



## PROMOTING HEALTHY FOODS GUIDE BOOK

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STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEALTH  
PROMOTION AND NUTRITION EDUCATION AT FOOD BANKS



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## Resources for Food Banks:

1. Fruit and Vegetable Infographics, Courtesy of Clark County Food Bank:  
<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0BwiWTRPuJV8lWXdHWXIYdjE3dXc&usp=sharing>
2. SNAP-ED Resources for cooking and nutrition: <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov>
3. Food and Nutrition Service, USDA have a number of resources designed to provide you with the tools you need to conduct effective nutrition education.  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/get-involved/provide-nutrition-education>
4. <http://healthyfoodbankhub.feedingamerica.org>

## Introduction

There is no “one-size fits all” model for delivering effective nutrition education in the community setting. Still, widely accepted education approaches and public health best practices can “nudge” participants to make more informed, healthier choices. Founded on the research of behavioral economics, the following guide is a framework for promoting healthy food selection among food bank and emergency food relief program participants. These simple, low-cost or no-cost strategies and tools can support your organization in implementing an effective nutrition education program, empowering participants to make nutritious food choices. Used in conjunction with SNAP-Ed program materials and other resources, these simple, low-cost or no-cost strategies and tools can support your organization in implementing an effective nutrition education program, empowering participants to make nutritious food choices.

The goals of nutrition education are to: inform participants of key dietary nutrients and a well-balanced plate, increase identification and selection of nutritious food items, decrease selection of highly processed foods including those containing added sugars, added sodium, and high amounts of saturated fat; show participants how to use food bank goods in simple, healthful recipes. Please note: this guidebook serves as an ideal. Implement the feasible strategies for your facility. The program is not all or nothing! Start small, and work to achieve realistic goals for the betterment of your participants.

## Northwest Harvest Nutrition Policy

“Northwest Harvest is committed to providing access to food that contributes to healthy living, including striving to provide nutritious options to the hunger response system that might not otherwise be readily available. This includes foods to prioritize while also providing a basis for foods to reduce, but not eliminate, as Northwest Harvest believes in the dignity of choice...”

In support of the Nutrition Policy, this nutrition education program strives to make participants aware of healthier food options at their local food banks and other emergency food relief programs. Bringing simple awareness to food as a determinant of health will allow participants to assess their own dietary choices.

*"One of the most powerful things a food bank can do is to work to assist the ability of the millions of people we work with to improve their own ability to look after their nutritional health, by improving their food literacy (understanding their nutritional needs and empowering them to meet them by teaching them how to stretch dollars by shopping smart, how to cook real nutrient dense meals for their families, eating and growing more produce, and making the connection with exercise and lifestyle). This is not window dressing, it truly helps people take control of their own situation and health." Erik Talkin, C.E.O., Foodbank of Santa Barbara County*

## Why It Matters

A healthy diet is a key determinant of health. About half of all American adults, or about 117 million people, have one or more preventable chronic diseases: cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, some cancers and poor bone health. Two-thirds of all adults and one-third of all children are currently overweight or obese. Research suggests that improving access to healthy foods can lower the risk of these chronic health conditions. Thus, making healthier food options more convenient and more prominent can promote increased consumption to support better health. Highlighting healthier food options for participants is essential to the selection of these foods and the basis for this guidebook. Make the healthy choice the easy choice.

## How to Get Started: Steps to Kick Start Your Nutrition Program

1. Designate a nutrition intern, student, or long-standing volunteer as Volunteer Nutrition Lead
2. Your Food Bank Manager and Volunteer Nutrition Lead should assess which aspects of the nutrition program could be easily implemented by the facility. Lead Nutrition Volunteer must work with food bank orientation team to educate and train volunteers prior to program implementation.
3. Start small. Begin by rearranging the food line or pantry to highlight healthy items. Follow Placement and Presentation guidelines.
4. Begin by making a few food labels for fresh produce and healthy, staple items. Expand label library to include all healthy foods in time.
5. Offer recipes and handouts to participants as they peruse the line or pantry, such as “Simply Lower Salt”, “Choose Whole Foods”, and “Everyday vs. Sometimes Foods”.
6. Create signage, such as “Build Healthy Plate” or “Today’s Healthy Offerings”. Place in visible areas of food bank or pantry.
7. Start with simple food sampling, like raw produce! Start just 1-2 times per month. Later, prepare more complex sample recipes if time and resources allows.
8. Evaluate the program after several months. What is working? Are there any noticeable knowledge or behavior changes? Is there positive feedback from participants? Are your materials in a language participants can understand?

The following are potential participant survey questions as a basis for evaluating knowledge, attitude, and behavior changes:

**Participant Survey**

[SHARE THOUGHTS AND FEEDBACK](#)

What foods should you eat EVERYDAY? Circle all that apply

- A. Fruits and vegetables
- B. Pastries and sweets
- C. Whole grains
- D. Lean protein sources

Which foods are protein sources?

- A. Canned peaches
- B. Beans, poultry, meat, fish and eggs
- C. Dry cereal
- D. Fresh broccoli

What foods are heart healthy?

- A. Fried foods
- B. Soda and sugar sweetened beverages
- C. Fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins
- D. Chips and snacks

How much of your plate or meal should be made up of fruits and vegetables?

- A. ¼
- B. ½
- C. The whole plate

Do you like the labels and signage?

- A. Yes
- B. No

Are the recipes and tip sheets provided easy useful to you?

- A. Yes
- B. No

Do you frequently select labeled foods, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and protein sources?

- A. Yes
- B. No



### What Does Healthy Mean?

Healthy or nutritious foods are less processed and have the fewest added ingredients. They are whole and nutrient dense. Healthy foods minimize added sugars, salt, hydrogenated oils, and excessive saturated fats. These foods include fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables; whole grains; beans and other legumes; reduced or low-fat dairy; lean meats, fish, eggs, and poultry. These foods are crucial to a balanced, nutritious eating pattern. Clarify what healthy means to food bank employees and volunteers so that they can assist in the promotion and selection of these food options by participants.

Here is a basic schematic:



## Nudge Interventions: Tools for Increasing Healthy Food Selection

### Food Placement and Presentation

The way foods are placed and presented greatly influences participants' selection. The easier a healthy food is to eat, the more likely one is to eat it. Techniques such as prominent placement, good visibility and favorable lighting, and the appearance of abundance, highlight healthy food options for more frequent selection.

#### Placement

Locate healthy foods at the front of line. Make these foods easy to get to by placing them before or in front of less healthy items, at the front or top of bins, and in the middle shelves of pantries and refrigerators.

- Place healthy foods towards the front of a pantry or food line. These foods include:
  - ✓ Fresh produce
  - ✓ Bulk unprocessed items like oats, dried beans, and rice
  - ✓ Whole grains (like brown rice or barely), and 100% whole wheat versions of pastas and breads
  - ✓ Frozen or canned fruits and vegetables
  - ✓ Protein sources including nuts and other legumes, eggs, poultry, lean meats, canned fish
- Work to find ways to separate healthier options from standard varieties. When placing canned/package foods on pantry shelves or along the food line, take note of those that have: low or reduced sodium; no sugar added; 100% whole wheat or whole grain ingredients; no hydrogenated oils or trans fats; fewest total ingredients. Bring these foods to the front and top of bins, first or in front of standard items on shelves, or placed side-by-side with healthy item first.
- Put the same foods and similar looking canned or frozen varieties together for easy identification
- Place highly processed packaged items and other indulgent treats last in the food line, at the very top or bottom of shelves, or in the back of other items to decrease visibility

#### Presentation

- Ensure there is adequate lighting in your facility to promote optimal visibility of healthy foods
- Arrange foods (including bins or crates) in a visually appealing manner.

- Able to work collaboratively within a team as well as one-on-one with participants and volunteers
- Willing to adhere to program structure

### Evaluation

Evaluating the effectiveness of program elements is important in determining successful education and goal achievement. Use basic methods of evaluation to assess program usefulness to food bank participants. Evaluation tools should reflect knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to outcomes of ability to identify healthy foods, food selection, and attitudes surrounding healthy foods. Conduct evaluations as often as determined by facility. Highlight areas of success and propose suggestions for areas of improvement. As always, provide evaluation tools in the language of participants as possible.

Consider the following methods of evaluation:

- Participant surveys
- Participant pre-tests and post tests
- Participant interviews
- Participant focus-groups
- Quantitative changes in inventory of healthier food items. Observed turnover and demand
- Visual monitoring of healthy food selection by participants

## Program Implementation and Continuation

### Volunteer Nutrition Lead: Role and Job Description

The role of a Volunteer Nutrition Lead will be essential to effectively implementing and sustaining the nutrition education program at your food bank or emergency food relief site. Reach out to local dietetics associations, dietetic internships, or nutrition undergraduate programs to inquire about student volunteers to fill the position. You may also consider offering the role to a frequent, longstanding volunteer or staff member. Preferably, the volunteer will be knowledgeable in the field of nutrition.

#### Job Description

Title: Volunteer Nutrition Lead  
Reports to: Food Bank Manager

#### Summary of Position:

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Oversee the planning, organizing, training, and leadership necessary to implement and sustain the Nutrition Education Program.

#### Duties and Responsibilities:

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- Understand the goals of nutrition education in the food bank setting
- Implement and follow all intervention strategies of the “Volunteer Guide: Tips to Promote Healthy Food Selection”
- Continually oversee the proper set-up, organization, and accurate labeling of the food line or pantry
- Train *volunteers* to recognize the goals of nutrition education and guide them to follow the strategies outlined in the “Volunteer Guide: Tips to Promote Healthy Food Selection”
- To the best of your ability, ensure *participants* feel adequately informed and supported in navigating the food line; selecting healthy foods; deciphering labels, handouts, and signage; engaging in food sampling or cooking demonstrations; and registering for offered cooking classes
- Ensure all program materials are kept clean and in working condition. Update and create labels, handouts, and signage as necessary.
- Perform food sampling and quick cooking demonstrations as often as determined by facility
- Evaluate nutrition education program on basis as determined by facility
- Strive to keep volunteers and staff informed of program progress and effectiveness

#### Skills:

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- Knowledge and training in nutrition strongly preferred
- Strong leadership and excellent communication skills
- Responsible, organized, and efficient

- If using food bins for canned goods: remove certain foods from bins, such as canned vegetables, fruits, or beans, and place on line tables for increased visibility and accessibility.
- Angle food bins or crates downward to prevent the lip from obstructing a participants’ view
- Remove any rotting produce or severely damaged cans and boxes from bins or shelves
- Keep food bins, shelves, or tables full and well-stocked to promote abundance
- Tag or label healthy foods to enhance taste expectations and to promote recognition of these foods (See Labels and Icon section below)

### Labels and Icon Use

Visual reinforcement of healthy food offerings helps to increase awareness of and bring demand to nutritious foods. Labels help clarify food items that may be foreign to some participants. They can even highlight important nutritional qualities with the use of representative icons for: important nutrients, health properties, and cooking methods. Using food labels and icons is an easy, universal way to communicate to participants about their food choices.

#### *A Note About Labeling....*

Do not label your entire food bank inventory! Labels should be reserved for easily identifiable whole, healthy foods. Call attention to the nutritive value of healthy foods as defined above. Start small. It’s not all or nothing. Perhaps begin by labeling just fresh fruits and vegetables. Then, add bulk staple items. Gradually add labels for other foods, like canned beans or frozen vegetables. Build a label library that matches your food bank’s frequent inventory. Keep labels for reuse and create new labels as food variety changes by week, month, or season. Most importantly, assess participant understanding and use of labels. Are they noticing healthy foods?

## Food Labels

Labels should be large and visible, clearly stating the food’s name. Assess your participant demographic so that words and names can be translated into common languages of food bank participants (i.e. Mandarin, Vietnamese, Spanish, Russian). Written communication must be inclusive to be effective. Include a simple picture of the food item to reinforce recognition with its name. Use the example food label as guide. Label the below.

<p><b>Fruits and Vegetables</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All fresh produce</li> <li>All frozen fruits and vegetables</li> <li>All canned fruits and vegetables</li> </ul> <p><i>Highlight and make prominent the varieties with reduced sodium; no added salt; without added sugars, packaged in in water, 100% juice, or “lite” syrup; with no partially hydrogenated oil; and no trans fats as possible with available inventory</i></p>
<p><b>Grains</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% whole grains such as rolled oats, barley, wild rice and brown rice</li> <li>Whole grain breads, pastas and tortillas that contain whole grain as first ingredient</li> <li>Whole grain cereals that contain whole grain as first ingredient</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dairy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced fat, low-fat or skim milks</li> <li>Milk substitutes–Unsweetened (e.g. fortified soy milk, almond milk)</li> <li>Yogurt-Unflavored or flavored low-fat (1%) or skim/non-fat</li> <li>Cheese</li> </ul>
<p><b>Proteins</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lean meat, poultry, and seafood–lean or low-fat (including canned varieties)</li> <li>Dried or canned beans and lentils</li> <li>Eggs</li> <li>Nuts and seeds, including spreads such as peanut butter</li> </ul> <p><i>Highlight and make prominent varieties with reduced sodium; no added salt; no partially hydrogenated oils, and no added sugars as possible with available inventory.</i></p>
<p><b>Combination Foods (if desired)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-packaged frozen meals and canned meals -low or reduced sodium, at least 3 grams of fiber per serving, at least 6 grams of protein per serving, no added sugars or hydrogenated oils, low saturated fat</li> <li>Soups- low or reduced sodium, at least 3 grams of fiber per serving, at least 6 grams of protein per serving, no hydrogenated oil, low saturated fat.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Beverages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water</li> <li>100% juice- unsweetened, no added sugars</li> </ul> <p><i>Names for added sugars include: brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, maltose, malt syrup, molasses, raw sugar, turbinado sugar, trehalose, and sucrose.</i></p>

## Food Safety Considerations

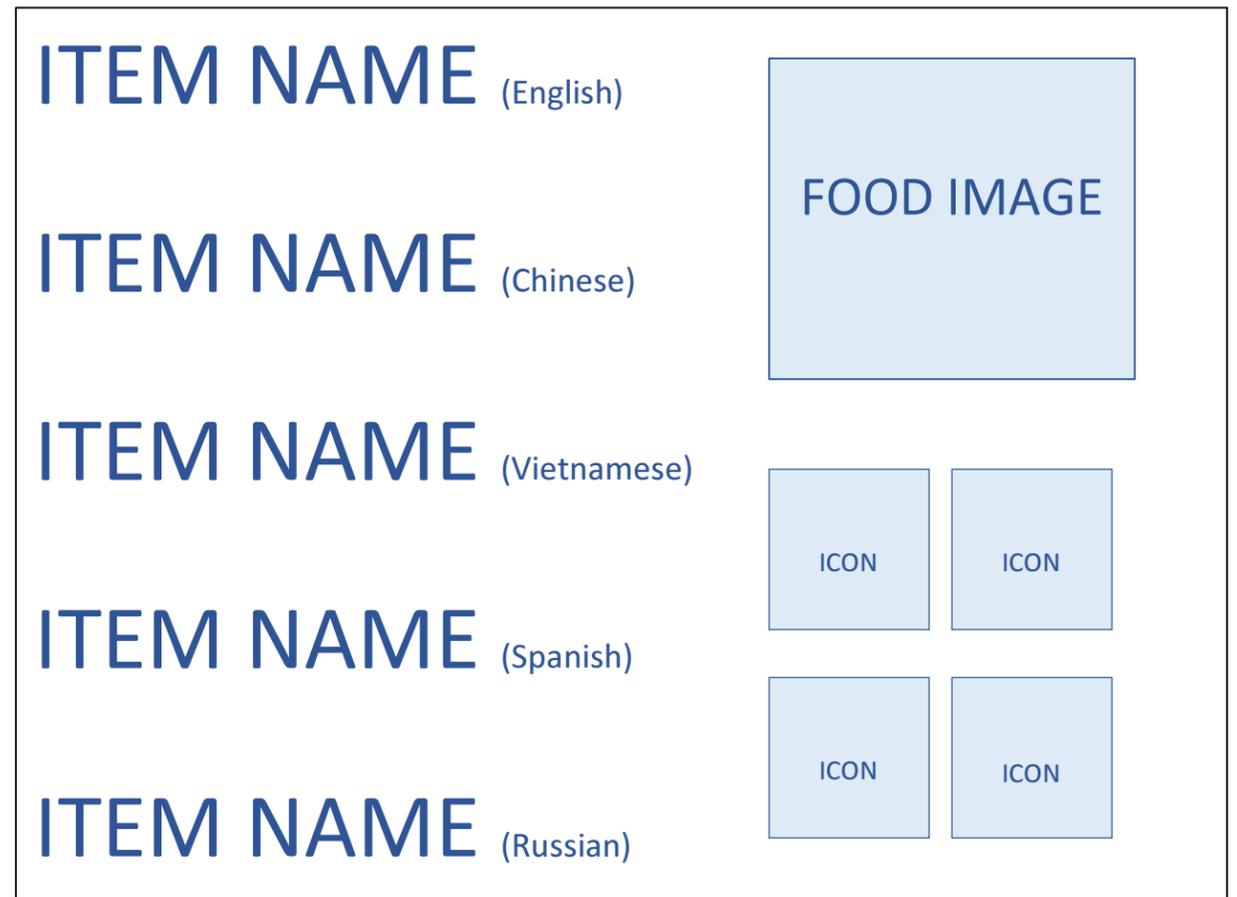
Handling and preparing foods for participant consumption requires proper food safety and sanitation procedures to reduce risk for contamination and food borne illness. Any food bank involved in the sampling or demonstration of food must adhere to basic food safety procedures.

- All perishable foods to be prepared for sampling or demonstration will be safely and properly stored in an onsite refrigerator or freezer. All open or pre-prepared foods will bear labels containing the name of the food and date it was opened or made.
- All cooked foods used for sampling will be prepared onsite, in a licensed kitchen.
- All foods will be safely stored, cold or hot held, to avoid danger zone activity between 41-135 degrees F.
- Avoid cross contamination by preparing different foods using separate, clean utensils (such as knives and other cutlery, cutting boards, bowls, cooking ware etc.)
- All cooking utensils must be adequately cleaned after use and stored in a clean environment
- Frequently and properly wash hands. Hands must be washed prior to any contact with food and after any activity that might dirty hands. Follow this procedure:
  - Rinse hands in warm or hot water. Lather with soap and rub together for 10-15 seconds (Sing Happy Birthday twice) paying particular attention to fingernails, cuticles, and in between the fingers.
  - Rinse hands in warm water.
  - Dry hands on clean disposable paper towel. Use towel to turn off faucet.
- Use disposable glove when handling ready-to-eat foods, such as food samples and non-cook recipes. Change gloves when soiled, ripped, or upon switching tasks. Wash hands between glove changes.
- All cooked foods will be temped prior to serving. Foods will be thoroughly cooked to meet these temperature criteria:
  - Fish, shellfish, lamb, beef and pork: 145 degrees F
  - Ground beef: 155 degrees F
  - Poultry and stuffed foods: 165 degrees F
  - Reheated leftovers: 165 degrees F
- All hot foods held longer than 4 hours must be kept at a safe internal temperature of 135 degrees F or above.
- All cold foods held longer than 4 hours must be kept at a safe internal temperature of 41 degrees F or below.

resources for simple topics and themes. Quick cooking demonstrations may be conducted by the Volunteer Nutrition Lead or other experienced volunteers.

Also consider partnering with community agencies that hold weekly or monthly established cooking class sessions. Draw from networks within the local community, partner recommendations, or online resources to provide cooking and nutrition curricula. *Many nutrition education programs are not completely independent. Remember that successful programming is created with community needs in mind and with community support.* Seek out resources offered by university extension offices, SNAP-Ed Implementation Agencies or SNAP-Ed Connection (i.e. WSU Extension Food \$ense), and your county public health department. Partnering with local organizations and utilizing pre-existing programs will establish cooking education at your food relief site with limited effort. When possible, offer classes on site in a common area of the food bank. Know that all federally funded SNAP recipients must adhere to SNAP-Ed guidelines. Please inquire about restrictions for eligible participants at your food bank. [Plan ahead.](#) Create a schedule and market upcoming demonstrations or classes with colorful posters, sign-up sheets, handouts and verbal reminders. Successful promotion of upcoming events will ensure demos and classes are well attended.

### Food Label Template



## Icon Use

A collection of easily recognizable icons can be useful to convey important nutrition information to participants despite language barriers. Simple is best. Highlight healthy everyday foods like fresh produce and whole grains, key major nutrients (i.e. protein source), food features (i.e. whole grain, fiber source), health benefits (i.e. heart healthy, bone healthy), and potential cooking methods (sauté, microwave, bake). Include icons on food labels for easy association with healthy foods. Create an icon reference guide for participants and place on stand alone signs, visible walls, on front of line tables or on pantry shelves. They may also be given as handouts. The reference guide serves to define icons for clear understanding. Translate words and meanings to meet participant needs. Consider these icons or create your own!



## Food Sampling

Allow participants to test taste new, healthy foods and simple recipes. Active hands-on participation—such as touching, tasting, and smelling foods—is a crucial component of memorable learning. Provide samples, when possible, of a variety of food bank items including raw fresh produce, easy, no-cook recipes, or simple cooked foods using food bank ingredients. The Volunteer Nutrition Lead could be in charge of food sampling. Prior to start, determine what day works best for the facility to offer samples and select a time of day that may reach the most participants. Consider how frequently sampling could be done (i.e. once per week, twice per month, or once per month) to encourage selection of healthy foods. Make a food sampling schedule to ensure it becomes a more frequent aspect of your nutrition program.

Follow these guidelines:

- Adhere to all Food Safety Considerations on page 25.
- Ready to eat foods must be assembled on site in a clean workspace or kitchen. All foods requiring cooking must be prepared on site in a licensed kitchen.
- Place food samples on small disposable plates, muffin trays, napkins, or cups for one-time use. Place individually portioned samples on a tray, if available.
- Designate a separate table or counter to hand out food samples. A food bank volunteer or employee must manage the table at all times.
- Advertise samples with visible, thorough signage that includes the name of the item and all ingredients (if not a whole food).
- Replicate food presentation tips to highlight selection
- Use suggestive selling to encourage participants to sample healthy food items
- Provide recipes when sampling mixed or cooked foods

## Quick Cooking Demonstrations and Classes

One of the biggest barriers to eating well is lack of knowledge, skill, or experience in the kitchen. Demonstrating *how* to prepare simple recipes can instill confidence in food bank participants to use healthy foods at home. Learning to cook nutritious meals with limited resources, funds, and equipment is valuable for lifestyle change. Consider offering quick 5-10 minute cooking demonstrations in a lobby or general area of the food bank. These demonstrations can be quick and easy when you choose to highlight basic cooking skills or technique using no-cook recipes. Explore the community and online

## Example Recipe Cards: Front and Back View

<p><b>Black Bean and Corn Salad</b></p> <p>Ingredients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 can (14 oz.) black beans, rinsed and drained OR 1 ½ cups black beans prepared dry beans</li> <li>2 ½ cups of frozen corn and pepper mix</li> <li>1/2 onion, chopped</li> <li>2 teaspoons hot sauce OR 1 teaspoon chili powder</li> <li>2 tablespoons vegetable OR olive oil (can be left out if you prefer)</li> <li>Salt and pepper, to taste</li> </ul> <p>If you are not using the frozen mix use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 cups frozen corn kernels OR 1 can (15 oz) of corn kernels, rinsed and drained</li> <li>1 small bell pepper, seeded and chopped</li> </ul> <p>Recipe Adapted from Food Network, <a href="http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/rachaelray/black-bean-and-corn-salad-recipe.html">http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/rachaelray/black-bean-and-corn-salad-recipe.html</a> (continued on back →)</p>		<p><b>Black Bean and Corn Salad</b></p> <p>Ingredients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 can (14 oz.) black beans, rinsed and drained OR 1 ½ cups black beans prepared dry beans</li> <li>2 ½ cups of frozen corn and pepper mix</li> <li>1/2 onion, chopped</li> <li>2 teaspoons hot sauce OR 1 teaspoon chili powder,</li> <li>2 tablespoons vegetable OR olive oil (can be left out if you prefer)</li> <li>Salt and pepper, to taste</li> </ul> <p>If you are not using the frozen mix use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 cups frozen corn kernels OR 1 can (15 oz) of corn kernels, rinsed and drained</li> <li>1 small bell pepper, seeded and chopped</li> </ul> <p>Recipe Adapted from Food Network, <a href="http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/rachaelray/black-bean-and-corn-salad-recipe.html">http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/rachaelray/black-bean-and-corn-salad-recipe.html</a> (continued on back →)</p>	
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<p><b>*Optional Ingredients*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin</li> <li>1 lime or lemon, juiced OR a splash of vinegar</li> <li>1 chopped fresh tomato</li> <li>Cilantro for garnish</li> </ul> <p>Directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combine beans, corn, pepper, and onion.</li> <li>Sprinkle in hot sauce OR chili powder, and oil (if you are using it).</li> <li>Add any ingredients from the optional list.</li> <li>Add salt and pepper to taste.</li> <li>Let Salad sit for 15 minutes, refrigerate if you have not used frozen vegetables.</li> <li>Enjoy!</li> </ul>	<p><b>*Optional Ingredients*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin</li> <li>1 lime or lemon, juiced OR a splash of vinegar</li> <li>1 chopped fresh tomato</li> <li>Cilantro for garnish</li> </ul> <p>Directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combine beans, corn, pepper, and onion.</li> <li>Sprinkle in hot sauce OR chili powder and oil (if you are using it).</li> <li>Add any ingredients from the optional list.</li> <li>Add salt and pepper to taste.</li> <li>Let Salad sit for 15 minutes, refrigerate if you have not used frozen vegetables.</li> <li>Enjoy!</li> </ul>
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### A note on food icons...

Select the most appropriate icons for food labels, and try to limit the number of images per label to 4 or less. Too many icons can confuse and overwhelm participants. Icons should guide and not distract participants from selecting healthy foods. The fewest and most relevant icons should be chosen to reflect important nutritional properties and possible cooking methods. Use discretion when labeling, and assess the feasibility for your facility to identify, categorize, and label healthy foods. Low sodium and No added sugar icons might not be a realistic part of your food bank inventory.

### Icon-Food Associations

**Heart Healthy:** Whole grains (oats, brown rice, barley etc.), whole wheat breads, and whole grain pastas, high fiber foods, reduced and low sodium foods, fresh fruits and vegetables, lean proteins and foods low in saturated fat

**Everyday Foods:** Fresh produce, bulk whole grains and foods with whole grain as first ingredient; canned or frozen fruits and vegetables with low sodium and no added sugars; reduced/low fat/non-fat dairy products, lean meats and protein sources (beans and lentils, poultry, eggs, fish, nuts)

**Fiber Source:** Whole grains (oats, brown rice, barley etc.), 100% whole wheat pastas and breads, fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds, beans and lentils

**Protein Source:** Lean meats, poultry, eggs, fish (and canned fish), beans, lentils, nuts and legumes

**Vitamins and Minerals:** All fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned), whole grains, protein sources (beans, lentils, eggs, poultry, lean meats, fish, legumes), dairy products (milk, yogurt, cheeses)

**Whole Grain:** Oats, barley, brown rice, 100% whole wheat breads and pastas; products with whole grain listed as first ingredient

**No Added Sugars:** As marked on can/box/bag; 100% fruit juices; fruits canned in water or lite syrup

**Reduced Sodium or No Added Salt:** As marked on can/box/bag; canned beans and vegetables with no added salt or <140 mg per serving; reduced sodium canned soups

**Bone Healthy:** Dairy products (reduced, low fat, or non-fat); fortifies milk substitutes (i.e. soy, almond milks), canned fish and other protein sources (meat, poultry, canned beans); low sodium foods

Example Labels: canned green beans and bulk oats

# Green Beans

(English)

青刀豆

(Chinese)

Đậu xanh

(Vietnamese)

Judías Verdes

(Spanish)

фасоль

(Russian)

# Oats

(English)

燕麦

(Chinese)

yến mạch

(Vietnamese)

Avena

(Spanish)

Овес

(Russian)

Example Tip Sheets

**Everyday vs Sometimes Foods** [northwest HARVEST .org](http://northwestharvest.org)

**Everyday Foods**  
Eat these every day and even w/ every meal!

**Sometimes Foods**  
These are a special treat. Limit eating these to 2-3 times per week.

- Fresh, frozen or canned vegetables
- Fresh, frozen, or canned fruit
- Legumes—beans, lentils—and Nuts
- Whole grains
- Reduced and low-fat dairy
- Low fat protein

**SOMETIMES foods:**

- Baked goods and Pastries
- Sweets
- Candy
- Chips—potato & tortilla
- Fried foods—pork rinds, fries
- Soda or other sweetened beverages

**Choose Whole Foods!** [northwest HARVEST .org](http://northwestharvest.org)

- ⇒ **PICK** unprocessed foods! Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, fish, beans, and legumes; reduced or low-fat dairy products.
- ⇒ **READ** the ingredients list on packaged foods
- ⇒ **LOOK FOR** foods with the fewest number of ingredients on the label.
- ⇒ **AVOID** ingredients like partially or full hydrogenated oils, trans fats, artificial flavorings and colors, high fructose corn syrup and other added sugars, sodium >400mg per serving
- ⇒ **PREPARE** your own versions of canned or packaged foods when possible, like homemade soups and chili from scratch

**Simply Lower Salt!** [northwest HARVEST .org](http://northwestharvest.org)

- ⇒ **RINSE** canned vegetables and beans before eating or cooking.
- ⇒ **COMBINE** canned foods with fresh or frozen vegetables to dilute the salt and improve flavor.
- ⇒ **COOK** dry beans or fresh vegetables from scratch
- ⇒ **ADD** more water, rinsed beans and vegetables, or fresh and frozen vegetables to canned soups and meals
- ⇒ **USE LESS** of the flavor packet for ramen and dried soup mixes. Add fresh or frozen vegetables

## Recipe Distribution

Providing recipes for any F2E, including sampled foods or demonstration recipes, encourages selection of new foods. More importantly, recipes empower food bank participants to prepare healthy foods at home for continued incorporation into their diet. One of the largest barriers to consuming healthy foods is a knowledge deficit in preparation. Share tips by giving easily replicated recipes.

Collect or create recipes featuring food bank ingredients. It is OK for recipes to use additional ingredients, but focus on those that are most affordable and attainable. Limit ingredients to a handful. Archive recipes and disseminate when particular foods are available, such as during food sampling, after a cooking demonstration, while participants wait in line, or in a simple stack beside the featured food in the pantry/food bank. Consider formatting the recipes as small cards with writing (and images when possible) on the front and back. See example recipes on following page.

## What's happening at Cherry Street?



## Signage

Prominent, visible signage with simple representations of a well-balanced plate, definitions of everyday nutritious foods, and images of the day's healthy offerings directs participant attention to these foods, helping to increase recognition and selection of healthy items. Visuals encourage recognition and comprehension, when clearly depicted and prominently displayed. Basic is best. Consider the following topics for signage.

### “Build A Healthy Plate”

Replicate the MyPlate model to depict a well-balanced plate with available food bank items. Use food images to highlight each of the 4 main categories: fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and protein. Encourage participants to reference the healthy plate image when selecting foods and building meals. Translate titles and content when possible. See example on page 16.

### “Everyday vs. Sometimes Foods”

Increasing knowledge of healthy food choices by differentiating Everyday vs. Sometimes foods. Everyday foods include: Sometimes Foods include: This is a positive way to wrap nutrition messages around healthy foods and sensitive to the fact that individuals may not always have other options. When possible, use images to transcend language barriers. Translate titles and content when possible. See example on page 17.

### “Today's Healthy Offerings”

Use the Northwest Harvest Availability poster to feature Today's Healthy Offerings. This sign should include name and images of healthy foods such as: fresh fruits and vegetables; canned or frozen fruits and vegetables; whole grains; beans, nuts, and legumes; lean proteins; dairy products. Place outside the food bank or immediately before the line to expose participants before they select foods.

## Point of Service Education Methods

The episodic and often irregular use of emergency food relief programs can make traditional classroom and curriculum approaches to nutrition education a challenge. Still, active engagement and instruction is an essential part of learning new skills. To support the selection and consumption of F2E, consider delivering simple, short and one-time lessons while participants are receiving food. Point of service nutrition education can include informational handouts, food sampling, recipe distribution, quick cooking demonstrations, and even condensed five-minute nutrition or food budgeting lessons. These tools may be especially effective for food relief sites with waiting rooms, where participants are a gathered and captive audience. Assess the feasibility to provide education at your facility and determine which point of service education methods would best meet the needs of your participant demographic.

### Informational Handouts

Colorful and easy to read handouts or brochures can help provide participants with the information and tools to continue making healthy food choices outside the food bank. Consider replicating signage in brochure form to reinforce messages on building a healthy, balanced plate; clarify everyday vs sometimes foods; provide tip sheets for assisting in healthy food selection; provide easy sample recipes with available food bank foods; market upcoming on-site food samples, cooking demonstrations, or scheduled community classes; provide community resources for more information and support. As with any education method, effective communication is key. Knowing the demographic of participants will ensure you can provide handouts, brochures, and flyers in the languages they speak and understand. Utilize local resources (Red Cross) that can translate educational materials. See Example Tip Sheets on page 21.

## Volunteer Guide: Tips to Promote Healthy Food Selection

Make the healthy choice the easy choice. Volunteers can help participants choose healthy foods by assisting in the implementation of “nudge” interventions. This Volunteer Guide should be used in during volunteer orientation to adequately train volunteers prior to work.

### Enhance Food Presentation

*The way food looks grabs participants’ attention and draws them in. Employ these techniques to showcase food and increase healthful food selection:*

- Place healthy foods at the beginning of the line, as possible by facility.
- Follow “Food Placement and Presentation” guidelines to make healthy foods prominent
- Place like foods together for visual appearance
- Maintain an attractive and orderly presentation of foods
- Remove rotting produce or overly damaged cans/boxes from bins and shelves
- Continually restock shelves and keep bins full (Try not to over fill bins so food remains neat, and easy to take)
- Place fronts of containers/cans/bags/boxes forward for easy reading while restocking
- Place labels on healthy foods and ensure they remain prominent and attached to respective foods

### Utilize Suggestive Selling

*Verbal and visual cues are simple ways to call people’s attention to produce and other healthful items without persuading them to select it. Try these techniques to encourage selection:*

- Always be familiar with available healthy food items to effectively inform participants of their selections
- Help clarify healthy food items to participants, especially those who look uncertain. Ex: “We have \_\_\_ today!”
- Nudge healthy foods at your station to increase likelihood of selection. Ex: “Would you like some mixed vegetables?” or “Would you like to try whole grain pasta?”
- Make healthy foods high priority with phrases like “Get it while it lasts!” or “Special today!”
- Refer and point to healthy foods signage
- Offer simple recipe ideas to participants who are curious or uncertain what to do with food items; Offer tips for decreasing added sodium or sugar on canned foods by encouraging participants to wash the item. Handouts

### Maintain A Positive Atmosphere

*Create a caring and cooperative environment that encourages participants to take advantage of nutrition education for improved health and well-being*

- Talk to participants, smile, and make eye contact to help them to feel welcome. Assist participants as necessary
- Always use positive language. When informing a participant about a number limit, say “One, please” instead of “You can only take one.”
- Avoid any comment that may be taken as an aggressive “sell” or action perceived to invade a participant’s personal space. Maintain a comfortable atmosphere for both you and your participants.

Sectioning the offerings by type, such as “Vegetables”, “Fruits”, “Proteins”, and “Whole Grains” may help clarify food categories for participants and tie the day’s offerings to a healthy plate model.

Food images must be removable, as the poster will match inventory changes. Considering using the same laminated food labels as placed along the line. Attach labels with Velcro or tape, or fashion plastic sleeves to the poster. Remember that including food images, and not just food names, is crucial for communicating with individuals speaking different languages.

### “Build A Healthy Plate”



“Everyday vs. Sometimes Foods”

# EVERYDAY vs. SOMETIMES FOODS

Everyday foods you can eat every day—and even with every meal!  
Sometimes foods are a special treat, try to limit these to 2-3 times per week.

The infographic is set against a light blue background. At the top, the title 'EVERYDAY vs. SOMETIMES FOODS' is written in green and blue. Below the title, a paragraph explains that everyday foods can be eaten daily, while sometimes foods should be limited to 2-3 times per week. The main part of the infographic is a large white oval containing various food items. The word 'EVERYDAY...' is written in green above the oval, and 'SOMETIMES...' is written in blue below it. The everyday foods include bananas, eggs, Mott's applesauce, rice, broccoli, onions, potatoes, tomatoes, oranges, a fish, a bowl of cereal, an apple, a piece of grilled fish, kidney beans, a green pepper, a carton of milk, a cup of coffee, green beans, bread, peanut butter, and a package of tofu. The sometimes foods are shown in five circular images at the bottom: donuts, various candies, french fries, and several bottles of soft drinks.



Signage portrayed at the Cherry Street Food Bank



Signage portrayed at the Cherry Street Food Bank