

Sloatsburg Food Pantry Volunteer Handbook



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WELCOME

Welcome to The Sloatsburg Food Pantry “the Pantry”! We're deeply grateful for your contribution of time and talent, which enables us to fulfill our mission of uniting as a community to provide supplemental, nutritionally balanced food to those in need while upholding the dignity of each person we serve.

This handbook outlines the policies and guidelines that govern your role as a volunteer with us. We've crafted it with both new and experienced volunteers in mind to ensure clarity and consistency in our operations.

We hope your time spent at The Sloatsburg Food Pantry will be both heartfelt and rewarding. Your dedication to our cause means a lot to us, and we're thrilled to have you on board.

As part of our process, we kindly ask each volunteer to sign the "***Receipt of Volunteer Handbook and Acknowledgement***" form located at the end of this handbook on an annual basis. A copy of the signed document will be kept on file for our records.

Thank you once again for your commitment to serving our community.

ABOUT US

The Pantry, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, has been serving the community since the early 1990s. We provide emergency and supplemental food supplies and connect clients with community resource programs such as health insurance and SNAP benefits. Our weekly food distributions occur on every other Tuesday, as well as every Wednesday. These distributions are facilitated by community volunteers and supervised by our Pantry Coordinators.

We operate as a "client choice" food pantry, providing a variety of non-perishable goods like rice, beans, pasta, cereal, along with essentials such as eggs, milk, and frozen meat, poultry, or fish. Fresh produce and canned vegetables and fruits are available weekly. Most of our food comes from the [Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York](#), supplemented by weekly donations of bread from [Bimbo Bakeries](#) and fresh seasonal produce from local farms. Through our partnership with T.O.U.C.H. and The [Rockland Community Against Hunger](#), we help recover fresh food from local distributors, preventing it from ending up in landfills. Our pantry is designed like a grocery store, allowing clients to select items based on their preferences and dietary needs.

The Pantry serves residents of Sloatsburg, Suffern, Hillburn, and Tuxedo. Each client or household/family can visit twice a month, and emergency assistance is always available for those in need.

ABSENCE DUE TO ILLNESS OR OTHER

If you are feeling unwell or have been exposed to someone who is ill, we kindly ask that you refrain from volunteering to ensure the safety and well-being of our community. Should you find yourself unable to make your scheduled shift due to illness or any other unforeseen circumstance, please notify us as soon as possible. Your prompt communication allows us to make necessary arrangements to cover your position and ensures the smooth operation of our pantry services.

AGE REQUIREMENTS

Volunteers interacting directly with clients on our distribution days should be in 9th grade or above. Younger volunteers (13 years of age or younger) are welcome to assist with sorting donations on days when we do not have clients, provided they are accompanied by an adult.

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

We offer a variety of volunteer positions as outlined below:

Set up: Our Pantry setup team prepares the Pantry, Welcome/Waiting area, and entry points for our incoming client families. Responsibilities include stocking shelves, refrigeration, setting up tables and chairs, and storing new produce or perishable items. This short-term role at the start of each distribution day is essential for ensuring an efficient and organized day.

Client Check-In: Our Check-in team is responsible for greeting our incoming clients. They log each client family into our client management system, assist new clients with onboarding paperwork, and can book an upcoming appointment if requested. Please note, this role requires separate training. If you're interested in volunteering in this area please let a member of The Pantry team know.

Managing Pantry Flow: This volunteer opportunity involves greeting our clients after check-in and ensuring they receive a colored band representing their family size. Volunteers also provide bags to clients, as needed, and monitor the flow of clients and carts in and out of The Pantry to prevent overcrowding.

In-Pantry Help: Our In-Pantry Help team assists clients during their shopping experience. Volunteers provide support in selecting food items, guide clients through the pantry, and help them understand our food cards. We are looking for volunteers who are welcoming, patient, and ideally have a background in nutrition or healthcare, which would be an added benefit for our clients but is not necessary.

Stocking Shelves: During opening hours, we need a volunteer to monitor and restock shelves and refrigeration throughout the day. This role is physically active, involving lifting items weighing 10-20 pounds or more, such as cases of canned goods or crates of milk. We provide carts to assist with this work as needed.

Carry Out: After clients complete their visit, volunteers are stationed with wagons to assist in moving packages, for our elderly and differently-abled clients, from the Pantry to their cars. This role involves lifting somewhat heavy packages. Individuals who choose to do this role **must work in pairs and are not allowed to carry out any items alone for safety reasons**. Under no circumstances should any volunteer leave Oliver street. This role operates rain or shine, so dress appropriately. You will be asked to wear a reflective vest.

Bilingual Support: In this role, you'll assist with the check-in process or any point during the client's visit if the client doesn't speak sufficient English to communicate

with a member of The Pantry team. Languages that often require translation assistance include Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Korean, Ukrainian, and Haitian Creole.

Floater: Assist wherever needed during the shift.

Please note that volunteer positions may be switched based on pantry needs. Volunteers who sign up for the last shift of a distribution day are expected to help with breakdown and clean-up.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The board of directors plays a vital role in guiding the strategic direction and ensuring the effective operation of our non-profit food pantry. Here are our members:

Shannon Donnellan, Treasurer
Denise Kane, Secretary
Heather Kidde, Finance Manager
Susan Meyer, Board Chairperson
Linda Pallack, Board Member
Diana Petrosky, Board Member
Pastor Will Reinmuth, Board Member

COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS

Many of our volunteers seek opportunities at the pantry to fulfill community service hours for school or faith-based organizations. We are happy to assist you in fulfilling these hours but kindly ask that you notify the pantry coordinator on duty when you check in for your shift and provide them with the necessary information at that time. This allows ample time for documentation completion.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Location: All Souls Community Church, 81 Washington Avenue, Suffern NY 10901

Mailing Address: PO Box 409, Tuxedo Park, NY 10987

Phone Number: (845) 618 - 5373

Email Address: sloatsburgfoodpantry@gmail.com

Website: www.sloatsburgfoodpantry.org

Emergency Contact: Susan Meyer by phone at (914) 393-3160 or email at

susanm@sloatsburgfoodpantry.org

DISCIPLINARY ACTION | TERMINATION

In the event that a volunteer fails to adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook, the pantry reserves the right to take disciplinary action, which may include termination of their volunteer position. We take the well-being of our clients, staff, and volunteers seriously, and maintaining a safe and respectful environment is our top priority. Disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may occur if a volunteer's actions are deemed detrimental to the organization's mission, values, or reputation. Any decision regarding disciplinary action will be made in accordance with our established procedures and may involve a review by the board of directors.

DRESS CODE POLICY

Our dress code policy emphasizes the importance of clean, comfortable attire suitable for the tasks at hand, recognizing that volunteers may encounter situations where their clothes get a bit dirty. Volunteers should consider the weather and dress in layers for comfort, ensuring they can adjust to changing conditions throughout their shifts. To prioritize safety, open-toed shoes are not permitted; instead, volunteers are encouraged to wear sturdy, comfortable footwear. Additionally, personal hygiene is essential for maintaining a positive and hygienic environment for both volunteers and clients.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The pantry is open for distribution every other Tuesday from 1:00 PM to 5:30 PM and every Wednesday from 1:00 PM to 6:30 PM

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, please check our website (www.sloatsburgfoodpantry.org), or social media pages (Facebook and Instagram) or call the Pantry at (845) 618-5373 for possible delays or cancellations.

MANAGING CONFLICTS

If a conflict arises with a client, volunteers are encouraged to raise it as soon as possible with the pantry coordinator on duty or another member of the pantry staff for prompt resolution and support.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Sloatsburg Food Pantry is committed to ensuring fair and equal treatment for all staff, volunteers, and clients. We strictly prohibit discrimination in all our

programs and activities based on factors such as race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or income source from any public assistance program, in accordance with New York State and federal laws and regulations.

USDA Civil Rights Training

As a part of our involvement with The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), overseen by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), we are required to take Civil Rights Training. This training is pivotal in ensuring that we adhere to civil rights regulations governing our food assistance activities. It educates volunteers on principles such as non-discrimination, equal access, and fair treatment. As a TEFAP-affiliated agency, completion of this training is mandatory to maintain compliance with USDA regulations while upholding civil rights. Volunteers will be asked to participate in this training annually, reinforcing our commitment to serving the community equitably and fostering an inclusive environment.

PANTRY SUPERVISION

Each food distribution is overseen by one or more of the following: a Pantry Coordinator, Board Chairperson or a member of the Board of Directors. They offer guidance and are available to address any questions or concerns you may have. Please do not hesitate to ask them for assistance.

PARKING

Volunteers are kindly asked **not** to park on Oliver Street; instead, please park on nearby streets. We request that the spots closest to the church be left open for our client families.

PRIVACY

Our clients are often our neighbors, and it's crucial to respect their privacy. Client information is strictly confidential, and it's important that no client information be shared outside of the Pantry. This ensures their trust and maintains the integrity of our services.

SAFETY

Safety is our top priority at the Pantry. We maintain a clean and organized environment to ensure the well-being of our volunteers and clients. Additionally, our staff members are equipped with pendants capable of instantly notifying the local police station in case of any potentially dangerous or threatening situations. If you

notice any safety concerns during your shift, please bring them to the attention of the pantry coordinator or Board Chairperson immediately.

Please be aware that certain volunteer positions may require heavy lifting, emphasizing the importance of knowing your own limitations for personal safety and other positions require you to work as a team and never alone (see also Volunteer Positions).

SEXUAL AND OTHER HARASSMENT POLICY

Sexual Harassment Policy

The Pantry is committed to providing a work environment free from sexual harassment and discrimination. Sexual harassment violates state and federal laws and is prohibited in all aspects of employment and volunteering at The Pantry, including interactions with clients, staff, volunteers, and any other individuals associated with our organization.

Definition of Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, physical, or visual conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or volunteering.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment or volunteering decisions affecting that individual.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Other Harassment Policy:

The pantry is committed to maintaining a work environment free from all forms of harassment. Harassment based on any protected characteristic, including but not limited to race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, or any other characteristic protected by law, is prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Definition of Sexual Harassment:

Harassment includes unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment, interferes with an individual's work performance, or otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or volunteering opportunities. Harassment may include, but is not limited to, derogatory comments, slurs, jokes, gestures, physical contact, threats, or displays of offensive materials related to an individual's protected characteristic.

Reporting Procedure:

Any individual who believes they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment or any other form of harassment at the Pantry is encouraged to report the incident promptly to the pantry coordinator, the board chairperson or any other member of

the staff. Reports may also be made anonymously by placing a call to the pantry main phone number at (845) 618 - 5373 (see also Contact Information).

Investigation and Resolution:

All reports of sexual harassment or other harassment will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Investigations will be conducted in a fair, impartial, and confidential manner. The organization will take appropriate corrective action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteering, against any individual found to have engaged in sexual or other harassment.

Non-Retaliation:

The pantry prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports sexual harassment or other harassment and/or participates in an investigation. Retaliation against anyone who makes a complaint or participates in an investigation is a violation of this policy and will result in disciplinary action.

Training:

The pantry will provide regular training and education to employees and volunteers on sexual harassment prevention, including information on the organization's policy, reporting procedures, and legal obligations.

Policy Review:

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary to ensure compliance with state and federal laws and to promote a safe and respectful work environment for all.

The Pantry is committed to fostering a workplace culture that values diversity, respect, and dignity for all individuals. We take allegations of sexual and other harassment seriously and will take prompt and appropriate action to address and prevent such behavior.

SHIFT CHECK-IN PROCEDURES

When you arrive for your shift at the pantry, please check in with the Pantry Coordinator. They will confirm your volunteer position and, if you're new, provide a brief orientation of your assignment. You'll receive a nametag and any necessary safety equipment for your position. Additionally, they'll give you a quick rundown of the day's activities and any pertinent information, ensuring a smooth transition into your volunteering responsibilities and helping us maintain efficient operations.

If you are volunteering for service hours, please ensure to notify the Pantry Coordinator upon arrival (See also Community Service Hours).

STAFF MEMBERS

Our dedicated staff members are instrumental in the day-to-day operations of the pantry, from coordinating volunteer efforts to managing inventory and stocking shelves. Here are the members of our team:

Kevin O'Hara, Stock Person

Terry Osborne-Deasy, Food Recovery & Pantry Coordinator

Kathy Rodriguez, Pantry & Volunteer Coordinator

Elizabeth Takacs, Operations Coordinator

UNDERSTANDING OUR COMMUNITY

In order to serve our community effectively, it's important for volunteers to have an understanding of the makeup of our clientele. The pantry serves individuals and families from diverse backgrounds, each with their own unique challenges and needs. Our clients may include seniors on fixed incomes, families with young children, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those facing unemployment or other financial hardships. Additionally, we serve individuals from various cultural backgrounds and may encounter language barriers. By familiarizing ourselves with the diverse demographics of our community, volunteers can better tailor their interactions to meet the specific needs of our clients, fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for all who seek assistance from our food pantry. It is paramount that we approach our work with empathy and understanding, demonstrating our unwavering support without judgment.

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

WHAT TO DO	WHAT "NOT" TO DO
Please greet all clients with a smile and offer assistance in any way possible	Please do not ignore the clients; many are lonely, and you may be the only person who is kind to them today
Treat every client with dignity and respect regardless of their background or circumstance; be kind	Please do not make assumptions about clients or their situations based on appearances or stereotypes, and refrain from passing judgment.
Please try to communicate with non English speakers using a language translation app on your phone or by asking someone who may speak their language to assist you	Please do not continue speaking to them in English or in an raised tone when they clearly do not understand; it makes them feel uncomfortable
Please let clients pass other clients in front of them while shopping	Please do not reprimand a client who passes another client while shopping
Please offer them bags to shop	Please do not make them feel guilty if they forgot bags
Please speak with clients who are looking to chat with you	Please do not encourage a client to chat with you if they are not interested
Please explain to them how to use the food cards, clarifying the number of items they can choose	Please do not encourage people to take something they do not want
Please allow clients to put their own items in their cart	Please do not put items in their cart without their permission
Please let clients take their time choosing what they want	Please do not escort the person to each rack, unless they ask
Please ignore agitated clients	Please do not respond to them with antagonism or showing displeasure with their demeanor.
Please remind clients to follow the food card guidelines when choosing items as we need enough for all families who are coming	Please do not look through a client's bag that you suspect may have taken more than allotted
Please demonstrate and encourage clients to pack food in bags as they shop	Please do not force them to pack food in bags if they do not understand
Please encourage clients to keep their children with them	Please do not allow children to sit in shopping carts, it is not safe
Please encourage children to take our books	Please do not reprimand children unless they are in danger
Please limit your conversation with other volunteers while you are serving our neighbors in need	Please do not ignore the clients while they are with us

Addressing Client Requests for Extra Food Items:

There are times when a client may ask for more of a food item than the allotted amount for their family size. In such situations, if we have an abundance of the item, such as canned vegetables, fruits, beans, or sauce, they may take an additional item. Please be sure to thank them for asking. If we do not have an abundance or if it's a specialty item like coffee, sweet treats, or vegetable oil, please let the client know that our supply is limited, and we aim to ensure each family receives one. Please be sure to apologize and thank them for their understanding.

If the client becomes agitated based on your response, please refrain from further engaging in the conversation and instead seek the assistance of the pantry coordinator, board chairperson, or another staff member.

Managing Clients Exceeding Allotted Food Portions:

There may be occasions when you observe a client taking more food items than allotted for their family size. If this occurs, first confirm with them the number of people in their family. If it's evident they are taking beyond their family's allocation, explain how to read the cards. Then, inquire if they require additional items and why. Utilize your best judgment to address the situation.

VOLUNTEER SIGNUP

The Pantry uses Signupgenius as our volunteer management platform. Each month, an email is sent to all registered and active volunteers containing a link to sign up for available volunteer opportunities.

VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE CLIENTS

If you're a volunteer who also benefits from the pantry, we ask that you please wait until your shift has ended to shop. Like all clients, you'll need to visit our Check-In Volunteer team to be checked into our client management system for accurate record-keeping.

ADDENDUM I- VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I, the undersigned, hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Volunteer Handbook for the Sloatsburg Food Pantry. I have read and understood the policies, procedures, and guidelines outlined in the handbook. I agree to comply with all the rules and regulations set forth by the organization.

By signing this acknowledgment form, I confirm that I will adhere to the code of conduct, confidentiality agreements, safety protocols, and any other requirements specified in the handbook. I understand that failure to comply with these policies may result in disciplinary action, including termination of my volunteer position.

I understand that the Volunteer Handbook is subject to updates and revisions, and it is my responsibility to stay informed about any changes. I agree to seek clarification from the appropriate staff members if I have any questions or concerns regarding the policies outlined in the handbook.

I acknowledge that volunteering at the Sloatsburg Food pantry is a privilege, and I am committed to contributing positively to the organization's mission of serving our community with compassion and dignity.

Volunteer's Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____