



Prospective Partner Agency Review Process & Calendar

Thank you for inquiring about becoming a partner agency with Marion Polk Food Share. As the regional food bank for our two counties since 1987. We provide partners with food, training and support services.

We are part of the Oregon Food Bank and Feeding America hunger-relief networks. We receive food from them, the USDA, and local sources, including food drives, grocery stores, manufacturers and farmers. These foods are provided to contracted partner agencies at no charge. Food Share partner agencies work most closely with our Agency Relations and Operations teams. However, our Development and Administration teams are also at work keeping the Food Share strong, so we can serve our partners and community well.

Types of programs we have historically supported are public/congregate meal sites and public food pantries. However, Marion Polk supplies food to a variety of programs in our two counties. Here is the complete list of programs we support:

- Public Food Pantry – supplying a low-income household with a wide-range of food. Emphasis is on fresh and frozen foods.
- Public Meal Site – typically a hot meal for sit down service open to low-income neighbors.
- Private/Closed Meal Site – meals at shelters, group homes, after school programs.
- Private/Closed Food Pantry – pantry who serves a limited clientele based on their own internal criteria. Emphasis again on fresh and frozen foods.
- Neighborhood Fresh Connect – produce “stands” that could be for closed or public distribution
- Grab N Go – items for an individual that can be heated and eaten or eaten as is. This serves as a meal or snack without the organization needing to cook.
- After Hours Boxes – a 2-day supply of shelf-stable for about 2 adults with referral materials to public food pantries. These are not intended to be a household staple or regular pick-up, but for emergency situations until a household can go to a food pantry or grocery store.

Partner agencies must meet certain federal, state and local criteria. They also sign contracts with us and agree to uphold certain operational safety and customer service standards. Partner agencies are visited annually for a formal review, however, our Agency Relations staff offers support year-round.

The Food Share brings on new partner agencies through a review and vetting process twice a year. Due to the high volume of requests we receive, the current number of contracted partners, and a limited food supply, we cannot bring on every group that is looking to become a partner.

We base our decisions on the following criteria:

- **Foremost, does your organization meet our baseline contract requirements?**
 - Tax-exempt status as a federally incorporated 501c3 dedicated to helping the ill, need or infants; or a church. Or you have or can gain fiscal sponsorship by this type of tax-exempt group.
 - Food safety certification (Serve Safe or county Food Handler's card) and county inspected kitchen if serving a meal
 - Active board of directors, church council, or leadership group overseeing food operations

If you meet these baseline criteria, this is what we look for next:

- **Organizational Capacity:** Prospective groups must have an existing volunteer base, board or leadership team, demonstrated ability to operate successfully, and budget for food programming.
- **Facilities:** Organizations must have adequate, secure, safe facilities for storing and distributing food to the public.
- **Community Connections:** Demonstrate that your connections with the local community, and how you attract clients to utilize services and connect clients with other resources.
- **Demonstrated Unmet Need or Reaching Underserved Populations:** We need to be convinced your community or target population needs additional food services and is not being adequately served by existing services.
- **Flexibility on Service Dates and Times:** We already have a large network of food programs. We are looking for partners that are willing to “fill in gaps” and avoid serving when existing programs already serve.
- **Shopping Style:** Any new pantries must distribute using a “Shopping Style” model, wherein clients choose their own foods off your pantry shelves. We will not be adding pantries that plan to distribute a pre-made food box.
- **Healthy Foods:** Partners must emphasize the distribution of healthy foods, including fresh produce.
- **Food Resourcing:** Must be willing to put effort towards sourcing some of your own food or goods whether through donations or purchase.
- **Network Participation:** Must attend quarterly Food Share network meetings and an annual, day-long training.
- **Pantry as Community Center, Value Inclusion & Diversity:** We are interested in pantries that want to build community, connect clients with resources beyond

food, and create a welcoming environment for all individuals regardless of background.

- **Previous Operating Experience:** We are looking for partners that have effectively operated without Food Share support for at least 6 months, preferably longer.
- **Match for areas or communities of focus that have been identified by Marion Polk Food Share.** This can change from year to year or more frequently depending on our current partner network and local or national factors.

Due to the high volume of requests, new agency inquiries are reviewed twice a year. We offer a *mandatory* informational session each May and October for potential new agencies. See calendar below for more information.

Round 1:

Mid-April 2020: online information submission review; organizations will be notified if they are invited to the May information session or why your organization does not fit our criteria.

Mid-May: *Mandatory* informational session for prospective new agencies at the Marion Polk Food Share office, 1660 Salem Industrial Dr. NE, Salem, OR.

July 1: New agency application deadline.

July - September: MPFS vetting process (application review, visits, etc.).

September Marion Polk Food Share Board Meeting: Approval of new agencies. Not all new organizations will require board approval. Some groups could be notified about their status and oriented prior to this board meeting.

October 1: Notification of decision to add agency to Marion Polk Food Share Partner Network

Mid-October: Required training for new agencies joining network that needed board approval.

Round 2:

Mid-September: online information submission review; organizations will be notified if they are invited to the October information session or why your organization does not fit our criteria.

Early October: *Mandatory* informational session for prospective new agencies at the Marion Polk Food Share office, 1660 Salem Industrial Dr. NE, Salem, OR.

November 1: New agency application deadline.

November - January: Marion Polk Food Share vetting process.

January Board Meeting: Approval of new agencies.

February 1, 2021: Notification of decisions to partner agencies.

Mid-February: Mandatory training for new agencies joining network that needed board approval.

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