available on the day of the visit.
 - i. If “No” is selected, skip to question 26.
- b. Select “Yes” if there are fresh vegetables on the day of the visit.

24. What is the overall VARIETY of FRESH vegetables in the Pantry on the day of the visit? *Count each kind of vegetable as one type; for example, romaine lettuce, iceberg lettuce and butter lettuce would only count as ONE type of vegetable.*

- a. Refer to instructions for question 21 to measure the variety of fresh vegetables.
- b. ONLY answer this question if “Yes” was selected for question 23.

25. What is the overall QUALITY of FRESH vegetables in the Pantry on the day of the visit? *Choose the best answer that represents the overall quality.*

- a. Refer to instructions for question 22 to measure the quality of fresh vegetables.
- b. ONLY answer this question if “Yes” was selected for question 23.

26. Does the Pantry have FROZEN storage? *This question is NOT scored.*

- a. Select “Yes” if the Pantry has frozen storage for foods that are given to clients. This storage may be on-site or off-site.
- b. Select “No” if the Pantry does not have ANY frozen storage for foods given to clients.
 - ii. If “No” is selected, skip to question 31 on page 6.

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B.3. Frozen Fruits, Vegetables and Lean Protein

27. What is the overall VARIETY of FROZEN fruit and vegetables in the Pantry on the day of the visit? Count all frozen fruits and vegetables.

- Select the option that corresponds with the number of different types of frozen fruit or vegetables.
- Do NOT count frozen meals like lasagnas, mixed noodle dishes, pies, pot-pies, TV-trays, breaded meat products, frozen potatoes, or frozen snack products such as “Pizza Rolls.”
- Count *mixed vegetables* as 1 type of frozen vegetable. If the Pantry offers different kinds of mixed vegetables, do not count them separately.
 - For example, if the Pantry has a bag of peas & carrots and another bag with peas, corn, onions & carrots, count this as 1 type of frozen vegetable.
- Count *mixed fruit* as 1 type of frozen fruit.
 - For example, if the Pantry has a bag of frozen mixed berries and another bag with mixed tropical fruit, count this is 1 type of frozen fruit.

Example: If the Pantry’s freezer contains...

- mixed berries
- stir-fry vegetables
- blueberry waffles
- mixed tropical fruit
- peas & carrots
- spinach

→ Count this as **3 types** of frozen fruit and vegetables. (The mixed berries and mixed tropical fruit count as 1 type of frozen fruit. The stir-fry vegetables and peas & carrots count as 1 type of frozen vegetable. The blueberry waffles do not count as a frozen fruit or vegetable. The frozen spinach counts as the third type of frozen fruit and vegetable.)

Example Images: Variety of FROZEN Fruit, Vegetables, or Lean Protein

Count as 3 Types Frozen Vegetables



Do NOT Count



28. What is the overall QUALITY of FROZEN fruit and vegetables in the Pantry on the day of the visit?

- Select “Poor/ Frost Covered” if the items are frozen solid, covered in ice or frost, and clearly not edible.
- Select “Some frost” if there is some visible ice or frost on items.
- Select “Zero Frost” if there is little to no frost on any food.
- ONLY answer this question if “Yes” was selected for question 27.

29. What is the overall VARIETY of FROZEN and FRESH lean protein in the Pantry on the day of the visit? Count all frozen or fresh lean protein sources, includes fresh protein that has been frozen. Do NOT count DAIRY or EGGS in this question. DAIRY and EGGS are scored on Page 7.

- a. Refer to the examples of lean protein listed below.
- b. Count ONLY lean meats such as: skinless poultry, lean pork, lean beef, lean fish, bison, and other meats that are naturally low in fat.
- c. Do NOT count meat items with visible fat, “marbling,” or large fatty deposits.
- d. If “None Available” is selected, skip to question 31.

Variety of FROZEN & FRESH Lean protein. One type counts as a type of packaged LOW-FAT poultry, seafood, tofu, or low-fat prepared legume or bean product. Count any of the following as lean protein.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Chicken with skin removed | • Lobster or shrimp | • Tofu |
| • Turkey with skin removed | • Cod, flounder or Sole | • Hummus or low-fat nut butters |
| • Clams or Mussels | • Low-fat luncheon meat | • Low-fat meat substitutes |

★ If peanut butter is NOT labeled as LOW-FAT, do not count it in variety.

Example: If the Pantry’s freezer contains...

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| - whole skinless chicken | - bags of shrimp |
| - packaged skinless chicken breast | - soy meat-free patties |
| - sliced lean deli turkey | - vegetable meat-free patties |
| - sliced deli roast beef | |

→ Count this as **4 types** of frozen lean protein. (The roast beef does not count as lean protein. The meat-free patties count as one type, and all frozen chicken counts as one type.)

30. What is the overall QUALITY of FROZEN and FRESH lean protein in the Pantry on the day of the visit?

Poor/ Frost Covered <i>(Frozen solid, not edible)</i>	Some Frost <i>(Slight frost visible on foods; check pre-cut foods)</i>	Zero Frost <i>(Little to no frost visible on any fruits or vegetables)</i>
0	1	2

- a. Observe the frozen and fresh lean protein.
- b. Select “Poor/ Frost Covered” if...
 - i. the frozen lean protein is frozen solid, covered in frost, and clearly not edible.
 - ii. most of the fresh lean protein is expired, moldy, or clearly not safe to eat.
- c. Select “Some Frost” if...
 - i. the lean protein has some visible frost, including pre-cut foods.
 - ii. some of the fresh lean protein is expired, moldy, or clearly not safe to eat, but the majority are of good quality and safe to eat.
- d. Select “Zero Frost,” if...
 - i. there is little to zero frost on all frozen lean protein, including pre-cut products.
 - ii. no fresh lean protein products are expired, moldy, or unsafe to eat.

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B.4. Canned and Dried Fruits, Vegetables, and Lean Protein

31. Are MOST of the CANNED vegetables labeled as “low-sodium” or “no salt added” on the day of the Pantry visit?

- Select “No Low-Sodium” if none of the canned vegetables available to clients are labeled low-sodium.
- Select “Some Low-Sodium” if less than half of cans are labeled as low-sodium.
- Select “Most Low-Sodium” if 50% of the cans or more are low-sodium.
- Select “ALL Low-Sodium” if 100% of the canned vegetables available to clients are labeled as low-sodium



32. Are MOST of the CANNED fruits labeled as “low-sugar,” “no sugar added,” or “canned in own juice” on the day of the Pantry visit?

- Select “No Low-Sugar” if none of the canned fruits available are labeled as low-sugar.
- Select “Some Low-Sugar” if less than half of the canned fruits are labeled as low-sugar, no sugar added, or canned in own juices.
- Select “Most Low-Sugar” if 50% of the cans or more are labeled as low-sugar.
- Select “ALL Low-Sugar” if 100% of the canned fruits are labeled as low-sugar.



33. What is the overall VARIETY of dried or canned lean proteins available to clients on the day of the Pantry visit? Select the best option that corresponds to lean proteins available.

No Variety <i>(None Available)</i>	Limited <i>(Only Dried Beans or Lentils)</i>	Moderate <i>(Dried Beans, Lentils, & Low-fat Peanut Butter)</i>	Wide Variety <i>(Beans, Lentils, Low-fat Peanut Butter AND Tuna canned in water)</i>
0	1	2	3

- a. Only count canned proteins that have less than 5g of total fat per 3 oz. serving.
- b. Peanut butter should only be counted if it is low-fat.
- c. Do NOT count dairy or eggs in this question.
- d. Do NOT count cans that have bulges. These cans are not safe for clients and therefore do not contribute towards the variety score.
- e. Do NOT count cans with deep dents. Minor dents (small dents) that are smaller than half an inch are acceptable. For example, a small dent would be smaller than the width of a dime.

Example Images: Bulges and Dents in Canned Food

Cans with Bulges



Cans with Dents



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B.5. Low-Fat Dairy, Eggs, and Grains

Low-fat Dairy items: these are items that are milk or soy based and meet ALL of the following criteria:

- Contain 7+ grams of protein per 1 cup (or 8 oz.) serving
- Contain less than 5 grams of total fat per 1 cup (or 8 oz.) serving
- Contain at least 300 mg of calcium per 1 cup (or 8 oz.) serving

Count as LOW-FAT Dairy products:

- Fat-free milk, any kind (canned, dried, fluid, etc.)
- 1% fat milk, any kind
- Low-fat kefir
- Low-fat yogurt
- Fat-free yogurt
- Low-fat cottage cheese
- Fat-free cottage cheese
- Low-fat cheese
- Fat-free cheese
- Soy milk

34. **What is the overall VARIETY of low-fat dairy items?** Choose variety based on the criteria above.

Please note, variety types are different for low-fat dairy products.

- a. Count the number of low-fat dairy items available on the day of the assessment.
- b. 1 type of low-fat dairy item counts as a distinct packaged product.
- c. In general, cheese will NOT be considered a low-fat dairy item.

Example #1: Whole cow's milk, skim milk, soy milk, low-fat yogurt, full fat cottage cheese, and low-fat cottage cheese.
→Count as **4 types** of low-fat dairy items. (The whole cow's milk and full fat cottage cheese do not count.)

Example #2: Skim milk, 1% milk, soy milk, chocolate low-fat (2%) milk, full fat cottage cheese, cheddar cheese, and kefir.
→Count as **2 types** of low-fat dairy items. (The 2% chocolate milk, full fat cottage cheese, cheddar cheese, and regular kefir do not count. The skim milk and 1% milk count as 1 type, and the soy milk counts as the second type.)

35. **What kind of eggs are available to clients on the day of the Pantry visit?** This includes whole, fresh, powdered, or fluid packaged eggs. Select the best option that corresponds to the eggs available.

- a. Select "None Available" if...
 - ii. no eggs are available to clients on the day of the assessment.
 - iii. eggs are available but they are expired.
- b. Select "Whole, fresh eggs, or any other type" if fresh eggs are available to clients and they are not expired.

Count items as refined or single grain (intact grain in bulk form). 1 type of grain counts as a packaged product or a whole grain. **Do NOT count pastries, cookies, cakes, cupcakes, or grain items with over 10 grams of sugar per single serving.** This will likely exclude many processed cereals, especially “children’s cereals.”

Single Grain Examples

Quinoa Bulgur wheat
Popcorn Oatmeal
Rice Barley

Refined Grain Examples

Sliced bread Tortillas
Pasta Muffins & bagels
Cereals Crackers

36. What is the overall VARIETY of grain items (examples above) on the day of the Pantry visit?

Do NOT count pastries, cookies, cakes, and sugary grain items

- a. Count single and refined grain items.
- b. Consider 1 type of grain item as a packaged product or a whole grain item (examples above).
- c. Do NOT count grain items with over 10g of added sugar per serving.

Example #1: Whole oatmeal, whole brown rice, whole white rice, white sandwich bread, whole grain hamburger buns, and white hamburger buns.

→ Count as **4 types** of grain items. (The brown rice and white rice count as 1 type of grain, the whole grain and white hamburger buns count as 1 type of grain.)

Example #2: Unfrosted cupcakes, packaged brownies, hamburger buns, whole rice, whole oats, and boxed rice dinner.

→ Count as **4 types** of grain items. (The cupcakes and the brownies do not count.)

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The Healthy Food Pantry Assessment Tool

37. Of the grain items (examples above) what is the availability of **WHOLE GRAIN** products on the day of the Pantry visit?

None Available (None of the grain items are whole grain; all grains are “white”)	Some Whole Grain (Less than 50% of grain products are whole grain)	Most Whole Grain (More than 50% of grain products are whole grain)	ALL Whole Grains (Over 90% of all total grain products are whole)	
0	1	2	3	

a. Look through the selection of grain items available at the Pantry and identify the items that are whole grain. *Each of the following are whole grain ingredients:*

Whole wheat	Whole-grain corn	Brown rice	Bulgur	Rolled oats
Whole rye	Buckwheat	Wild rice	Millet	Whole oats
Whole-grain barley	Popcorn	Quinoa	Oatmeal	

(Source: www.ChooseMyPlate.gov/grains-tips)

- i. If the first item listed on the ingredients list is a whole grain (listed above), count the item as a whole grain.
- b. Select “None Available” if none of the grain products are whole grain or ALL grain products are white and refined.
- c. Select “Some Whole Grain” if less than 50% of grain products are whole grain.
- d. Select “Most Whole Grains” if half of grain products or more are whole grain.
- e. Select “ALL Whole Grains” if ALL grain products, or more than 90% of the grain products, are whole grain.

C. Policies of the Food Pantry

The questions in this section may not be directly observable to the partner agency rater during the Pantry assessment. Partner agency raters should pose these questions to a Food Pantry manager, staff member, or a volunteer leader who is familiar with the Pantry's policies.

38. Does the Pantry have documented Nutritional Guidelines for food brought IN to the Pantry? *Examples include procurement policies with recommendations on low-sodium items, high protein foods, or avoiding bringing candy or soda pop into the Pantry.*

- a. "Nutritional guidelines for food brought IN to the Pantry" refers to a food procurement policy that outlines the types of food the Pantry will accept for distribution to clients.
 - i. In this question, do NOT count food safety guidelines for not accepting spoiled food.
- b. Select "No" if...
 - ii. the Pantry currently has no guidelines relating to the nutrients in the foods they accept.
 - iii. the Pantry only has a spoken policy that is not currently documented.
- c. Select "Yes" if the Pantry has a documented policy regarding the nutrient requirements of foods brought into the Pantry.

39. Does the Pantry have documented Nutritional Guidelines for food given OUT by the Pantry to clients? *Examples include food distribution to clients: policies that ensure every client gets a food from the MyPlate food groups or not sending candy or sweets home with clients.*

- a. This question refers to a policy that outlines the types of food that the Pantry will send home with clients.
 - i. In this question, do NOT count food safety guidelines for not donating spoiled food to clients.
- b. Select "No" if...
 - ii. the Pantry currently has no guidelines for the nutrients in the foods they distribute to clients.
 - iii. the Pantry only has a spoken policy that is not currently documented.
- c. Select "Yes" if the Pantry has a documented policy regarding the nutrient requirements of foods given out to clients.



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40. Does the Agency and/or the Pantry have a documented “Respect & Dignity policy” for how clients and volunteers are treated and expected to act? *Examples include a written policy covering client behavior in the Pantry or a non-discrimination policy.*
- Select “No” if a policy for how clients and volunteers are treated is spoken only and not currently documented.
 - If “No” is selected, skip to question 42.
 - Select “Yes” if a policy is currently documented for expectations on how volunteers and clients should act and treat each other within the Pantry.
41. Is the “Respect & Dignity” policy or statement visible in a place where clients and volunteers can see it within the Pantry space?
- Look for the “Respect & Dignity” policy from a place where clients have access.
 - Select “No” if the policy is within a manual and not visible to clients unless they request to see it.
 - Select “Yes” if the policy or statement is posted where clients can see it.

Example Image: Respect and Dignity Policy Displayed



42. Is Food Safety Training a documented requirement for Staff or Volunteers who have leadership positions?
- Consider individuals “staff” if they are paid by the Pantry or agency, receiving some kind of stipend, or belong to a service corps such as AmeriCorps volunteers. Volunteers who serve the Pantry on a regular basis and who have leadership responsibilities (such as managing other volunteers) should be considered “staff” for this question.
 - Select “No” if...
 - any type of food safety training is not documented as a requirement for paid or volunteer staff of the Pantry or agency.
 - food safety training is a spoken expectation only.
 - Select “Yes” if food safety training is a documented requirement for paid or volunteer staff in leadership positions in the Pantry.

43. Is Food Safety Training a **documented** requirement for Volunteers that do not have leadership positions within the Pantry?
- a. This question refers to volunteers who serve the Pantry on a less routine schedule and do not have leadership roles or responsibility over other volunteers.
 - b. Select “No” if...
 - i. food safety training is not documented as a requirement for volunteers.
 - ii. food safety training is a spoken expectation only.
 - c. Select “Yes” if food safety training for volunteers is a documented requirement for their service in the Pantry, and may include a threshold of hours in service.

Example #1: If the Pantry has a documented policy requiring temporary volunteers who will be re-packing food to read through a food safety pamphlet on proper food handling → select “Yes”

Example #2: If the Pantry has a documented policy requiring volunteers who work for a full day (more than 6 hours) to watch a short video on food safety → select “Yes”

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D.1. Food Safety, Frozen, Chilled and Dry Storage – Storage

44. **Does the Pantry have FROZEN storage available for foods?** *If the answer for #26 was No, this is No.*

- a. This is the same question as question 26, except this one is scored. Therefore, if “No” was selected in question 26, select “No” here.
- b. If “No” is selected, skip to question 47.
- c. Select “Yes” *if* the Pantry has a frozen storage unit either at the Pantry or at an off-site location.

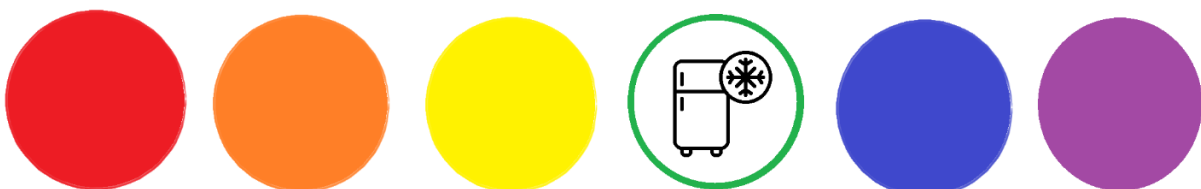
45. ***If yes, please record temperature.*** *If more than one frozen storage, record the temperature for the unit where MOST of the food for clients is stored.*

- a. This question is not scored. It is for documentation purposes only.

46. **Please select the following types of FREEZERS the Pantry has available for food storage.**

Include off-site units and list the number of units. Choose ALL that apply.

- a. Place a ✓ in the by the freezer unit option(s) that best match the freezer unit(s) that the Food Pantry currently uses to store food. Then, on the right, list the number of units.
 - i. Do NOT count freezer units that are broken, unplugged, or not used to store food for clients.
 - ii. If “Household freezer & refrigerator combination” is selected, list the number of units in this question, but do NOT count it again in question 49 on refrigerator storage.
- b. The next page shows examples of frozen and chilled storage units. Refer to the images as a guide for deciding how to classify the frozen and chilled storage units at the Pantry.
- c. If the Pantry has a type of freezer unit that is not listed, select “Other freezer, please specify” and describe the freezer unit on the line provided.
 - i. “Other” includes if the pantry has an off-site location with freezer storage for foods given out by the pantry.

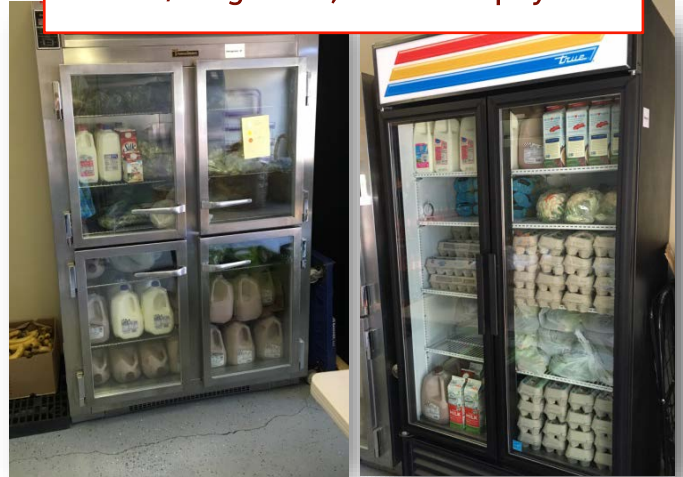


Example Images: Sizes and Types of Frozen and Chilled Storage

Household freezer & refrigerator



Double door commercial reach-in freezers/refrigerators, includes display units



Single door household freezer or refrigerator standing upright



Single door commercial reach-in freezer/refrigerator, includes display units



Multi-door (3+ doors) commercial and display reach-in freezer/refrigerator



Large walk-in commercial freezers/coolers, including very large "drive-in" unit



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47. Does the Pantry have REFRIGERATED/ CHILLED storage available for foods?

- a. If “No” is selected, skip to question 50.
- b. Select “Yes” if the Pantry has a refrigerator or chilled storage unit either at the Pantry or at an off-site location.

48. If yes, please record temperature. *If more than one refrigerated/ chilled storage, record the temperature for the unit where MOST of the food for clients is stored.*

- a. This question is not scored. It is for documentation purposes only.

49. Please select the following types of REFRIGERATORS the Pantry has available for food storage. *Include off-site units and list the number of units. Choose ALL that apply.*

Do NOT double count household freezer & refrigerator combination

- a. Place a ✓ in the by the refrigerators/ chilled storage option(s) that best represent the chilled storage available to the Pantry. Then, on the right, list the number of units the Food Pantry currently uses to store food.
 - i. Do NOT count refrigerator units that are broken, unplugged, or not used to store food for clients.
 - ii. If “Household refrigerator/freezer combination was selected for question 46, do NOT count it again in this question.
- b. Refer to the examples of chilled storage units on the previous page as a guide to decide how to classify the chilled storage units at the Pantry.
- c. If the Pantry has a type of refrigerator/chilled storage unit that is not listed, select “Other refrigerator, please specify” and describe the unit on the line provided.
 - i. “Other” would include an off-site location that has refrigeration capacity for the pantry.

50. What is the approximate square footage of ALL dry storage space available to the Pantry? *This question is NOT scored.*

- a. Estimate the dry storage area by multiplying the length of the space by the width of the space.
- b. Consider “dry storage space” the area where non-perishable foods are stored. This space is often the largest space in pantries.

51. Please describe dry storage space. *This question is NOT scored.*

- a. Please provide a short description of the dry storage space. Include details such as: indoors or outdoors, humidity controlled, number or size of shelving units, etc.

D.2. Food Safety

52. Is there a thermometer or thermostat in the Dry Storage area?

- a. Select “No” if...
 - i. there is no thermostat or thermometer hanging or placed in dry storage.
 - ii. there is a broken thermostat that does not read the temperature of the space.
 - iii. If “No” is selected, skip to question 54.
- b. Select “Yes” if there is a functioning thermostat or thermometer that reads the temperature of the dry storage area.

53. Record the temperature of the thermometer or thermostat in dry storage and select the appropriate score.

- a. Record the dry storage temperature in Fahrenheit.
- b. *If there is more than one dry storage area, select the largest dry storage area OR the area with the most food.*
- c. Select “0” if the temperature is below 43 degrees OR above 83 degrees Fahrenheit.
- d. Select “1” if the temperature is between 43-83 degrees Fahrenheit.

54. Are hand washing signs displayed above sinks?

- a. Observe the areas where volunteers or clients may wash their hands. Determine whether there are signs displayed by the sinks that detail standard hand washing procedure or remind volunteers to wash their hands.
- b. Select “No Hand Washing Signs” if none of the sinks where volunteers and clients may wash their hands have hand washing signs displayed.
- c. Select “Some Hand Washing Signs” if some of the sinks where volunteers and clients may wash their hands do not have hand washing signs displayed.
- d. Select “ALL Sinks have Hand Washing Signs Displayed” if ALL of the sinks where volunteers and clients may wash their hands have hand washing signs displayed.

Example Image: Hand Washing Sign Displayed



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55. How clean and clear is the area where food is brought into the Pantry?

- a. Observe the area where food is brought in to the Pantry, also known as the “food receiving area.” This area is most likely separate from the space where food is given out to clients. It may be located in the back of the building or by an exit door.
- b. Select “Dirty and Cluttered” *if* the path through the food receiving area has multiple objects or boxes on the floor AND there is visible dirt.
- c. Select “Clean but Cluttered” *if* the path through the food receiving area has multiple objects or boxes on the floor but there is NO visible dirt.
- d. Select “Clean and Clear” *if* there are NO boxes or objects on the floor path and NO visible dirt.

Example Images: Cleanliness and Organization of Food Receiving Area

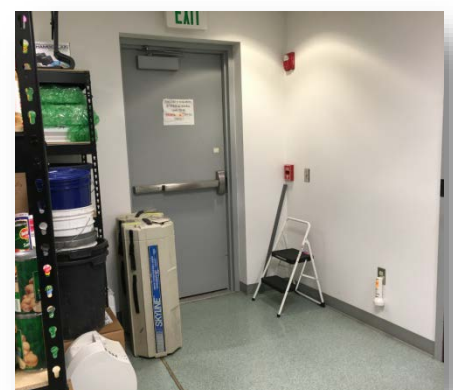
Dirty and Cluttered



Clean but Cluttered



Clean and Clear



56. What kind of transportation equipment is available for use by the Pantry?

- a. Partner agency raters: Ask the Food Pantry manager or a representative what transportation is available for the Pantry to transport food from their distributor, to another Pantry, or to clients.
- b. Select “Only Private Transportation” *if* there is no vehicle available for transporting foods other than vehicles that are privately owned by Pantry staff or volunteers.
- c. Select “Shared Vehicle or Food Bank Distributor Vehicle” *if* there is at least 1 vehicle dedicated for Pantry use that is NOT privately owned by Pantry staff or volunteers. This may be a vehicle that is shared between multiple Pantries or agencies, or one that is owned by another agency.
 - i. Select this option if the food bank/food distributor makes deliveries directly to the Pantry AND Pantry staff can use the distributor vehicle.
- d. Select “Pantry or Agency Owned Vehicle in Use” *if* there is at least 1 vehicle dedicated for Pantry use that is NOT a privately-owned vehicle and is insured by the Pantry or its associated agency.

E. Services

57. Does the Pantry provide or partner with another agency to deliver Nutrition Education Classes on site?

- a. Nutrition Education Classes are considered a single class or series of classes that takes place on site at the Pantry in a space separate from where clients may pick up or select foods.
- b. Nutrition Education Classes may be provided through a partner agency, such as a private non-profit or public university system. Common agency partners that deliver low-income nutrition education include SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education) and EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program).
- c. Select “No” if the Pantry ONLY hosts food or cooking demonstrations (either in the space where food is given to clients or in the space where clients wait to check-in). Count those in question 58 only.
- d. Select “No” if the Pantry does not currently provide any Nutrition Education Classes on site within the calendar year.
- e. Select “Yes” if the Pantry hosts at least one nutrition education class on site and in an area separate from where clients are receiving food. These classes may also include cooking segments.

58. Does the Pantry host food demonstrations, provide samples, or distribute recipes to clients?

- a. Food demonstrations are considered short presentations where volunteers, staff, or partners demonstrate how to prepare or use foods available at the Pantry.
- b. Samples are considered small portions of food that clients may taste that DO NOT count as part of their food allotment. These samples may be to demonstrate a healthy recipe, or to let clients taste a less familiar food that is available at the Pantry.
 - i. Do NOT include samples that are unhealthy, such as bakery desserts or candy.
- c. Recipes are considered lists of ingredients, menus, pamphlets, cookbooks, or handouts that are distributed to clients for free.
 - i. These materials may be in different languages.
- d. Select “No” if the Pantry does not host food demonstrations, provide samples, OR offer recipes materials to clients.
- e. Select “Yes” if the Pantry hosts food demonstrations, offers samples, OR offers recipe materials to clients for free.

59. Does the Pantry have visual or spoken referrals to WIC, TANF, SNAP, etc.?

- a. WIC represents the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.
- b. TANF represents Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
- c. SNAP represents Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program.
- d. Select “No” if the Pantry does NOT refer clients to any low-income assistance services.
- e. Select “Yes” if the Pantry displays signs, posters, pamphlets, or cards to refer clients to other services that can help them meet temporary need.
 - i. This includes policies where volunteers verbally refer clients to other services.

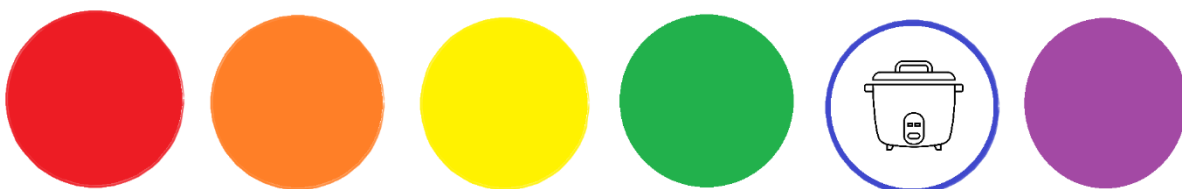
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F. Other Supplementary Programs

The following programs are not scored; they are supplementary programs that may be present at the Food Pantry. Information on these programs may be found elsewhere. Select No or Yes.

60. Does the Pantry participate in a “BackPack Program” where food is given to children in school bags?
- BackPack Programs are those that pre-pack food in backpacks or bags to send home with students. These programs often operate through a partnership between the Food Pantry, food bank distributor, and a school district with high Federal School Lunch Program participation rates.
61. Does the Pantry participate in/ receive reimbursement for Federal Child Nutrition Programs, such as Summer Meals, CACFP, etc.?
- Federal Child Nutrition Programs include:
 - Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
 - Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP)
 - National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
 - School Breakfast Program (SBP)
 - Special Milk Program (SMP)
 - Summer Food Service Program (SMSP)
62. Does the Pantry have a Registered Dietitian or Nutritionist on Staff or one that regularly volunteers?
- This may be a local nutritionist with a bachelor’s degree in nutritional science, or a Registered Dietitian who is credentialed.
 - “Regularly volunteers” means that the nutritionist or Registered Dietitian provides support to the Pantry *at least* once per month. This may be through menu reviews, nutritional analyses, recipe support, creating newsletters, or others.
63. Does the Pantry offer nutritional training to staff or volunteers regarding the USDA MyPlate food groups or serving sizes of foods?
- Nutritional training refers to any training or presentations by Pantry leadership or partner agencies that detail the USDA MyPlate dietary guidelines for Americans, including: recommended daily allowances of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and lean protein, AND guidelines for serving sizes based on age ranges.



- 64. Does the Pantry have a Mobile or School Pantry that is off-site in operation?** *(May be in partnerships with larger-member food bank/ distributor.)*
- This includes any off-site food distribution area.
 - Mobile Pantries may be a second delivery site for the Pantry or a “satellite” site of the Pantry.
- 65. Does the Pantry offer home delivery of foods or hot meals?**
- Home delivery of foods or hot meals includes transporting the food or meals from the Pantry kitchen or food preparation area to the clients. This may be to their home, to a residential facility, or to an assisted living facility.
- 66. Does the Pantry provide hot meals on site?**
- Select “No” if the Pantry does not provide clients any prepared or hot meals on site.
 - This may be due to not having a license or approval from the local health department.
 - Select “Yes” if the Pantry has a kitchen or food preparation facility that is certified by the local health department to serve clients meals on site.
- 67. Does the Pantry have specialty food items such as gluten-free or baby foods?**
- Select “Yes” if the Pantry has specialty foods for of clients with special dietary restrictions or requirements. These include...
 - foods to accommodate food allergies, such as gluten-free, fructose-free, soy-free, or dairy-free foods.
 - foods to accommodate the needs of clients with diet-related health conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes, congestive heart failure, kidney disease, or Cystic Fibrosis.
 - high protein foods for seniors.
 - nutritional supplements for children.
 - infant formula and baby food.
- 68. Does the Pantry sponsor or demonstrate Volunteer Appreciation or Awards for service?**
- Select “Yes” if the Pantry has any tradition in which they display their appreciation to the volunteers. This may be a party or event dedicated to the volunteers to thank them for their contributions to the Pantry.
- 69. What comments would you like to share about your Food Pantry environment?** *Please use the space provided below. This question is not scored.*
- This space is provided for the assessment rater to describe any unique aspect of the Pantry environment that the assessment may or may not reflect. Comments provided in this box are not required for the assessment. However, they may help provide contextual details to better understand the Food Pantry’s environment, the Pantry’s assessment score, or how improvements may be made to the Pantry environment.

