



Partner Agency Manual

Our Mission

Lead a network that provides nutritious food and pathways to self-sufficiency for people facing hunger.

Our Vision

An Oklahoma where no one goes hungry.

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Section I: About the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma

About Us

The Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, a member of the Feeding America nationwide network of food banks, is one of two food banks in Oklahoma. We work to address not only the immediate needs of hungry Oklahomans, but also the underlying causes of hunger. We envision a hunger-free Oklahoma, where everyone has access to food, regardless of circumstance.

Oklahoma is consistently among the top 7 hungriest states in the nation. Working together, we can make a difference. Ending hunger is a shared responsibility and will take many partners, organizations, and agencies working together. The majority of people served are chronically hungry children, seniors living on fixed incomes, and hardworking families who cannot make ends meet.

Our History

On May 15, 1980, the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma (formerly known as the Oklahoma City Food Bank) became the 21st member food bank in the Feeding America network and the first in the region. A 10,000-square-foot warehouse at 200 S.W. 5th Street was secured as the first distribution facility.

In 1981, the Good Faith Donor Bill passed the Oklahoma Legislature, relieving donors of liability for donations made in good faith, and the Regional Food Bank moved into a 14,000-square-foot warehouse at 8 NW 8th in Oklahoma City. Then, in 1987, we purchased a 37,000-square-foot warehouse at 30 SE 17th Street where distribution remained until May of 2000.

In 2000, the distribution was moved to the newly constructed Donald W. Reynolds Distribution Center at 3355 S. Purdue. An expansion of the current site in 2009 added additional warehouse, freezer, dock and volunteer space - increasing the total size of the current facility to nearly 200,000 square-feet.

In its first year of operation, the Regional Food Bank distributed 280,000 pounds of food, which is now distributed every two days. Since its inception in 1980, the Regional Food Bank has distributed more than 467 million meals to Oklahomans in need of food.

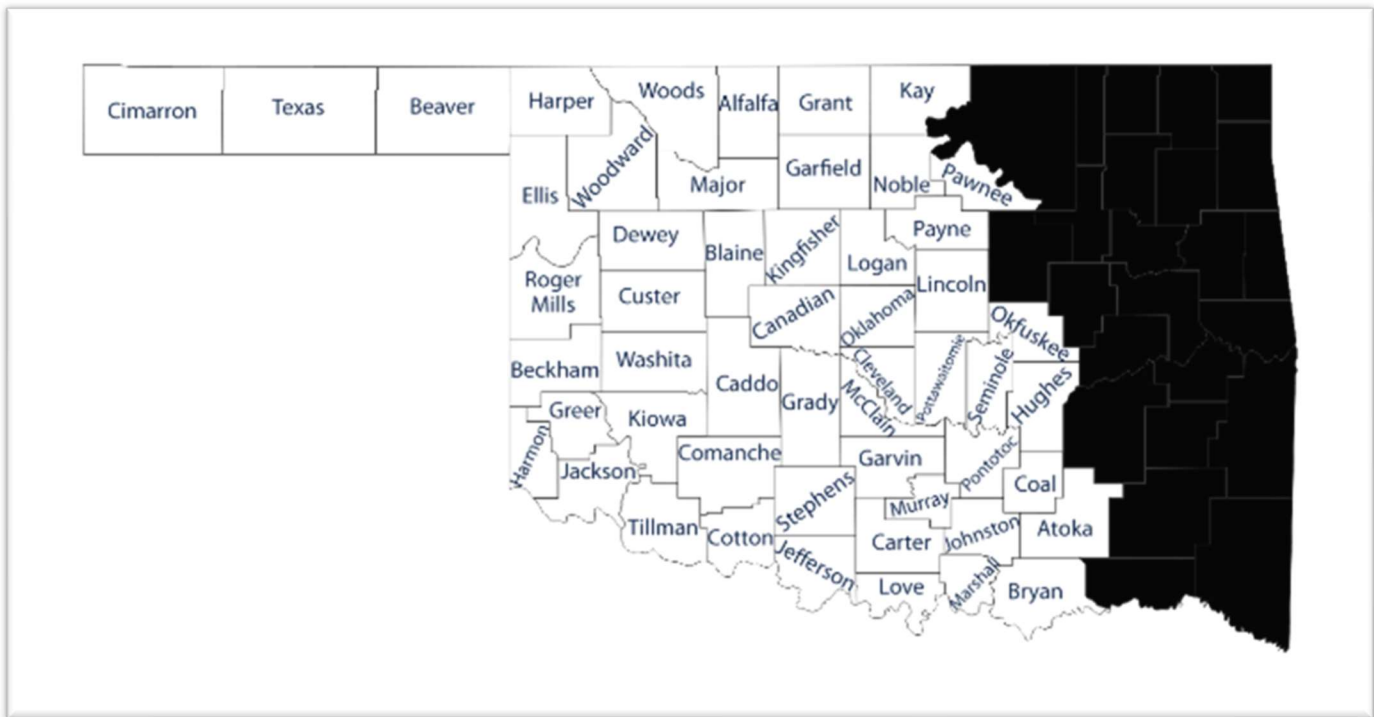
Why Partner with the Regional Food Bank?

1. NO membership fee – there is no fee to become a partner agency
2. Choose the items YOU WANT – choose from hundreds of items on our shopping list
3. Reliable quality & variety
4. Produce, bread & community food drive items at no cost, when available
5. Low handling fees
6. Delivery to local area locations throughout our 53-county service area (NO delivery fees)
7. Food safety standards and resources – decreasing liability and protecting clients
8. Network with hunger relief peers at Partner Agency Conference and Regional Hunger Fighter

Our Service Area

We provide food to 53 counties in central and western Oklahoma, covering 48,000 square miles. In fiscal year 2020, the Regional Food Bank provided more than 47 million meals through a network of 1,300 partner agencies, charitable feeding programs, and schools.

Agencies like yours are the front line between health and happiness versus hunger and despair. Your organization can depend on us to help obtain food and provide the support needed to strengthen your mission.



Communication on Changes

Partner agencies agree to keep the Regional Food Bank aware of any changes, as listed below. Additionally, agencies agree to only distribute food received from the Regional Food Bank for the approved programs associated with the Regional Food Bank.

- **Additional Programs:** If you wish to use Regional Food Bank product for any other program besides the specific program you have been approved for, **you must get prior written approval from the Regional Food Bank**. Requests for approval for other programs will go through the Partnership Application process.
- **Location Changes or other Changes:** Your agency will be approved to store and distribute, or prepare and serve, food from the Regional Food Bank only at the specific location that has been approved by the Regional Food Bank staff. **If you need to change your location you must notify the Regional Food Bank**. A new site visit must be made before you can be authorized to store or distribute or serve food (or other Regional Food Bank products) from a different location. The same holds true if you are moving into a new facility. Please contact the Regional Food Bank for further instructions.
- **Changes to Program Director, Senior Faith Leader, or Shoppers:** You must notify the Regional Food Bank any time changes need to be made to our records for your agency. For example, changes in program director/senior faith leader, shoppers, and/or agency phone number, service area, days and hours of operation.

Section II: How Food Insecurity is Calculated

Food insecurity exists in every county and congressional district in the country. Not everyone experiencing hunger qualifies for federal nutrition assistance. To view hunger statistics in your county, the three data sources listed below provided a well-rounded look at how food insecurity is calculated.

Map the Meal Gap

Access [Map the Meal Gap Interactive Map](#) for a closer look at your county's food insecurity data.

1. Map the Meal Gap generates two types of community-level data:
 - County-level food insecurity and child food insecurity estimates by income categories and
 - An estimate of the food budget shortfall that food insecure individuals report they experience
2. The following provides additional information included in the methodology; a technical brief is also available for those interested in greater detail about the methods and data of Map the Meal Gap:
 - Food insecurity rate
 - Food-budget shortfall
 - Cost-of-food index
 - National average meal cost

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps)

When we hit tough times most of us are lucky enough to have parents, siblings, friends and neighbors who can help us through. Your food pantry does this work every day, giving of yourselves to help friends and neighbors in need.

Sometimes, even with a job that help is not enough. SNAP benefits help to bridge that gap, providing the benefits for eligible families to purchase their own food, which helps to ensure that your food pantry has enough food for those who don't qualify for benefits.

SNAP benefits, in conjunction with food banks, community groups, churches and volunteer organizations like yours, collectively help strengthen communities by providing the fuel and nutrition people need to begin the work toward turning their lives around.

To learn more about how you can partner with Regional Food Bank to provide SNAP application assistance, visit: <https://www.regionalfoodbank.org/partner-agency-resources/capacity-building-resources/>.

Meals per Person in Need (MPIN)

Through our membership with Feeding America, we have access to their food insecurity research and data. Specifically, Feeding America uses Meals per Person in Need (MPIN) to determine the county-level compliance for equitable distribution of food for its member food banks. The Regional Food Bank uses the reports to determine how to allocate resources and prioritize outreach efforts in our service area. MPIN refines our definition of how we measure service, more closely aligning with food insecure populations.

Feeding America establishes an area median for distribution, which is currently 97.48 meals per person in need in each county. The percentage tells us how far above or below we are of that goal. A food bank's service area may be declared inadequately served if the member does not provide at least fifty percent (50%) of the network service area median of Meals per Person in Need (MPIN) in each county of the service area.

Each quarter, the MPIN report analyzes information including the number of food insecure individuals and the number of meals distributed in each county to illustrate the level of assistance provided and where

more improvements can be made. The number of Food Insecure Persons is derived from Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap data. A county is deemed compliant if the number of meals distributed there is 50% of the Service Area Median MPIN (48.74 meals per person in need) or higher. If the county is compliant, the color code will be Green. Non-compliant counties will be color coded Red.

MPIN COUNTY-LEVEL COMPLIANCE INDICATOR REPORT
for the four quarter period ending Q2 2015

	Shared	Percent	Total Pounds Distributed to County	Nonfood and Water Pounds Removed	USDA Pounds from Other Members	Donated and Purchased Pounds from Other Members	Total Meals Converted from Pounds	TEFAP Augment per capita	SNAP Apps	SNAP Meals from Apps	GRAND TOTAL MEALS (pounds and SNAP)	2013 Food Insecure Persons	County MPIN	Percent of Network Median	Extenuating Circumstances	Compliance Status	
								TEFAP Meal Augment									
County XXX	No	100 %	1,963,020	41,947	4	2	1,600,894	0.00	0	0	1,600,894	49,470	32.4	44.7 %		Red	
County XXX	No	100 %	6,723,289	143,668	0	0	5,483,018	0.00	0	2,108	1,153,974	6,636,991	87,720	75.7	104.6 %		Green
County XXX	No	100 %	225,558	4,820	0	0	183,948	0.00	0	0	183,948	12,340	14.9	20.6 %		Red	
County XXX	No	100 %	232,767	4,974	0	0	189,828	0.00	0	0	189,828	2,910	65.2	90.2 %		Green	
County XXX	No	100 %	247,308	5,285	0	0	201,686	0.00	0	0	201,686	2,890	69.8	96.5 %		Green	
County XXX	No	100 %	32,042	685	0	0	26,131	0.00	0	0	26,131	3,010	8.7	12.0 %		Red	
County XXX	No	100 %	429,187	9,171	0	0	350,013	0.00	0	0	350,013	1,400	250.0	345.7 %		Green	
County XXX	No	100 %	3,588,904	76,690	0	0	2,926,845	0.00	0	0	2,926,845	45,740	64.0	88.5 %		Green	
County XXX	No	100 %	444,825	9,505	0	0	362,766	0.00	0	0	362,766	7,250	50.0	69.2 %		Green	

Section III: Protecting our Food Partners – The Good Samaritan Act

To encourage companies and organizations to donate healthy food that would otherwise go to waste, they are protected from criminal and civil liability under the Good Samaritan Food Donation Act.

A. The Federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act

On October 1, 1996, President Clinton signed into effect this act to encourage donation of food and grocery products to non-profit organizations for distribution to individuals in need.

This law:

- Protects you from liability when you donate to a non-profit organization
- Protects you from civil and criminal liability should the product donated in good faith later cause harm to the recipient
- Standardizes donor liability exposure. You or your legal counsel do not need to investigate liability laws in 50 states
- Sets a floor of "gross negligence" or intentional misconduct for persons who donate grocery products. According to the new law, gross negligence is defined as "voluntary and conscious conduct by a person with knowledge (at the time of conduct) that the conduct is likely to be harmful to the health or well-being of another person"

For more information, visit:

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/42/1791>

<http://www.feedingamerica.org/ways-to-give>

It is the policy of the Regional Food Bank to comply with the Good Samaritan Food Donation Act. Compliance with the Act is a shared responsibility of each Regional Food Bank employee, partner agency, volunteer, and visitor. While every attempt is made to screen and check food items donated to the Regional Food Bank, unfortunately, it is not always possible. With an average of 30,000 cases of product in our warehouse at any given time, we do our best to sort food for quality and safe consumption but can't always inspect every box or item. Thus, we strongly encourage you to double check items as you unload at your agency. Your assistance to ensure that all food items are wholesome and fit for distribution is essential.

For more information on food safety, visit:

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/foodkeeperapp/index.html>

Section IV: Protecting our Clients

Treating Clients with Respect

The Regional Food Bank requires all partner agencies to treat clients with respect, acceptance, courtesy, and the personal acknowledgment they deserve; and to follow Civil Rights regulations (Non-Discrimination Statement). To view the USDA's non-discrimination statement, visit this link: <https://www.usda.gov/non-discrimination-statement>.

Partner agencies may not deny anyone access to food products based on race, color, citizenship, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, family or parental status, disability, sexual orientation including gender identity, unfavorable discharge from the military or status as a protected veteran, or political viewpoints and other ideologies.

Many of our partner agencies are located in and/or sponsored by faith-based organizations. Please recognize and ensure religious activities DO NOT:

- Discriminate against clients based on faith or religious belief
- Require or request clients to attend a meeting or services (religious or not) or request participation in any religious activity (i.e., prayer, religious instruction)
- Ask questions pertaining to religious affiliation or beliefs on the client intake form

If you have any questions on activities, and what is and is not allowable, please contact your Community Connections Manager.

Ensuring Food Safety for Clients

Each partner agency is held to the utmost food safety guidelines. This includes ensuring that food is stored in appropriate temperature ranges and is protected from contamination, pests, and theft. Prior to partnership approval, and thereafter approval, agency sites are inspected and then visited a minimum of once every two years.

In keeping with consistent food safety guidelines outlined in the partnership agreement:

- partner agencies **MAY NOT REPACKAGE ANY** food items at their facilities – unless prior approval has been given and passed inspection by the local/state Health Department
- partner agencies may not charge or be perceived as charging for any of the product received from the Regional Food Bank
- partner agencies will ensure the safe and proper handling of food, to conform with all local, state, and federal regulations
- all product received by the Regional Food Bank **MUST BE** used at the food distribution program; it cannot be removed for personal or private use
- partner agencies may not sell, exchange, trade or barter product received from the Regional Food Bank for events such as fundraisers or church dinners

Section V: Ordering from the Regional Food Bank

Online Ordering via Agency Express

To receive packaged food and grocery items from the Regional Food Bank, partner agencies must place orders through our Agency Express online ordering system. A username, password, and program number will be provided to you once approved. The Agency Express online ordering system can be found by typing <https://www.agencyexpress3.org/AgencyExpress30/NewLogin.aspx> into your internet web browser. We recommend bookmarking this web address in your internet's "favorites" settings, to allow for quick and easy access. This system is available on the internet 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Partner Agency Resources Home Screen

the [Partner Agency Resources tab](#), you will find printable versions of current forms and other useful resources to keep you up to date on current policies and procedures. Detailed user manuals for ordering are found in the "Partner Portal" with a login password of "Change12" - including accessing a digital tutorial of the "Agency Express 3.0 Quick Start Guide."

Agency Express Shopping List

After you are logged on to the Agency Express shopping system, you can browse the available items by going to "Order Options" and selecting "Shopping List" from the drop-down menu. All items on the shopping list are available in **CASE** quantities. Each item will show the item number, description of the product, unit price (cost for a case of the product), and pack size. A new special feature that is available for both Purchased and USDA items is a nutrition color coding (Green – healthy, Yellow – somewhat healthy, Red – not healthy).

- **Choose Often** = foods that are low in saturated fat, sodium and sugar, which is classified as a nutritional and healthy diet.
- **Choose Sometimes** = foods that have medium levels of saturated fat, sodium, and sugar, which is classified as (just okay) not quite a healthy or unhealthy diet.
- **Choose Rarely** = foods that have high levels of saturated fat, sodium and sugar, which is classified as an unhealthy diet.

When placing your order, be cognizant of the amount of space your facility has when ordering, be sure not to order more frozen or refrigerated product than you can store.

On the shopping list, there are different types of products available:

- **Donated** – Item numbers that start with # 1 or # 2 -The Unit Price you see will be the total handling fee for 1 case of that item.
- **Mixed Sorted Items** – Item numbers that start with # 4 – These are donated items that are packaged in boxes that contain a variety of items in one box. For example, if you order from the cereal category, you will get a case containing several varieties of cereal. These cases must be taken with the assortment in the box, we cannot change or substitute items.
- **Purchased** - Item numbers that start with # 3 - These are items that are purchased wholesale by the Regional Food Bank and offered at cost to assist our member agencies.
- **USDA Commodities** – Item numbers that start with U - Only approved emergency food pantries, homeless shelters, and soup kitchens will be able to order the USDA commodity foods.

Some other things you need to know about Agency Express:

- You can sort by Food Category type to easily search for the foods you need.
- As you select foods, be sure to hit "add to cart" before going to another page.
- Notice the pack size and quantity in a case, to ensure ordering items that are appropriate for your particular food program's needs (example: bulk or frozen products).
- Make sure to hit "submit" when you are completed with shopping, otherwise the order will not go through.
- First come, first served – All items are offered on a first come-first served basis to our agencies.

- Restricted Items – Occasionally you will see items noted for on-site feeding programs only at the Donors request. Food Pantries cannot order these items. These items are in bulk packaging and not congruent to distribute for household consumption (ex: one gallon can of beans).
- Fresh Produce is available at no-cost to agencies, when the Regional Food Bank has these items available. For the most part, these items cannot be ordered, but instead are placed on the trucks, as space and inventory allows, for agencies to share at the drop site. We ask that you portion out and take what you are able to distribute to clients – this should be based on number of households served, agency days/hours open, and cooler/freezer capacity.
- Inventory items change frequently; it is recommended that agencies check the inventory listing as early as possible.
- There is a chance that items you have ordered may not be available due to the lag time in the internet transmission and review process. When a Regional Food Bank staff member reviews your order, any unavailable products will show up on the order invoice with a zero quantity.

Product Descriptions

The software used within Agency Express only allows for a certain number of characters for a product's description. We attempt to do our best at providing a clear and concise description for each product, and we do realize the limitations of our system. We have provided below a list of key terms and their definitions to help you understand product descriptions.

- **Assorted/Assortment** – each case of the product includes a variety of brands, sizes, and possibly flavors, of the same type of product
- **Bulk** – the product is not individually packaged and is typically loose
- **Repack** – the product has been repackaged by Regional Food Bank staff and volunteers. Repack products may be considered a Value-Added-Product (VAP). VAP is explained in the Shared Maintenance portion of this section
- **100% Juice vs. Juice Cocktail/Drink/Beverage** – if a juice does not specifically state on its label that it is 100% it will be described as a cocktail, drink or beverage. Many child nutrition programs require 100% juice to be in compliance with dietary guidelines
- **#10 Can** – a large restaurant style canned good typically weighing between 6 – 7 pounds and is used by hot meal programs

Handling Fees & Shared Maintenance

The Regional Food Bank operates on a shared maintenance fee system. All items on Agency Express have a per pound handling fee of \$0.00 cents to \$0.19 cents per pound. This fee is **not** the cost of the food, it is a shared maintenance cost associated with acquiring, handling and distributing the product. There are no other dues or costs to the member. Per Feeding America standards, the shared maintenance fee cannot exceed \$0.19 per pound of product.

Perishable or fresh food items at the Regional Food Bank are normally set at a rate of \$0.00/lbs. Perishable items include bread, cakes, rolls, fresh produce and fruits, and many dairy products. Purchase/Best Buy Product is at listed cost.

Purchased products are normally a little higher than the normal fee range since the items are purchased at typical wholesale bulk-quantity prices. The fee on these items is based on the open market price and other costs incurred by the Regional Food Bank to make these products available.

VAP, or Value-Added-Products, are typically donated products, but may also be purchased items, that need to be repackaged into smaller more usable sizes. Repackaging may include new boxes, bags, bottles or other outer containers and new labeling. Additional costs are incurred by the Regional Food Bank when repackaging a product. These expenses are in addition to the shared maintenance fee of the product. For example, bulk cereal may be repackaged into smaller bags. The cost of the new bag and label may be \$0.03 per pound. In this case, the product's fee would be \$0.18 per pound plus an additional \$0.03 per pound, making the total fee to your agency \$0.21 per pound.

Placing Orders - Deadlines

- Your ordering window will open up 8 days before your scheduled delivery date
- Your order must be submitted 2 business days before the delivery, by 8:00 a.m.

For more information on online ordering, please contact the Help Desk (phone or text) at 405-600-3152 or email HelpDesk@rfbo.org.

Section VI: Deliveries

Depending on your agency's assigned partnership tier and our pre-determined transportation schedule and route, the Regional Food Bank will make deliveries either directly to your location or to a pre-determined regional delivery site. Along with your Agency Express login details, you will receive details on your ordering schedule and delivery location once your agency is approved. In addition to the below overview, we ask that you follow the Delivery Site Guidelines in the Partnership Agreement, for a smooth and efficient delivery experience.

Regional Delivery Sites

For agencies assigned a regional delivery site, the Regional Food Bank will deliver orders to a pre-determined location for multiple agencies to meet. Our goal with the regional delivery system is that no agency or individual needs to drive more than 45 minutes to receive their food order.

- Arrive on time for your scheduled appointment
- Be sure to bring a vehicle(s) large enough to hold all of your order in one trip
- You may also want to bring a large ice chest to hold refrigerated or frozen items
- Make sure you have someone to assist you with loading your items
- After your order has been loaded into your vehicle, you can have access to "no-cost" (produce and bread), if available on the truck
- Before you leave the delivery site, please help clean up – pieces of shrink wrap, pallets, or other trash – don't leave it for someone else to pick up
- Upon receiving your order, sign one copy of the bill of lading and give to the driver. A second copy is provided for your records
 - A final invoice will be emailed to the primary email address provided
- It is NOT necessary to check your items before signing the bill of lading. If you find items are missing or if you receive something that you did not order, contact the Help Desk (405-600-3152) within 3 business days to report the discrepancy

Direct Deliveries

For agencies assigned a direct delivery, the Regional Food Bank will deliver your order to your agency location.

- We will deliver to the closest door to your feeding program at the agency as possible
- We can take pallets inside with a pallet jack if:
 - There is a door at least 4 foot wide
 - An overhead door or double doors
- Upon receiving your order, sign one copy of the bill of lading and give to the driver. A second copy is provided for your records
 - A final invoice will be emailed to the primary email address provided
- It is NOT necessary to check your items before signing the bill of lading. If you find items are missing or if you receive something that you did not order, contact the Help Desk (405-600-3152) within 3 business days to report the discrepancy

Holiday Closures

The Regional Food Bank is closed on the following holidays:

January:	New Year's Day, MLK Day
May:	Memorial Day
June:	Closed 2 days at end of month for Inventory
July:	Independence Day
September:	Labor Day
November:	Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving
December:	Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve

Emergency Closures

In the event of a local emergency or severe weather situation, for the safety of our agencies, volunteers, and its staff, the Regional Food Bank may temporarily shut down operations.

If the Regional Food Bank should experience an unscheduled closure or some type of safety concern, our partner agencies will be notified in the following ways:

- The Regional Food Bank will use its automated messaging system to contact partner agencies
- A general message will be placed on the main phone line (405-972-1111) explaining the type of emergency and the expected duration of the emergency
- Updates will be placed on the Regional Food Bank's website and social media

Product Return Policy

Possible order discrepancies include missing items, incorrect items, and/or damaged items.

While the driver is still at the delivery site, if you find an item discrepancy on either dry or temperature-controlled items, please notify the driver and he will be able to return the product to the Regional Food Bank that same day. The driver will notify the Help Desk on your behalf, and the Help Desk will process an adjustment and a credit will be requested before your final invoice is sent out. The Regional Food Bank will not process any returns or credits on Temperature Controlled items once the driver has left the delivery site.

If you find an item discrepancy with a dry item after the driver has left the delivery site, please contact the Help Desk within 3 business days of your delivery to report the discrepancy to be eligible for a credit.

To receive a credit, the product must be returned in the condition in which it was received, no exceptions.

Section VII: Invoices, Statements, and Payment

When your agency's food order is delivered, the driver will have two copies of the Bill of Lading available - one copy is signed for our records, and the other copy will be given to you. Following the delivery, you will also be emailed an electronic copy of the invoice.

Invoice payments are due 30 days from the date of the invoice. Accounts can be paid by using church/organization check or church/organization credit card, not by personal check or cash. Please make checks payable to Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma. Please include both your agency number and invoice number when submitting your payments. Agencies must mail in payments to the Regional Food Bank; our drivers cannot collect payments. Checks returned for insufficient funds will be charged \$25.00 per check to the partner account.

Mail all payments to:
Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma
P.O. Box 268984
Oklahoma City, OK 73137

Statements are emailed near the 10th day of every month. Statements are sent to each agency's designated billing contact, itemizing your account's open balances. An open balance is an invoice that has not been paid. Statements provide reference/invoice numbers with corresponding dates of orders an agency has received. Failure to pay invoices in a timely manner may subject your agency to being placed on hold until it is paid.

Section VIII: Product Recalls

When a recall has been issued on any product, the Regional Food Bank receives a notification. Each product recall will have a numerical designation, i.e. I, II, III, assigned by the regulatory agency to a particular product recall that indicates the relative degree of health hazard presented by the product being recalled.

- **Class I Recall** – Situation where there is a strong likelihood that the use of, or exposure to, an adulterated or misbranded product will cause serious, adverse health consequences or death
- **Class II Recall** – Situation in which the use of, or exposure to an adulterated or misbranded product may cause temporary or medically reversible adverse health consequences or where the probability of serious adverse health consequences is remote
- **Class III Recall** – Situation in which the use of, or exposure to, an adulterated or misbranded product is not likely to cause adverse health consequences

It is our process to thoroughly review all recall specifications to determine whether the recalled product is on our inventory list, or if it has been distributed throughout our service area. If it is determined that a recalled item is in our warehouse, the Regional Food Bank immediately places any remaining product on hold to prevent further ordering. Recalled items will be pulled from all existing orders if they are still in our warehouse.

Partner agencies will be notified immediately when recalls are issued. Recall notification emails are sent to the primary contact of all partner agencies who have supplied a valid email address. Additionally, you may sign up for emails concerning recalls at www.foodsafety.gov

Your agency should be prepared to handle a food recall or food safety issue. Please make sure that everyone at your organization knows the following steps to take:

1. Print out the recall email notification
2. Review your inventory for recalled products.
 - *Name of manufacturer and/or brand name*
 - *Packaging Size*
 - *Serial and/or Lot numbers*
 - *Location/area of applicable recall*
 - *Any special instructions for the disposal or the return of recalled items*
3. Suspend distribution of any and all products in question.
4. Dispose of any recalled products; unless the product is a USDA Commodity, which must be held for tracking purposes.
5. Promptly and efficiently provide food recall or advisory information to any of your clients who may have received some of the recalled products.

By taking an active role in food safety and knowing what to do when a food recall is issued, we can help guarantee the safety of the people you serve.

Section IX: Food Safety

The populations that are most susceptible to food borne illnesses are older adults, pregnant women, young children, and those with compromised immune systems. Many of the people we help fall under one of these categories. Maintaining food safety standards for storing and handling product is crucial for protecting our clients' health. Additionally, according to the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic act, food will be considered adulterated if *"it has been prepared, packed, or held under insanitary conditions whereby it may have become contaminated..."* Not only is maintaining food safety standards important to protect our clients, it is the law.

Each Partner Agency will be held to the utmost food safety guidelines. This includes ensuring that food is stored in appropriate temperature ranges and is protected from contamination, pests and theft. Prior to approval, Partner Agencies are inspected and then visited a minimum of once every two years.

The Regional Food Bank provides online trainings and resources available within Agency Zone. Each organization is required to annually complete an online agency self-evaluation related to food safety and civil rights.

A. Safe Storage Practices - These guidelines are important for safe food storage:

- Choose a storage space with locking doors, preferably with no outside entrance.
- There should be no cracks in the walls, ceilings, or floor and no broken windows where pests could enter.
- Dry storage should be in a dry, clean, well-ventilated area and the temperature should be between 50 and 70 degrees as dry goods can become unsafe if they get too cold or too hot. This will also help prevent mold, and pest infestation and the air flow will help control temperatures.
- Use free-standing shelves with the lowest shelf at least 6 inches off the floor. Food should also be kept at least 2 inches from the walls.
- Whenever possible, remove individual items from the cardboard cases. This is a good opportunity to inspect the product as you store it to look for pests or bad items that have bulges or are leaking. Getting rid of the cardboard also eliminates hiding places and nesting material for pests.
- Store all pet food, non-food items (including paper products, and cleaning supplies on separate shelving away from food storage.
- Ensure that older items are rotated out first by labeling items with the date received, and always using the "First In, First Out" rule.
- Use only non-toxic insect and rodent traps and inspect these traps regularly. Never spray chemicals or lay poison in a food storage area.
- Refrigerators and Freezers: refrigerator temperatures should be between 32 and 40 degrees, and freezer should be between 0 and -20 degrees. Thermometers should be in all freezers and refrigerators on the front of shelves where they are easily visible when you look in. This helps staff/volunteers to spot problems easily and quickly.
- When you bring food into the storage area, store it properly and immediately. Never leave items on the floor. Place frozen and refrigerated items in coolers immediately.

B. Safe Transport Practices – What is the proper way to transport food for my pantry? Always have adequate vehicle space – truck or trailer is best. Transport that is enclosed is ideal so items do not fly out. When transporting food from a donor or a delivery drop location, be prepared with proper temperature controls like thermal blankets, coolers with ice packs, and/or a refrigerated truck.

Food should be at a safe temperature when picked up and also when delivered to the destination. Use a thermometer to check the temperature prior to putting items away to ensure that a safe temperature has been maintained and the items are safe for a client's consumption.

C. Product Code Dates – Dates are printed on many food items, but product dating is not required by federal regulations except on infant formula and baby foods. Dating of some foods, usually dairy products, is required by more than 20 states. An expired date doesn't necessarily mean that the food needs to be discarded. Still it is helpful to understand the differences among package dates.

Coded dates (packing numbers) may appear on shelf-stable products such as cans and boxes of food. This enables manufacturers to rotate their stock, as well as locate their products in the event of a recall.

Calendar dates help stores determine how long to display the product for sale and relate to the peak quality of food, not safety. Calendar date are found primarily on perishable foods, such as dairy products, eggs, meat and poultry. The only product that must be discarded if not used by its expiration date is baby food and infant formula. Otherwise, please use the below definitions to guide your decisions to keep or discard food.

1. **"Best if used by"** – Manufacturers use this date to indicate the last date by which the highest quality of the particular product is guaranteed. After this date, the product is still safe to consume but may not be at its highest quality in terms of nutrition and taste. For example, a box of cold cereal with a "best if used by date 3/25/19" is still safe to eat for several months afterward. However, it may not taste as fresh and may be slightly stale.
2. **"Sell By"** – The date the manufacturer recommends the product to be sold with the assumption it will be stored in an individual's home for several days after purchase. A "sell by" date is most commonly found on dairy items and other refrigerated foods.
3. **"Expiration date"** – This phrase is used with baby food and infant formula. After this date the nutritional quality of the food cannot be ensured. Because baby food and infant formula are the primary source of nutrition for infants, a food of lower nutritional quality is harmful to their growth and development. *Therefore, all baby food and infant formula must be discarded on their expiration date.* According to the Health Department It is illegal to sell and distribute baby food items after the expiration date.
4. **"Pack Date/Code Date"** – Indicates the date the product was originally packaged but does not indicate the time by which the product should be consumed.

For further assistance in making product determination, please read [The Food Keeper](#). This reference may also be found on Agency Zone's Partner Agency Resource Page.

D. Repackaging

Repackaging/repacking of food items is strictly prohibited. This includes all products, dry or frozen. If an Agency is found to be repacking items, it will result in immediate suspension of the Agency and could result in permanent cancellation of our partnership.

The only product that may be repacked is fresh produce (fruits and vegetables) and non-food items, like clothing. When thinking about repacking, call the Regional Food Bank ahead of time for notification and permission. If the product is stored at room temperature, is loose and would be in an open market within a grocery store, you **MAY** be allowed to package it or leave it for clients to package themselves. Any refrigerated, frozen or product that usually comes in a package **CANNOT**, under any circumstances, be repacked.

E. Tasting and Testing

All Taste Testing should be done in small quantities and not excessive in the amount of product used. Partner agencies **MAY** permit staff/volunteers to consume and/or prepare on-site products to:

- Become more familiar with the product (try out new recipes)
- Promote the product with clients
- Discover new ways to use the product (advising clients on usage)
- Test their fitness for consumption (as they near code dates)

Section X: Record Keeping & Client Service Reporting

Record Keeping

- A. **Client Intake Applications** – Keep on file for 4 years.
- B. **Regional Food Bank Invoices** – Invoices will provide record of product received for recall verification and audits. May also be utilized to total pounds received for Board and/or grant writing reports.
- C. **Client Records** – Maintain a list of clients served. Client records may be a manual tracking such as signing in on a piece of paper, tracked in excel format or utilization of an intake software or program. No personal information such as social security numbers or copies of ID should be kept on file due to the high risk of identity theft. Please keep all client information secured (see below for details to record).
- D. **Temperature Logs and Pest Control Logs**
- E. **Food Safety & Civil Rights Training Acknowledgement Logs** – Yearly certification documents.
- F. **USDA Commodities** – Allocated agencies will be required to maintain additional TEFAP records per USDA regulations.

Client Records

- 1. **Food Pantry Records** – Your agency is required to collect basic client household and demographic information. Capturing this information is as simple as an application or sign in sheet, entered onto an Excel spreadsheet or utilizing a food pantry software system (the use of **Link2Feed**, an online client intake management program, is offered through the Regional Food Bank and may be an option for your program). Here are details requested of clients:
 - Head of Household name, address (include zip and county), phone number
 - ID and/or Proof of Address Verification is collected for partners with established service area boundaries.
 - A driver's license or ID card is an easy way to verify name and identity (note that the address may be outdated and you should collect the current address).
 - A utility bill or rent receipt is the recommended way to verify address/residence (since some IDs/driver's license may not have most updated address).
 - Number, ages, and relationships of people in household
 - Demographics:
 - Gender
 - Marital status
 - Race/Ethnicity (plus Tribe)
 - Employment Status
 - Military Status
 - Additional Information (optional):
 - Self-declared household income*
 - Public assistance programs (government benefits) from which they receive help (e.g. SNAP)
 - If special dietary needs are required by any family member

* USDA Commodities (The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)) have eligibility income guidelines. The income eligibility must be self-declared by the client, in which physical documents of income are **not** required. The Regional Food Bank recommends serving ineligible individuals (outside your service area or above income threshold) one time and provide them with resources in their area, instead of turning them away.

- 2. **On-Site or Mobile Meal Program Records** - Programs approved to serve meals need to record:
 - Number of meals served each day and the date you served them.
 - Number of snacks served each day and the date you served them.

One simple way to record these counts is to keep a calendar and write on each date the number of breakfasts, lunches, dinners and/or snacks you served that day. Total these numbers at the end of each month.

Client Service Reporting

Every partner agency must track service data monthly and report program's pantry and/or meal activities on the Annual Partner Agency Report, distributed in January each year. The information provided is used in a variety of ways in our shared mission to end hunger. First, the statistics of our combined efforts are used to substantiate the need for food assistance to those who volunteer, donate food or funds, and those who advocate for hunger relief programs. Partner Agency statistics are also used to calculate grant amounts and TEFAP allocations.

Partner agencies are required to collect and report to us the following:

- All food pantries: Total number of households and individuals served.
 - adults (18-59), children (0-17) and seniors (60+)
- On-site feeding programs: Total number of individuals served.

Section XI: Site Visits

A pre-approval site visit is required as part of the application process for all potential partners. Current partners receive an on-site visit a minimum of once every two years. The Regional Food Bank reserves the right to conduct site visits more frequently if needed - these visits may be unannounced or scheduled ahead of time.

During these visits, Regional Food Bank staff will meet with your agency's main food program staff/volunteer to review food storage, preparation and distribution areas, address concerns, offer best practices and additional resources. Please be prepared to have records available. At the conclusion of the site visit, agencies will need to sign an Agency Monitoring Acknowledgement Form, confirming that a Regional Food Bank representative completed a site visit.

These on-site visits allow for:

- The Regional Food Bank staff to learn more about an agency's services and needs
- Answering of any questions either party may have
- Increase collaboration, communication, and strengthening partnership
- Ensuring that food is stored safely, and quality preserved from the time the food is received until it reaches the client
- Ensuring intake processes and general interaction with clients is void of discrimination activities
- Sharing and learning of best practices from throughout the network

Each Agency will receive the results of the onsite visit, including notations of successful inspection or areas to be addressed.

Please visit the [Partner Agency Resources tab](#) on the Regional Food Bank's website to download a Site Visit Checklist to help you prepare for a visit from a Regional Food Bank representative that will monitor your program.

Site Visit Non-Compliance Procedure

Site visits are a responsibility of the Regional Food Bank, as all Feeding America members must uphold this standard to ensure the integrity of the feeding program as described by the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Act.

In the event an agency is found out-of-compliance during a site visit and the compliance issue is or could adversely affect product integrity, donor relations, client access to services, the reputation of the Regional Food Bank or the Network, a follow-up monitoring visit will be conducted at a minimum of every six(6) months until the issue is corrected. Documentation of the corrective actions will be kept in the agency's file.

Agency representatives will follow-up within 30 days of "out of compliance warning" to ensure the situation is being remedied. If a partner does not take corrective action within 60 days, the Regional Food Bank has the right to suspend food access or remove the partner from the network based on severity of the situation. Situations that challenge civil rights and/or food safety take highest priority. The Regional Food Bank is required to give the partner 30-day notice before removing them from the network.

Section XII: Community Resources & Support

A. Regional Food Bank Staff Support

1. The Regional Food Bank Community Impact teams (Food for Communities, Food for Seniors, Food for Health, Food for Kids) and the HelpDesk have full time staff available to support your agency's operations.
2. Our staff will provide on-site visitations and consultations, regional on-site training and web published training materials, send out e-newsletters, and host Partner Agency Conferences.

B. Online Client Intake Management Systems

1. Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma has partnered with Link2Feed to bring our partners an easy-to-use solution for client intake processing. Beginning in 2020, onboarding will take place over the next couple of years.
2. Link2Feed is a user-friendly, cloud-based online system that enables food banks and their agencies to collect, manage and track client data and usage statistics.
3. Since Regional Food Bank covers the cost of the system, only a computer with an internet browser (Google Chrome, Firefox or Safari) as well as an internet connection are required to use Link2Feed.

C. Client Assistance – SNAP & Other Community Referrals

Because SNAP is the largest program in the domestic hunger safety net, the Regional Food Bank recognizes there is a need for consistent SNAP outreach to the low-income families served through our programs and your partner agencies. Feeding America estimates that 72% of families relying on food pantries may be eligible for SNAP, yet only 55% are participating! We all pay taxes and receive different types of benefits, like unemployment benefits, Social Security, or a mortgage interest deduction. Food stamps are one way to get supplemental money to buy food until you can get back on your feet.

Our goal of partnership with you is to reach more people across Oklahoma with SNAP. We are offering four partnership opportunities based on your interest and capacity.

Information Partner Spread awareness to promote SNAP and inform clients about Regional Food Bank's application assistance services.

Referral Partner Refer clients to Regional Food Bank's application assistance services via [RFBO's online referral form](#). RFBO will assist clients with an application and provide all follow up to help clients complete entire process.

Application Assistance Partner Assist those clients at your site by helping them apply using okdhslive.org.

Office Hours Partner Advertise and offer onsite office hours for a Regional Food Bank staff member or volunteer to provide in-person SNAP application assistance to clients.

Your Agency may also consider offering your clients other services on-site or a resource center to access brochures and flyers. Some of these wrap around services include SNAP, WIC, LIHEAP, TANF, and more.

Find more information including documents by visiting:

- Additional Food Assistance: <https://www.regionalfoodbank.org/get-help>
- 211: <http://www.211oklahoma.org/>
- Federal Programs: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/programs-and-services>
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program: <http://www.okdhs.org/services/liheap/Pages/UtilityServicesLIHEAPMain.aspx>

D. Training Resources

1. Food Safety & Civil Rights courses: Available on Partner Agency Resources: <https://www.regionalfoodbank.org/partner-agency-resources/training/>
2. Client Choice Conversion: Curious about Client Choice but don't know how to make the conversion? Contact us to schedule an appointment at your site. Simple alterations can cut volunteer hours, cut costs, and effectively serve the need in your in community.
3. Partner Agency Conference: Held every other year for active partner agencies

E. Capacity Building

Through capacity building, the Regional Food Banks seeks to empower and strengthen our partner agencies to continually improve, making meaningful changes in the lives of our neighbors and community. The Regional Food Bank is committed to strengthening the capacity of our network, and agencies like you, by providing additional support to our partner agencies in the form of equipment, special trainings, and grants. We budget each fiscal year for capacity building funding. Currently, this is not an open application process. Capacity building funds are utilized to strengthen our underserved counties by providing (but not limited to) equipment to increase food storage. Awarded partner agencies will have increased capacity to distribute more food to those in need of food assistance.

F. Funding Sources

1. *Pass-Through Funding*: Funding is sometimes provided to the Regional Food Bank to be used as pass through grants to partner agencies. The Regional Food Bank will provide this pass-through funds in the form of food credits, redeemable through orders placed on Agency Express. We offer help through a food credit to allow partner agencies a way to maximize their purchase ability.
2. Depending on the type of organization you are – faith based or non-faith based – funding may come from different sources:
 - Donations – private or business
 - Private Funds – money from your own pocket or from that of your Board of Directors
 - Grants –staff or volunteer assisting with applying for grants; research local organizations for grant assistance or training classes
 - Budget – make funding for your food pantry a line item on your organization's budget
 - Church Congregation – your parishioners may be your biggest supporter as they give each week with some of their tithing to support the food pantry
 - Fundraisers – host a car wash, bake sale, auction, or other event in your community to bring in donations
3. *Fund Drive vs. Food Drive*: A fund drive is another good way to secure money to acquire food from the Regional Food Bank. It is much more efficient to ask for donations of cash and use those funds at the food bank rather than having people purchase items at retail for your program. Asking supporters to contribute funds instead of food will stretch your donor's dollar and provide you with more resources to support your food program.

Important Notes on Funding:

- ❖ Agencies, its employees, its volunteers, and its clients must not sell, transfer, trade, or barter any items received from the Regional Food Bank in exchange for money, property, services or otherwise allow the items to enter commercial channels.
- ❖ Agencies must not require mandatory donations or suggest the same in any manner whatsoever, require or request volunteer time or participation in any religious activity or service in order to receive food, nor show preferential treatment.

G. Community Outreach

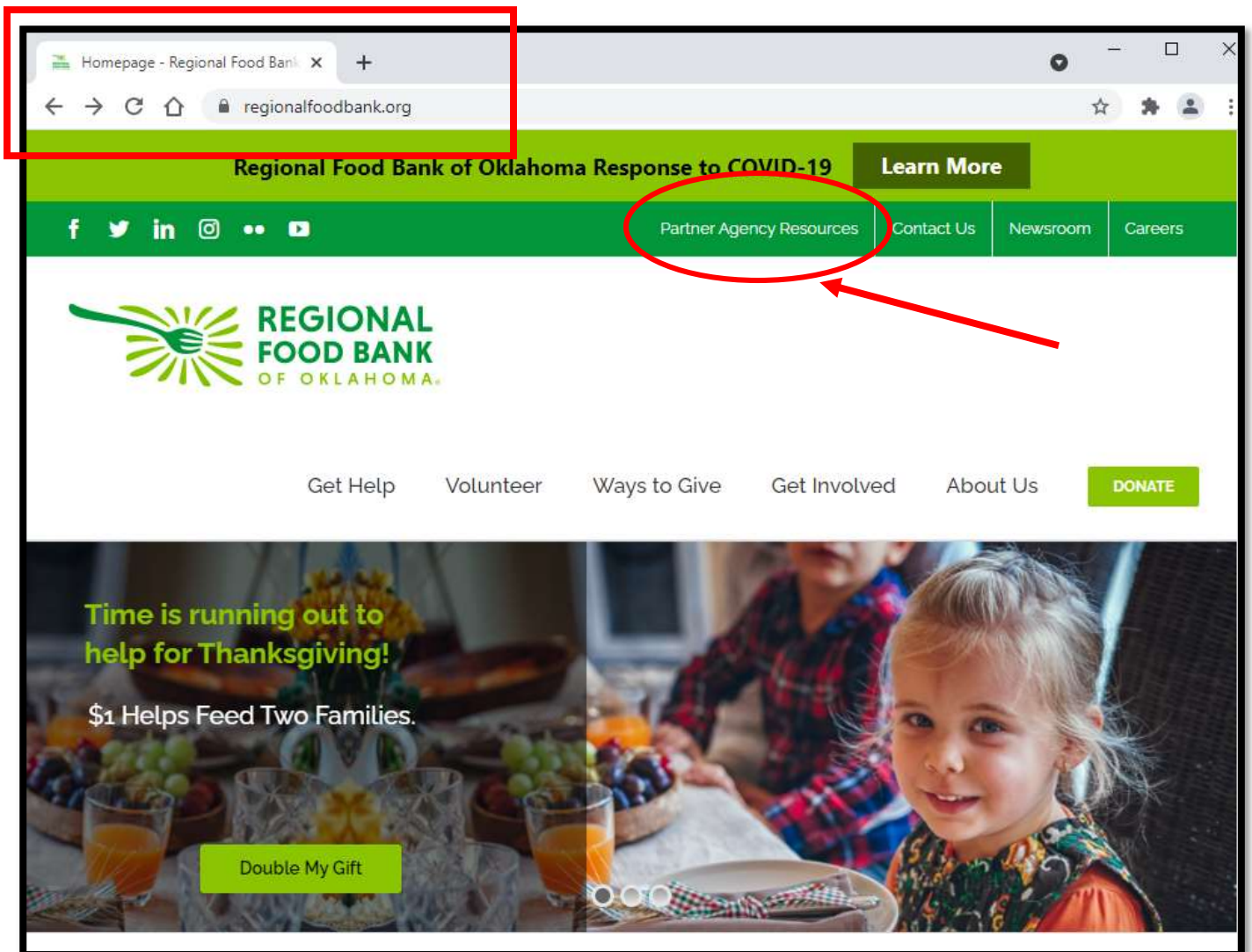
Keeping the community informed is important for financial, volunteer, and advocacy support. Before people will volunteer or give money to any program, they have to know about it.

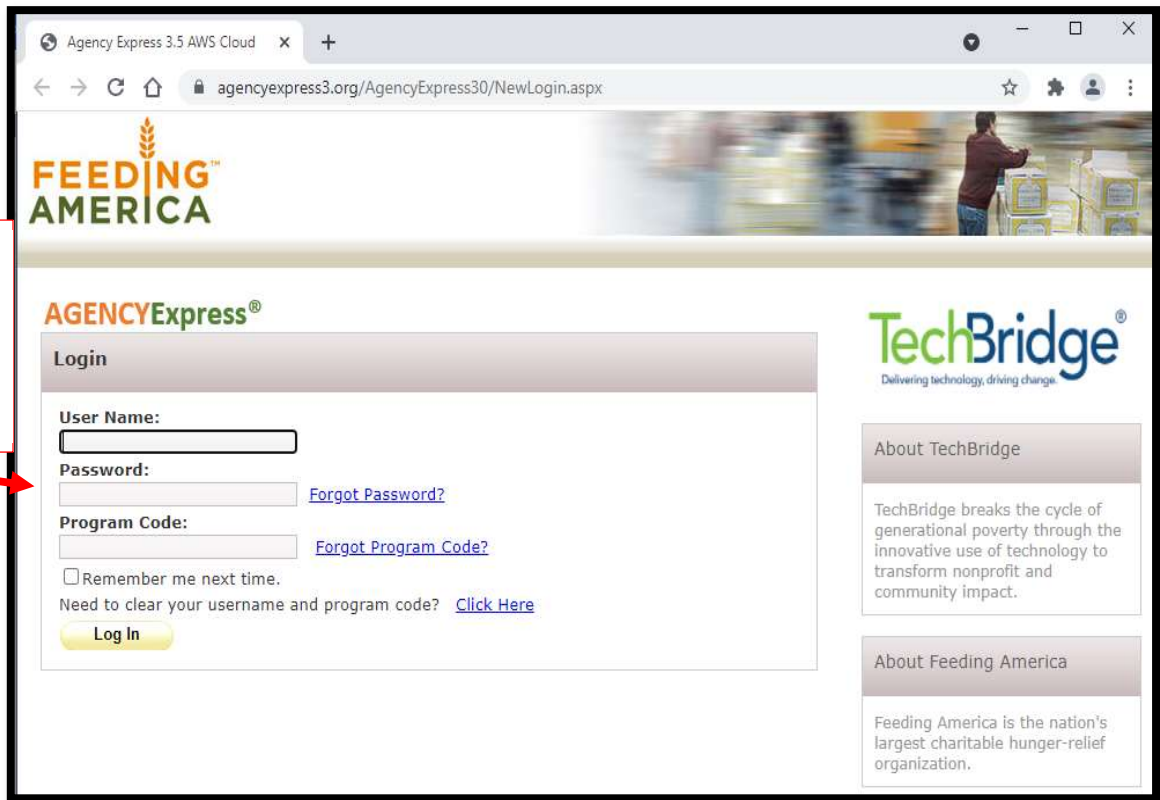
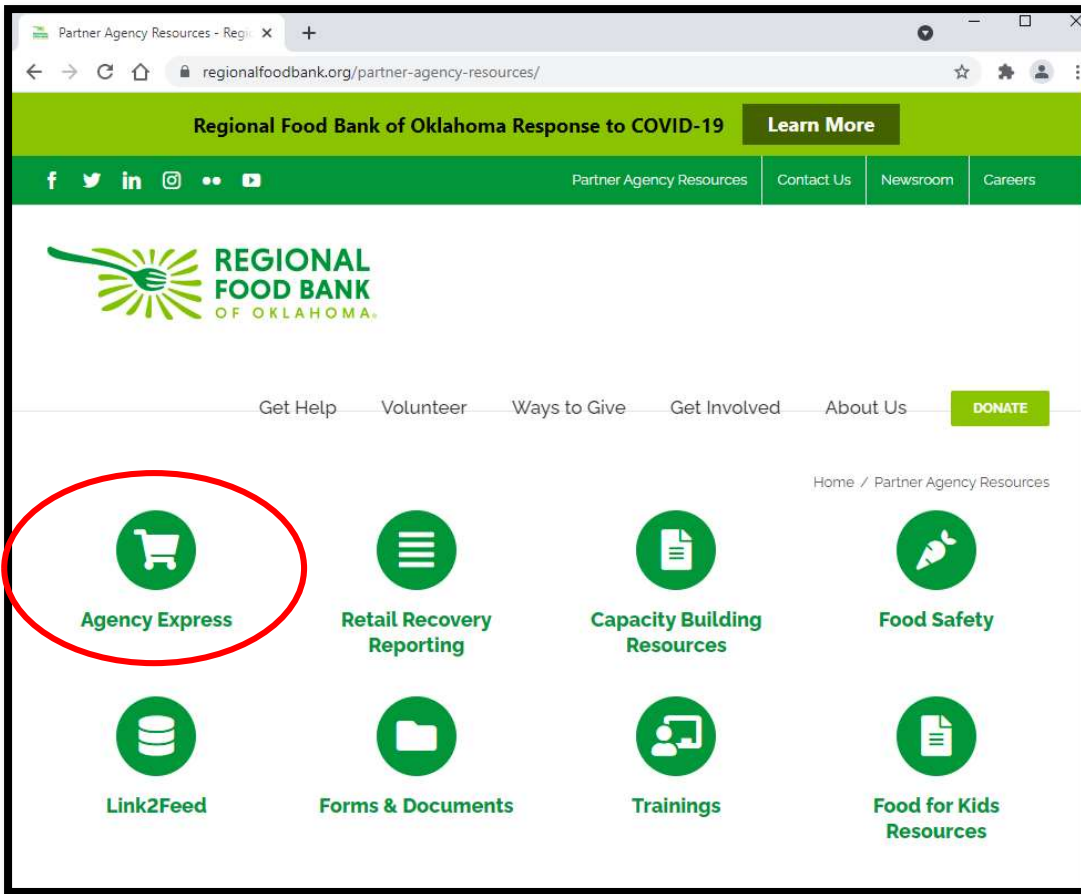
Here are a few tips:

1. Share client stories with their signed permission. Combined with statistics, stories bring the problem of hunger to life. Print brochures. Provide supporting churches and civic clubs with brief updates for their Sunday bulletins and/or newsletters.
2. Cultivate local and social media. In smaller communities, send announcements to your local radio and newspapers when a special activity is planned. Reach out to the Regional Food Bank when you have a client story that might interest the media. We'd love to partner with you to help reach out for great stories.
3. Start a mailing list and/or email list of the names of supporters, volunteers, donors, and contacts.
 - A. Send them regular emails or paper newsletters (monthly) about what's happening in your agency. Keep them short and interesting for best readership.
4. Unless they prefer anonymity, thank donors and volunteers publicly for anything they do. This can be done in a newsletter, on social media, in press releases, and in flyers/posters at your agency.

Section XIII: How to Access Agency Express

Online at Agency Express you will find templates and training resources available on the **Partner Agency Resources** section. The screenshots below will guide you through where to access this information.





We appreciate your partnership!

We hope you'll find this manual useful and welcome your feedback. Please feel free to share other useful information by contacting the Regional Food Bank at PartnerSupport@rfbo.org or (405) 600-3130.

Please visit us on the web at:



FACEBOOK



TWITTER



FLICKR



YOUTUBE

