

Becoming an Agency FAQ



What is a partner agency?

- 👉 Partner agencies are service-driven community leaders who stepped up to meet the need by operating soup kitchens, food pantries, childcare facilities, and life-saving residential programs at no cost to our neighbors in need.

Who can become a partner agency?

- 👉 CFB can partner with any nonprofit or religious organization in our service area that operates an active food program for at least six months.

What areas do you serve?

- 👉 CFB partners with organizations across twelve counties throughout central Alabama: Blount, Calhoun, Cherokee, Clay, Cleburne, Etowah, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, Talladega, Walker, and Winston.

Are there any membership fees?

- 👉 Never! We want to make serving the community as easy and cost-effective as possible for our partners, so there are no fees associated with Food Bank membership.

Are partner agencies allowed to provide religious services?

- 👉 Absolutely! We work with hundreds of churches and faith-based organizations across the state. As long as food services are not contingent on religious participation or spiritual agreement, you are welcome to practice your faith as you see fit.

Where does Food Bank food come from?

- 👉 The Community Food Bank procures food from a number of sources including the United States Department of Agriculture, international wholesalers, local farmers, and major retail partners like Walmart, Target, Publix, and GreenWise.

How much does it cost to get food from the Food Bank?

- 👉 CFB is dedicated to making healthy food accessible to all. As a result, the majority of our inventory costs between \$0-\$0.36/lb.

How can my organization become a partner agency?

- 👉 Visit our website (feedingal.org) and click on the “Become an Agency Partner” button on the top righthand side of your screen for more information.

I’m not sure if the Food Bank would be a good fit. How can I learn more?

- 👉 If you have any questions or concerns, a member of the Partner Engagement team would love to chat! For additional resources or support, please call us at (205)942-8911.

Getting Started

Starting a food program from scratch can be overwhelming, but the Community Food Bank is here to help. While we do restrict membership to organizations with at least six months of independent service behind them, the Partner Engagement team is always happy to offer suggestions, direction, and advice to organizations just starting out.

IDENTIFYING THE NEED

How do I start a food program for my community?

Well... that depends.

No two corners of our 12-county service region are the same, so neither are the programs that seek to serve them. Starting a food program is about meeting the unique needs of your community, so the first thing to do is to look around you.

Step One: Look for existing food programs in your community.

Here at CFB, we often say “it takes a community to care for a community.” When you connect with other organizations in your area who are currently offering resources, you may find that the most effective way to care for your neighbors in need is to collaborate with existing programs to grow and expand their reach. To find other food bank partners in your area, check out the “Find Food” tool on our website, www.feedingAL.org.

Step Two: Get to know your neighbors.

If you’ve looked at the resources available to your community and decided that the best route is to create a new program yourself, then it’s time to identify the people you’ll be serving. Does your community have a high number of senior citizens? What about children? Is there a large number of folks experiencing homelessness? Are the families in your area large, or are there typically only a few people per household? Do your neighbors in need work traditional hours, or are they available during the day? Do they need occasional assistance, or is hunger a daily battle? Gathering as much information as you can about the folks you’re aiming to serve will shape how you structure a program to best meet their needs.

Step Three: Identify your own limitations.

Throughout the rest of this guide, we will talk about things like picking your teammates, choosing a service model, planning, organizing, and growing your program over time, but all of that starts with knowing what you are capable of today. There is no shame in naming your limitations but ignoring the reality of your situation will leave you more susceptible to burnout, overextension, compassion fatigue, and overall failure.

Popular Service Models



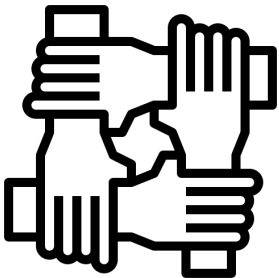
Emergency Food Pantry

When times are tough and our neighbors in need don't know where else to turn, our EFP partners stand as pillars in the community providing food, household staples, and a moment of kindness to their neighbors in need.



Community Meals

Whether it's operating a soup kitchen 7 days a week or serving a hot meal after church, our partners know the healing effect that sharing a home cooked meal can have on a community.



Residential Facilities

From rehabilitation centers to nonprofit housing solutions, CFB partners with a number of residential sites across our twelve counties in the hopes of making mealtime one less thing to worry about.



Outreach Distributions

Free food trucks and meal delivery systems are just two ways that our partners meet their neighbors where they are. Even if you don't have the capacity for sit-down meals at your facility, there are still options for getting prepared food out into your community.



School Feeding

Though CFB cannot directly partner with our local public-school systems, our agency partners may act on their behalf to run weekend backpack programs, summer meal distributions, and other on-site meal solutions.

Applying for Membership

Application Process:

- 👉 **Step One:** Visit the “Becoming an Agency Partner” page on feedingal.org to review membership guidelines, partnership FAQ, and to locate the online application.
- 👉 **Step Two:** Submit a complete online screening application.
- 👉 **Step Three:** A member of the CFB Partner Engagement team will reach out to set up a preliminary site visit and send CFB Agency Application. Complete the CFB Agency Application with all supporting documents and necessary signatures (detailed below).
- 👉 **Step Four:** Upon completion of a successful site visit, you will be provided with online training materials regarding civil rights procedure, food safety protocol, and the ins and outs of Food Bank membership.
- 👉 **Step Five:** As soon as your training is complete, your agency will go live! You will have full access to Food Bank inventory and resources.

* Please note that completion of this application does not guarantee membership. CFB reserves the right to deny or delay membership to agencies that we believe do not meet our criteria or guidelines.

Required Documents for Application:

- Proof of Tax-Exempt Status
 - For non-profits: a copy of 501(c) (3) Letter of Determination from the IRS showing official nonprofit status at a public charity.
 - For churches: *a letter from the appropriate denomination headquarters providing denominational EIN and stating that the applying agency is in good standing with said denomination. *Churches that do not have an official 501(c) may qualify for membership if they meet certain established criteria; however, the ultimate determination will be made by Food Bank staff.*
- Evidence of food program in operation for at least 6 months prior to application
- Proof of pest control services rendered at least quarterly by a reputable service
- Proof of Liability Coverage
- Proof of at least 2 funding sources and projected budget for food program
- Copy of Articles of Incorporation/Charter
- Letter from governing body granting permission for CFB membership (*download from application*)
- List of governing body including names, addresses, and phone numbers
- CFB Agency Agreement and Release (*download from application*)

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity employer.

