CLIENT CHOICE
COURSE WORKBOOK

**REGIONAL
FOOD BANK**
OF OKLAHOMA

> *My number one reason (for switching to client choice) is empowerment — I don't want the clients to feel as if this is charity. I want them to be able to make their choices and have a say in what they eat ... (also) since they have a choice, they will not take things they will not use.*
>
> ***Mary Arbuckle***
> *Other Options, Inc.*
> *Oklahoma City*

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Why Client Choice Matters

WHAT IS A CLIENT CHOICE PANTRY?

A client choice pantry allows clients to select their own food within guidelines provided by the local pantry instead of receiving a pre-packed or standard bag of groceries.

WHY GIVE CLIENTS A CHOICE?

Imagine your family is in need of food. Your kitchen has some items but not enough to make meals for the next few days. You need to visit a food pantry. When you go to the food pantry, you are handed a pre-packed or standard bag with food you already have at home. There are also some items your family does not know how to cook. You're not sure what to do with the food. If you had been able to choose the foods you need and like, your family could have enjoyed a well-rounded, nutritious meal. You would not have taken items you have already, do not like, or cannot eat for health or personal reasons.

BENEFITS OF CLIENT CHOICE PANTRY:

1 Pre-boxing process is eliminated. Volunteers are used to fill the shelves in preparation for the clients to shop, which is typically less physically demanding and monotonous. Volunteers are also available to assist clients with food selection.

2 Increased staff, volunteer and donor interaction with clients. There are more opportunities to get to know the clients. Donors and volunteers can experience how their physical and financial investments directly impact the clients.

3 Less waste and greater financial efficiency. Clients usually do not choose what they know they will not use, so there is less waste as a result of clients throwing away food they do not want. Agencies can also reduce waste and save money by eliminating items that clients will not eat.

4 Respect for the individual is emphasized. When clients have the freedom to make their own food choices, it has a positive effect on self esteem. Therefore, clients are more apt to use services.

Client Choice Models

There are many ways to set up a client choice pantry. Each agency must decide which model is right for you and your clients.

Many things may affect which Client Choice model you choose. They include:
• Equipment needs
• Physical space
• Workers

The Table of Client Choice Models on Page 5 gives you an overview of the different options. Setting up a client choice pantry is a bit like putting together a puzzle: all the pieces fit together, but you have to find the right way! The models shown can be modified to fit your pantry, or you can come up with a different way to bring client choice to your pantry.

> **"We** save both time AND money. We can accept ANY food donation now since we carry an unlimited number of products. For example, if someone has 200 cans of tuna they want to get rid of, we can say "sure!" (when before, we would have to say, "no sorry, tuna isn't in our pre-made bags"). It has really made us flexible which is great for donors. **"**
>
> **Caroline Owen**, Skyline Urban Ministries, Oklahoma City

	SUPERMARKET	TABLE	WINDOW	INVENTORY LIST
DESCRIPTION	Food is set up by food groups inside the pantry. Clients choose their food as they walk through the pantry. Workers may help guide clients through their choices or check them out when they have finished shopping.	Food is set up on tables by food groups. Clients walk by each table to choose and pack their food.	Clients stand outside the pantry area but can see the food in the pantry. Clients choose by pointing to the food they want.	A list of food in stock is posted or given to clients. Clients choose their food from the list. Workers then assemble the clients' food bags.
EQUIPMENT	**Necessary: 1)** Shelving **2)** Food Cards showing clients how much food they can take. **Optional: 1)** Refrigerators and freezers with clear glass doors to view products **2)** Grocery carts **3)** Check-out table	**Necessary: 1)** Tables **2)** Food cards showing clients how much food they can take. **Optional:** Carts to move food	**Necessary: 1)** Shelving visible to clients **2)** Food cards showing clients how much food they can take. **Optional:** Half door with counter at entry to pantry	**Necessary: 1)** Paper or board to list food in stock **2)** Food cards showing clients how much food they can take. **Optional: 1)** Clipboards to hold paper lists **2)** Copy machine or computer printer
SPACE	A space large enough to display food on shelves. There needs to be enough room for clients to walk through safely.	A space large enough to set up tables with room to walk in between the tables.	Will work in any space where clients can see the food.	Will work in any space. Needs only enough space to store food and have intake area.
ADVANTAGES	**1)** Pantry workers have more one-on-one time with clients enriching their volunteer experience. This also allows workers to ask clients specific questions. **2)** Store room and place where clients choose food are the same. **3)** Many clients can be served at one time. **4)** This is the most client friendly model as it models a grocery store.	**1)** Many clients can be served at one time. **2)** Clients can handle food like they would in a grocery store.	Very small space needed to offer client choice.	**1)** Very small space needed to offer client choice. **2)** Clients can choose food for themselves without leaving their seat in the intake area.
DISADVANTAGES	**1)** Planning in advance is required to set up foods by food groups. **2)** May need additional shelving, tables or equipment.	**1)** Workers need to set up and break down tables. **2)** Lifting food onto tables may be difficult for some workers.	Can only serve a small number of clients at one time.	**1)** Hard for clients with low reading level or English as a 2nd language. **2)** Need to update food list as inventory changes.

Supermarket Model

DESCRIPTION

Food is set up on shelves by food groups. Clients walk through the space and take food from shelves according to pantry guidelines. The food store room and the place where clients choose their food can be in the same location. Workers do not need to move the food items on days when clients come in. The whole pantry's stock is open for clients. The space needs to be large enough to display foods and allow clients to walk through. This model allows clients to handle food and look at the labels just as if they were shopping in a store. Pantry space will determine how many clients can shop at a time. This model is the most client-friendly, as it is most like a grocery store.

FOUR EASY STEPS TO MAKING IT WORK

1. Organize food on pantry shelves by food groups.

2. When clients sign in, give them instructions as to how much food they may take based on family size. The clients can be given a Food Card (Page 13) with the number of items they may take per food group, or they can be provided with a total number of items available to them. The pantry may also choose to display the number of items available on the shelves.

3. Allow clients to walk through the pantry alone, but with volunteers nearby to answer questions, or a worker can walk with the client as they shop.

4. Like in a supermarket, have clients "check-out" and pack their food in a bag or box with the help of a pantry worker. Pantry workers also check to see if client has taken the amount and type of food that they are allowed based on their family size.

EQUIPMENT NEEDS

Your pantry needs enough shelving space to display the food available in the pantry. A refrigerator or freezer with clear glass to view products is helpful for this model. If this type of equipment is not available, a list of available refrigerated and frozen foods can be posted for

clients to choose from. Grocery carts and a table for "check-out" would also be helpful, but not necessary.

WORKER TIPS

• It is important to have workers available before the pantry opens to ensure the pantry is organized and food is stocked on shelves.

• Workers may need to re-stock and straighten shelves during pantry hours.

• If a worker guides clients through the pantry, this offers a chance to talk about the types of food the client chooses. This may lead to the worker and the client discussing client needs, how to choose nutritious food or how to prepare unfamiliar food.

• If a worker does not walk with individual clients as they shop, workers may be placed strategically in the "store" to offer assistance, answer questions, and ensure clients are following the guidelines.

Table Model

DESCRIPTION

Food is set up on tables by food groups. Clients walk by each table to choose and pack their food.

The pantry needs enough room for clients to walk by each table. Pantry workers can stand by the food tables to guide clients and answer questions about the food. This model can serve many clients at one time. This model allows clients to physically handle food as they would do if they were shopping at a grocery store.

**THREE EASY STEPS
TO MAKING IT WORK**

1. Organize food on tables by food groups.

2. When clients sign in, give them a Food Card listing how many items they may take based on family size.

3. Allow clients to walk by the tables, choosing and packing their own food.

EQUIPMENT NEEDS

Your pantry needs enough tables to display the available food. Arranging tables in a U-shape can save space.

WORKER TIPS

• Workers may be needed before, during and after open pantry hours to set up, supervise and take down tables.

• It is helpful if the store room and the room displaying the food on tables are close together. If not, dollies or carts are helpful to transport the food items.

• Work in pairs to lift heavy cases or containers of food onto tables.

• Workers can accompany clients or remain by each display table to offer assistance, answer questions, and ensure clients are following the guidelines.

Window Model

DESCRIPTION

Clients choose the type of food they want by pointing to the food on the shelf. Pantry workers then pack food bags according to the clients' choices and family size. This model helps offer client choice when the pantry has limited space. One special consideration is that the window model can only serve a small number of clients at one time.

FOUR EASY STEPS TO MAKING IT WORK

1. Organize food on shelves by food group.

2. When clients sign in, gives them a Food Card listing how many items they may take based on family size.

3. Allow clients to choose food by pointing to the items they want.

4. Have workers pick the food items off the shelf and packs the food into a bag or box.

EQUIPMENT NEEDS

Your pantry needs shelving set up so clients can see the food items through a window or a half-door.

WORKER TIPS

• It is important to have workers available before the pantry opens to ensure the pantry is organized and food is stocked on shelves.

• If clients do not speak or read English, the pantry might need a translator or food pictures to help with the process.

Inventory List Model

DESCRIPTION

A list of food available is posted or given to clients. Clients choose their food from the list. Pantry workers then assemble the clients' food bags. This model is helpful for clients who have trouble moving around – they are able to choose foods without having to leave their seats.

Items Available per Food Group	Number of People in Household			
	1	2	3-4	5-6
Grains	2	3	4	6
Vegetables	3	5	8	11
Fruits	3	5	8	11
Dairy	2	3	4	6
Meat/Proteins	2	3	5	7
Combination Foods	1	2	4	6
Fats & Oils	1	1	2	2
Sweets	1	1	1	2

Please write the number you are requesting beside each item.

No.	Grains	No.	Dairy	No.	Fats/Oils
	bread, 1 bag or loaf		fluid milk, 1/2 gallon		Margarine or butter, 1 pound
	rice, 16 oz		dry milk, 25 oz		Vegetable oil, 48 oz
	pasta, 16 oz		yogurt, 16 oz		
	cereal, 1 box		cheese, 1 block		
	oatmeal, 18 oz				
No.	Vegetables	No.	Meat/Protein	No.	Sweets
	fresh broccoli, 1 bag or bunch		Tuna, 6 oz		Jelly, 18 oz
	fresh onions, 1 bag		Chicken, 8 oz		Pancake syrup, 24 oz
	canned peas, 1 can		Peanut butter, 1 jar		Honey, 1 jar

Pictured above are sample inventory lists

THREE EASY STEPS TO MAKING IT WORK

1. When clients sign in, give them instructions on how many items the client may take based on family size. The worker also shows the clients the list of food available, which can be on a piece of paper, a check list, or displayed on a white or chalk board.

2. Allow clients to write choices on a piece of paper, tell a worker their food choices, or complete a check-list.

3. Have workers fills bag(s)/box(es) with the client's food.

EQUIPMENT NEEDS

Your pantry needs materials to make a list of foods in stock. You can use paper, pens/pencils, and clip boards for creating a paper food list. A copy machine or computer printer is helpful to make copies of the paper list for clients. Or you can post the food list on a white dry-erase board or a chalk board. Either dry erase markers or chalk is needed if posting the food list on one of these types of boards.

WORKER TIPS

• Update food list as inventory changes.

• Use waiting time to share nutrition handouts, recipes, and other menu ideas with the client.

• If clients do not speak or read English, the pantry might need a translator or food pictures to help with the process.

Logistics

Inventory

Generally speaking, pantry organizers love well-stocked shelves and constantly worry about having enough food to cover the days when the pantry is open.

TIPS:

• Make food drives count! If you take part in food drives, encourage people to donate specific foods that are popular with your clients. You can also encourage them to donate products that are for clients with special needs (i.e. low sodium soups).

• If you are having trouble getting an item off of the shelf make it a feature item. Clients could take as many of the feature item as they wanted in order to get products off your shelf quickly, making room for more popular food items.

• Change the foods you offer clients from time to time. In the meat and nonmeat protein group, offer salmon, ground beef, and venison at one time; and tuna, ground turkey, and peanut butter at another time. Change is good!

Controlling the rate of food distribution is of utmost concern. Initially, it may seem that inventory will be more difficult to gauge with the client choice model. However, this model has little or no effect on the amount of food going out. What this model will affect is the *type* of food going out, as clients have the freedom to make decisions on their own.

Your panty will likely continue to serve the same number of clients each month. Also, the amount of food coming in from different donations and purchases should maintain similar levels. Thus, by simply allotting the same amount of food to each client as you did in the traditional pantry, you can prevent food from being distributed too quickly. This is why planning your implementation thoroughly is vitally important! Additionally, it will be necessary to carefully track individual items and types of items so future pantry purchases reflect what clients want and need.

FIRST IN AND FIRST OUT

In order to ensure that the food on your shelves is not out of date, you want to use the "first in, first out" method of inventory control. When you get a new delivery, put the newest food at the back and the older food at the front where the client has easy access.

STOCKING THE RIGHT FOOD

With client choice, popular food moves faster. After a few months, you will see how to stock your food, how often to order, and how much to order.

Before making the switch to client choice, you can plan ahead by doing the following:

Stock more of the popular food.

- What food items do your clients often ask for?
- Do you run out of some food before others?

Stock less of the unpopular food.

- What food do you receive back in food drives?
- What food do you find in trash containers outside the pantry?
- What food do you have problems giving out?

Determining the amount of food to distribute

There are many different ways to determine how much of each food item to give clients in your distribution. Client choice pantries often use a guide to show clients how much food they can take. You can use the guidelines discussed in this section or create your own guidelines.

THE RAINBOW OF CHOICE FOOD GUIDE

You can use the Food Guide Pyramid, now called MyPyramid (www.mypyramid.gov) as a guideline for distributing food. The pyramid is divided into the following groups: Grains, Vegetables, Fruits, Dairy, and Proteins. The guide also lists extra foods that don't fit neatly in any of the 5 food groups. (See Page 12)

The table shows that each household can choose a set number of items from each food group based on household size. For example, a 3-person household can choose 7 items from the vegetable group.

Rainbow of Choice Guide for a 3-Day Food Pantry Package

Food pantry clients can choose a number of items in each food group based on the number of persons in their household. Examples of foods are given for each group.

Food Group	One item or choice equals	Number of people in household							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Grains 9 servings per person per day	Rice, 16oz Pasta, 16 oz Cereal, 15 -20 oz Oatmeal, 18 oz 1 loaf of bread	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Vegetables 5 servings per person per day	Fresh vegetable, 1 bag or bunch Canned vegetable,16 oz Frozen vegetable, 16oz Spaghetti Sauce, 15 oz Instant Potatoes, 15 oz	3	6	7	9	11	12	13	14
Fruits 4 servings per person per day	Fresh fruit, 1 bag Dried fruit, 15 oz Canned fruit, 15 oz Fruit juice, 46 oz	3	6	7	9	11	12	13	14
Dairy 3 servings per person per day	Fluid Milk, 32 oz (1 quart) Dry Milk, 25 oz Ricotta Cheese, 16 oz 4 Yogurts, 6oz each Mozzarella Cheese, 8 oz	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Meat & Non-meat Proteins 2 servings per person per day	Peanut butter, 18 oz Eggs, 1 dozen Frozen meat, 16 oz Tuna, 6 oz Canned beans/meat, 15 oz	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Other Foods	Soup, 15 oz Macaroni & cheese, 1 box Meal in a box, 1 box	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Fats &Oils	Margarine, 16 oz Vegetable oil, 48 oz	0-1	0-1	0-1	0-1	0-1	1-2	1-2	1-2
Sweets	Jelly, 18 oz Pancake syrup, 24 oz	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2

FOOD CARDS

Agencies evaluate their pre-packed boxes and translate onto cards the amount and type of food traditionally given. Clients are given cards that correspond to the size of their family and the amount of each item they can take. The card is then turned in to the "check-out" attendant, who then transfers the items to another cart or bags. Instead of turning the card into a check-out counter, a volunteer can also shop with the client and bag their groceries as they walk through the pantry. Volunteers may also need to assist clients to their car with the groceries.

What you need to get started:
- Food cards with the items that clients can select based on family size.
- Trained volunteers who assist clients when they are walking through the pantry.
- OR Check out area where volunteers sack the groceries of the items pulled by the client.

FOOD (Red 1-3 in Family)

Quantity Allowed/When Available
1 Box Cereal
1 Carton Milk (fresh or dried)
1 Dozen Eggs
4 Cans Vegetable (your choice)
1 Bag of Rice
1 Bag of Pasta (Spaghetti or other)
1 Fresh Meat
1 Can Meat
1 Can Soup or Stew
1 Pkg. Dried Potatoes
1 Pkg. Dried Beans or Peas
2 Cans Fruit
1 Can Fruit Juice

FOOD (Blue 4-6 in Family)

Quantity Allowed/When Available
2 Boxes Cereal
1 Carton Milk (fresh or dried)
1 Dozen Eggs
8 Cans Vegetable (your choice)
1 Bag of Rice
1 Bag of Pasta (Spaghetti or other)
2 lbs. Fresh Meat
2 Can Meat
2 Can Soup or Stew
1 Pkg. Dried Potatoes
1 Pkg. Dried Beans or Peas
3 Cans Fruit
1 Can Fruit Juice

FOOD (Yellow 7-10 in Family)

Quantity Allowed/When Available
3 Boxes Cereal
1 Carton Milk (fresh or dried)
2 Dozen Eggs
10 Cans Vegetable (your choice)
2 Bags of Rice
2 Bags of Pasta (Spaghetti or other)
2 lbs. Dried Beans or Peas
3 Can Meat
3 lbs. Fresh Meat
3 Can Soup or Stew
1 Pkg. Dried Potatoes
5 Cans Fruit
3 Can Fruit Juice

FOOD (Green 10+ in Family)

Quantity Allowed/When Available
3 Boxes Cereal
1 Carton Milk (fresh or dried)
2 Dozen Eggs
12 Cans Vegetable (your choice)
2 Bags of Rice
2 Bags of Pasta (Spaghetti or other)
2 lbs. Dried Beans or Peas
3 Can Meat
3 lbs. Fresh Meat
4 Can Soup or Stew
2 Pkg. Dried Potatoes
5 Cans Fruit
4 Can Fruit Juice

THE POINT SYSTEM

The Point System is based on how much each item would cost if purchased at a typical grocery store. The pantry first devises cost ranges and then develops point values for each range. Each item is assigned a point value. The client or family is allotted a certain number of total points to "spend" on that pantry visit. The total point allotment per client or family is determined by the pantry, depending on supply, demand, and size of household.

Foods that cost this much:	Receive this many points:	And are coded with a sticker of this color:
$.01-$1.00	1 point	Red Sticker
$1.01- $2.00	2 points	Blue Sticker
$2.01- $3.00	3 points	Yellow Sticker
$3.01- $4.00	4 points	Green sticker
$4.01 +	5 points	Orange sticker

Then a total dollar amount for each family is determined by pricing a food box that would have been distributed to each family according to family size. If a regular box of bagged food had a value of $40.00, then the family would be able to spend 40 points in the pantry.

The point values may vary a little on products such as over-the-counter medicines or personal care products that would be very expensive to buy. Some pantries label these products as 1-point items, but set a limit of three, for example, to make sure the bulk of points goes toward food.

It is important to note that you may need to provide a calculator for each shopper.

The Worker

Volunteer Hours

Converting to a client choice pantry does not necessarily mean that you will need more volunteers. Instead, the jobs that are performed by your volunteers will change. Overall, the role of the volunteer will likely evolve from having little or no interaction with the client to being a fully interactive, conversational, and supportive role.

The main job that will be eliminated in the switch is the job of pre-packing the bags or boxes. Client choice can even give you the opportunity to expand your hours of operation because you can now spread out your volunteers.

Let's say your pantry is open one day a week for clients. Below is a comparison of volunteer time spent at a traditional pantry weighed against a client choice pantry.

	Volunteer Slots 8 am - 12 pm	Volunteer Slots 12 pm - 4 pm	Volunteer Slots 4 pm - 6 pm	Total volunteer hours per day
In a Traditional Pantry	**2** volunteers to pre-make boxes **3** volunteers to distribute boxes (20 vol. hours)	**2** volunteers to pre-make boxes **3** volunteers to distribute boxes (20 vol. hours)	None	20 + 20 = **40**
In a Client Choice Pantry	**4** volunteers to help clients shop for food (16 vol. hours)	**4** volunteers to help clients shop for food (16 vol. hours)	**4** volunteers to help clients shop for food (8 vol. hours)	16 + 16 + 8 = **40**

Volunteer Job Descriptions

People volunteer for organizations they perceive as worthwhile. They want to know that their contribution will make a difference. They also tend to volunteer for organizations that promote a particular cause or are active in particular areas, such as feeding the hungry.

ONLINE VOLUNTEER RESOURCES:
• www.handsonetwork.org
• http://www.idealist.org/info/VolunteerMgmt
• http://www.energizeinc.com/

Your staff and volunteer roles may need to be modified to fit the needs of your pantry. It is important that you have job descriptions for each role at your pantry, so that your volunteers know what to expect.

Below are sample volunteer roles for a client choice pantry. You may modify the descriptions to fit the needs of the pantry. You may want to include the following information in the description: expectation of the job, day of the week the job is performed, amount of time that is needed for the job and physical or skill requirements.

SHELF STOCKER - The main duty for this volunteer position is to stock pantry shelves the day before the food pantry is open for business. Part of the shelf stocker's job may also be to repackage bulk food items such as beans, rice, flour, sugar, etc.

CLIENT CHECK-IN - This person welcomes the food pantry clients when they arrive, and assist the client in filling out our intake forms. The volunteer also reviews the client choice model with the client.

CLIENT SHOPPER - This person walks through the pantry with the client and may assist them with selecting the food. The volunteer may also carry or push the basket for the client. The client shopper may also take the opportunity to educate the client on choosing healthy foods.

FOOD PANTRY SHOPPER - Using the food choice form or list, the volunteer will fill the client's shopping bags based on the food that the client selected on the form.

CHECK-OUT/BOXER - These positions work hand-in-hand with our clients making sure that they get the food they need to build nutritious meals at home. Once the clients have selected their food a boxer checks their food with the list and packs their food in boxes.
> Requirements:
> • Ability to lift a maximum of 40-lbs.
> • Ability to stand, bend and twist consistently for up to 3 hrs at a time.
> • Ability to communicate effectively and positively with clients, fellow volunteers, and staff.
> • Must use safe practices when lifting and bending.
> • Ability to accurately follow Food Boxing Guidelines form which assists boxers in determining quantities for each family.

OPTIONS FOR RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

• Using current volunteers—they are convincing salespeople, because they are committed to your cause and believe in your organization

• Using the mass media (e.g., television, radio,newspapers, billboards), as well as neighborhood newspapers, newsletters, and organizational bulletins

• Making announcements at services, educational sessions, meetings, and social gatherings of your congregation or organization

• Posting volunteer opportunities on appropriate Web sites

• Making personal appearances at schools, senior centers, career fairs, and other venues or events

• Using mailings, from mass mailings to personalized, handwritten notes

• Getting referrals from staff, ministers, friends, and lay leaders, such as deacons

• Registering with volunteer referral organizations

• Coordinating with schools that require community service hours for graduation

• Asking people to volunteer—most people volunteer because they are asked

Layout

Space

Often the biggest concern of traditional pantries considering conversion is that there is not enough space to implement and operate a client choice pantry efficiently. But with a little planning, all pantry layouts can be converted to client choice.

ONLINE EQUIPMENT RESOURCES:
• http://www.uline.com
  Uline, a family-owned business, is the leading distributor of shipping, industrial and packaging materials to businesses throughout North America.
• www.sterilite.com
  You can also buy Sterilite products on Amazon, Wal-Mart, Sam's Club and Target.

OPTIONS FOR SPACE

1. Clients will be able to walk through the pantry and select the food.
2. Clients cannot walk through pantry and volunteers will select food based on preference shared by the client.

LOGISTICAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN THINKING ABOUT SPACE

• Is food logically grouped so that clients and volunteers can find and select food easily?
• Are shelves arranged to provide a "route" for your clients and/or volunteers to procure the food?
• Do you want to pack the food in boxes or sacks?
• Who will pack the food for the clients?
• How will clients know how much food they can receive?
• How many clients do you usually have at your pantry at a time? Where can they sit and wait to be helped?

Equipment

Equipment can be extremely helpful in creating a useable and functional pantry.

Here are some tips for equipment:

SHELVES

• Convert the shelves you have been using for storage for use in the client choice pantry.

• Talk with your high school shop program about building additional shelving for your pantry.

• See if a Boy Scout or Girl Scout troop could build additional shelving for your pantry.

CARTS/BASKETS

• Ask your local grocery store to donate a few baskets or carts.

• Purchase a basket or cart. Baskets and carts are less expensive than you may think. For example, the shopping cart to the left can be purchased at Wal-Mart online for $20. (Whitmor 6307-1729 BLK Rolling Utility Cart)

NOTE: If you are concerned about how to store future bulk food purchases if you convert storage space to client browsing space, remember that the client choice model will enable your pantry to efficiently track which items are more popular among clients, as opposed to the traditional box method where every client received the same items. You can use this information when placing future orders, thus reducing the space occupied by certain bulk foods that you may discover your patrons do not prefer when they are given a choice.

Motivation

Change is never easy. Your volunteers, who have have worked tirelessly for years packing sacks, may not want their routine changed. Your job will not only include educating your volunteers on client choice, but also incorporating them into the new system.

TIPS FOR GETTING VOLUNTEERS, EMPLOYEES AND BOARD MEMBERS EXCITED ABOUT CLIENT CHOICE

1. Have a potluck dinner where you explain the client choice model and discuss the benefits and answer questions from your stakeholders.

2. Set up a small client choice pantry for your stakeholders and walk through the process with them.

3. Create a client choice pantry committee that includes stakeholders from your volunteers, staff and donors. This committee will oversee the startup and promotion of the client choice pantry.

WHAT REGIONAL FOOD BANK OF OKLAHOMA PARTNER AGENCIES ARE SAYING ABOUT CLIENT CHOICE

"We have always let people have a choice. By giving clients a choice, you actually have more food to give to other clients. Clients won't take food that they have or do not eat."

*   **Gene Barnes**,*
*   Mission Norman Director*

"We made the switch to client choice after attending the training at the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma. Our volunteers love the switch to client choice. It is less strenuous work on our volunteers, and our volunteers enjoy having more interaction with the clients."

*   **Linda Wells**,*
*   Cleveland Community*
*   Food Pantry*

"We save a lot of time because we can get a lot more volunteers in the store to stock, and no one has to do all the lifting or spend half a day getting it done."

*   **Pat Vandeveer**,*
*   Loaves & Fishes, Calvin*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following client choice resources contributed to materials in this workbook.

Indiana's Food for the Hungry - Client Choice Manual
   http://www.cfs.purdue.edu/safefood/clientchoice.asp

Foodlink , Rochester New York - On Your Way to Offering Client Choice
   http://www.foodlinkny.org/pdfs/Handbook_Client_Choice.pdf

Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food Banks -
Making the Switch: A Guide for Converting to a Client Choice Pantry
   http://www.oashf.org/docs/publications/ChoicePantryGuide.pdf

North Texas Food Bank - Client Choice Pantry PowerPoint presentation, April 2011

Photos courtesy of Feeding America; Society of St. Vincent De Paul, Atlanta, GA;
First Baptist Church, Painted Post, NY

REGIONAL FOOD BANK
O F   O K L A H O M A ®

APPENDIX AND EXERCISES

Client Choice Food Pantry Checklist

Are you ready to convert to client choice? Check the list below to make sure you are prepared.

☐ I believe clients benefit from selecting their own food in a pantry.

☐ I am willing to discuss making changes with my staff and volunteers.

☐ My staff and volunteers will work with me to put client choice into action at my pantry.

☐ I have an idea which client choice model would best fit my pantry's space.

☐ I can get, or I already have, the supplies I will need to put client choice into action.

☐ I am willing to contact the Regional Food Bank to discuss ways to put client choice into action.

TIPS FOR YOUR CLIENT CHOICE FOOD PANTRY:

☐ Client choice is about choosing from available food even if the variety of items is small.

☐ Allow pantry customers to choose food from your inventory.

☐ Aim for a variety and balance of foods from each of the food groups.

☐ Arrange pantry shelves or tables according to the food groups. This can help pantry customers make better and more balanced food choices.

☐ Rotate your stock. Use the FIFO system – First In First Out.

☐ Be generous with fresh fruits and vegetables.

☐ Offer whole grains (whole-wheat bread, brown rice, oatmeal) as much as possible.

☐ Provide lean protein options such as tuna, beans, and venison.

☐ Keep low-fat dairy products handy (non-fat dry milk, 1% fresh or shelf stable fluid milk, non-fat or reduced fat cheese, yogurt).

☐ Hand out recipes from the Regional Food Bank and other sources.

☐ Invite Cooperative Extension to bring samples of food with pantry ingredients for recipients to taste.

☐ Make a place for crackers, cookies, pastries, and other goodies. Your customers will enjoy the special treats.

Evaluate Your Inventory

Evaluation of Exhisting Inventory Resources			Recommendation for Future Inventory Resources		
Estimate the types, amount and source of foods you have on hand during a typical distribution.			Estimate the types, amount and source of foods you would like to have on hand during a typical distribution.		
Grains - Item Description	**Amount**	**Source**	**Grains - Item Description**	**Amount**	**Source**
Vegetables - Item Description	**Amount**	**Source**	**Vegetables - Item Description**	**Amount**	**Source**
Fruits - Item Description	**Amount**	**Source**	**Fruits - Item Description**	**Amount**	**Source**
Dairy - Item Description	**Amount**	**Source**	**Dairy - Item Description**	**Amount**	**Source**
Meats/Protein - Item Description	**Amount**	**Source**	**Meats/Protein - Item Description**	**Amount**	**Source**
Combination foods - Item Desc	**Amount**	**Source**	**Combination foods - Item Desc**	**Amount**	**Source**
Sweets - Item Description	**Amount**	**Source**	**Sweets - Item Description**	**Amount**	**Source**
Miscellaneous - Item Description	**Amount**	**Source**	**Miscellaneous - Item Description**	**Amount**	**Source**

Evaluate Your Volunteer Base		
Total Number of Volunteers:		

Volunteer activities: What do your volunteers do?		
Job Description	**Number of volunteers for this job**	**Average hours each volunteer works a week / month**

Volunteer Profile:			
How many volunteers do you have in each age range?		What percentage of volunteers are available during these hours?	
Youth/College		Morning	
Young Adult		Afternoon	
Middle Adult		Evening	
Senior Adult		Weekdays	
		Weekends	

Volunteer Sources:		
What sources do you have for volunteers?		
Source	Percentage of total volunteers	
Notes:		

Evaluate Your Current Space	
Square footage	What is your total available square footage?
Freezer Space	How much freezer space do you have available?
	Where is the freezer located?
Refrigerator space	How much refrigerator space do you have available?
	Where is the refrigerator located?
Shelving	How many linear feet of shelving do you have available?
Equipment	What equipment do you have available to move food around with the client? (shopping carts, shopping baskets, or other rolling carts)
Draw the layout of your current food pantry below.	
Notes:	