



School Pantry Program

Best Practices

Here are a few tips for what some schools are doing to reach students. If you have any questions about any of the listed procedures, please let us know.

Distribution:

- We pack sacks and put the bags in participating students' lockers.
- Students are given a survey of a list of food items. They identify what they like from the various categories. They are encouraged to try new items and report back what they liked and disliked about them. The bags are prepared and distributed on Fridays.
- Students come to the pantry at a convenient time for them. They bag products of their choice and place in a secure place until they are ready to go home.
- Students are confidentially called to the counselor's office. They bring their own backpacks and the food sacks are placed inside of them.
- They come in after school on Friday's and load their shopping cart. The parent drives around to load the car.
- We have a designated room at our school that houses the food pantry. Students are to go there on Fridays during the last part of their lunch time and pick out their food.
- The bags are pre-packaged for our students. All they have to do is come by the counselor's office after school on Friday and pick up their number located on the bag.
- We bag the food the day before students come, except for the frozen food, which is done about 20 minutes before they come. They pick up their bag at the end of the day on Thursday. Anyone that misses Thursday comes on Friday.

Spreading the word:

- All students are aware of the hours and operations of the pantry by making school announcements, displaying posters/ flyers, and putting the Regional Food Bank partner sign in the front office.
- Students know how they can self-refer to receive food. They are aware of who the coordinator is and can ask to be placed on the program.
- Staff may still write referrals for students. We send information about our pantry to all teachers through emails and sometimes allot a few minutes to talk about the program at staff meetings.
- We contact backpack coordinators at our feeder schools to see which kids on their program may have siblings at our school.
- We remind students who have been referred to the program through REMIND101, which sends them a one-way text message reminding them to pick up their food or of any changes to pantry hours for the week. This especially comes in handy if there are

any anticipated weather related school closings. It is a secure system that students can opt-out of at any time.