

Nutrition For Neighbors: Nutrition Policy for Food Procurement for Terre Haute Catholic Charities Foodbank

1. Statement of Purpose

The Terre Haute Catholic Charities Foodbank (THCC Foodbank) Nutrition Policy guides our decision-making about which foods we purchase and distribute to our agencies and neighbors. This formal policy demonstrates our commitment to improving equitable access to nutritious food and nutritious food education in the community.

Many factors can affect food insecurity. This is why we believe that access to nutritious food can aid in breaking the cycle of food insecurity. Proper nutrition and nutrition education is crucial in protecting our neighbors' health from chronic disease. We believe that nutritious food should be available for all.

2. Policy Rationale and Benefits

THCC Foodbank has a history of service to the community, supplying foods to help families in hard times. In recent years, the Foodbank has become concerned about the increasing rates of diabetes, heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, and other serious diet-related diseases and conditions in the community.

Our Foodbank has a strong commitment to providing healthful foods to clients. We are working with donors and government programs to make this happen.

We want our agencies to know that their health and preferences for more healthful foods are among our highest considerations in acquiring food.

We recognize the increasing role that foodbanks play in providing healthful foods to community members in need. Our policy to procure and distribute foods of high nutritional quality demonstrates to the community that we take our role and responsibility seriously.

This policy ensures our ongoing commitment to promoting healthy food choices within our organization. It guides staff in making clear and consistent decisions about the foods and beverages they should procure, encourage, and prioritize in their work. The selection and distribution of these healthier foods helps educate our community about healthier food options and provides management with a framework to select and offer healthier food choices.

3. Food Inventory Sources Covered by This Policy

This policy applies to all foods and beverages purchased by the Foodbank. It does not include donated foods or beverages with less than 50 cases or less than 2 pallets of the same item donated.

4. Foods at THCC Foodbank – Covered by This Policy

- a. Fruit and Vegetables - including:
 - i. Fresh Produce
 - ii. Frozen Fruit and Vegetables
 - iii. Canned Fruit and Vegetables
 - iv. Juices
 - v. Other Fruits and Vegetables
- b. Dairy - including:
 - i. Milks
 - ii. Yogurts
 - iii. Butters
 - iv. Cheeses
 - v. Other Dairy
- c. Grains - including:
 - i. Cereals
 - ii. Rice
 - iii. Pastas
 - iv. Oats
 - v. Breads
 - vi. Other Grains
- d. Non-Dairy Alternatives - including:
 - i. Alternative Milks
 - ii. Alternative Yogurts
 - iii. Alternative Butters
 - iv. Alternative Cheeses
 - v. Other Non-Dairy Alternatives
- e. Beverages - including:
 - i. Sodas
 - ii. Soft Drinks
 - iii. Water
 - iv. Coffees
 - v. Teas
 - vi. Other Beverages
- f. Processed and Packaged Snacks - including:
 - i. Chips
 - ii. Snack Packs
 - iii. Crackers
 - iv. Bars
 - v. Other Processed and Packaged Snacks
- g. Mixed Dishes - including:
 - i. Chilis
 - ii. Soups
 - iii. Shelf-Stable Meals
 - iv. Frozen Meals

- v. Pre-Made Meals
- vi. Other Mixed Dishes
- h. Desserts - including:
 - i. Ice Cream
 - ii. Cakes
 - iii. Cookies
 - iv. Baked Goods
 - v. Dessert Mixes (Cake Mix, Brownie Mix, etc.)
 - vi. Pudding
 - vii. Jello
 - viii. Candy
 - ix. Other Dessert Items

5. Foods to Prioritize

The foods that have been chosen as most desirable by neighbors through research points to more healthful foods. We will put considerable effort into purchasing <40% Choose rarely foods to ensure that more food items are healthful beginning March 1, 2024.

6. Foods Intended to Reduce at THCC Foodbank in the Choose Rarely Category

- a. Chips
- b. Crackers
- c. Fried Foods
- d. Cakes
- e. Candies
- f. Cookies
- g. Donuts
- h. Frozen Desserts
- i. Fruit Snacks
- j. Fruit Flavored Drinks/Soft Drinks
- k. Regular Sodas
- l. Energy Drinks

7. Ranking Policy

Food items should be ranked utilizing the HER ranking system with the proper wording, categorization, and color coding. This will ensure consistency and proper ranking.

All purchased and USDA foods and beverages will be ranked if they are able to be ranked based on their HER category. Donated foods and beverages with >50 cases or >2 pallets of the same item donated will be ranked.

No mixed donations boxes or items donated with less than 50 cases or 2 pallets of the same item donated will be ranked.

8. Brief Overview of Policy Implementation and Review

This policy has been approved by THCC Foodbank, Nutrition Policy Committee, November 14, 2023 for implementation by the Program Director.

The policy will be effective December 1, 2023 and will be integrated into THCC Foodbank official Policies as an addendum by Robert Barcus.

The policy will be communicated and disseminated to all stakeholders by December 1, 2023 . The Program Director and his/her designated staff are responsible for the oversight of initial communications of the policy to staff and member agencies. Nutrition Outreach Educators are available as requested to support training and implementation.

Training of all staff involved in the implementation of the policy will be initiated in November 2023 and completed by December 2023. The Nutrition Outreach Educators are responsible for oversight of training, beginning with food procurement staff. Training will include identification of items that meet the policy criteria for Choose often, Choose sometimes, and Choose rarely.

Questions and comments about the policy should be directed to the Program Director.

The Nutrition Outreach Educators are responsible for working with the Program Director and inventory staff to establish monthly reviews of the purchased items to ensure adherence to the policy and to make changes to practices as necessary.

The Nutrition Outreach Educators are responsible for reporting progress toward policy goals to the Program Director and Agency Director.

The policy will be reviewed every 6 months by the Nutrition Policy Committee to assess for any changes needed and progress made toward the goal of healthful food procurement.