



## Mountaineer Food Bank

Member Agency Handbook

*Our mission is to feed West Virginia's hungry through a network of member feeding programs and to engage our state in the fight to end hunger.*

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In order to become a member agency with Mountaineer Food Bank there are certain guidelines that must be met:

Each member agency must serve the ill, the needy, or infant. The Feeding America national network and our food bank emphasize as our first priority, service to low-income individuals. Member agencies must have tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and must provide Mountaineer Food Bank with a copy of the determination letter from the IRS. Each member agency must operate a program (food pantry or on-site feeding) that incorporates food as a part of its normal scope of services and maintain regularly scheduled hours so that clients may be able to rely or depend on consistent service hours. Member agencies are required to be within Mountaineer Food Bank's 48 county service area. Each member agency must pass the inspection of food bank monitoring personnel prior to approval and be monitored every two years thereafter. Agencies who are inactive for a period of six months will be terminated and must re-apply to gain active status. This means any agency that has been deemed inactive will have to repeat the entire application process prior to being re-admitted as a member agency with ordering privileges.

By definition:

### **Ill**

Those persons who suffer from physical injury, malnutrition, disease, sickness, infection, disability, and/or are unable to provide self-care including those who are incapacitated due to old age.

### **Needy**

Those who lack the necessities of life, involving physical mental or emotional wellbeing, as a result of poverty or temporary distress.

### **Infant**

An infant is a minor child as determined under the laws of the jurisdiction in which the child resides.

## **Orientation**

Approved member agencies must complete orientation training with a Mountaineer Food Bank staff member prior to placing their first order. Orientation will include product ordering procedures and introduction to the online ordering system as well as an explanation of the various product categories. Pantry/on-site product storage and food safety as well as terms of payment will also be addressed.

## **Record Keeping**

Record keeping is a vital part of program compliance. Each member agency must maintain records to document its activities with our food services including records of client distribution to be used for safety and recall purposes. This includes the client's name, address, phone number, and household size along with the dates of food distribution. Soup kitchens/on-site/hot meal programs are required to maintain records of the number of meals served per month. Invoices from Mountaineer Food Bank need to be filed and kept for at least 3 years.

## **Client Eligibility**

It is imperative that we adhere to guidelines that protect and encourage those who are in need of food assistance. Agencies are responsible for maintaining records in a secure area that will protect clients' privacy at all times. Member agencies may not charge the recipients directly for product distributed, nor may any agency require clients to perform services in exchange for food or grocery products. Discrimination based on race, color, citizenship, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation including gender identity, unfavorable discharge from the military, or status as a protected veteran is strictly prohibited. Member agencies are not permitted to require clients to attend a religious or political meeting, to make a statement of faith, or to pledge membership to any religious or political organization before or after food assistance is given. Services of the member agency must not be restricted to the membership of the sponsoring organization.

## **Food Handling**

- 1.) Food must not be stored directly on the floor. Food is to be stored a minimum of four inches off the floor.
- 2.) Dry food storage areas must be kept clean and dry.
- 3.) Food must be stored separate from cleaning supplies and non-food items.
- 4.) Damaged cans, spoilage, unlabeled products and open packages must not be distributed to the public and should be disposed of properly.
- 5.) There must be a pest control policy in place for each agency. The use of insecticides and/or pesticides is prohibited unless used by a professional exterminator. Agencies are encouraged to use traps and/or glue traps. To discourage entry of pests, storage areas should be well sealed with no holes or gaps in the wall, floors, ceilings, windows, or floorboards.
- 6.) Freezers, refrigerators, and kitchen facilities must be kept clean.
- 7.) Freezers and refrigerator temperatures must be routinely checked and recorded. Freezer temperatures must be maintained at zero or below Fahrenheit. Refrigerator temperatures must be maintained at no higher than 41 degrees Fahrenheit and above 32 degrees Fahrenheit.
- 8.) Food that is supplied by MFB should not be stored at a separate location unless that location is inspected and approved by MFB.
- 9.) Agencies must agree to on-site inspections by MFB and the Department of Agriculture if USDA foods are distributed by the agency. USDA food and Feeding America food must be stored separately and labeled as such, e.g. different shelves.
- 10.) If you are transporting refrigerated or frozen product, your agency is responsible for maintaining the integrity and safety of any such product. This can be accomplished through the use of active temperature control such as a refrigerated truck or with passive temperature devices e.g., freezer blankets or ice chests.

11.) Each member agency is responsible for the security of food bank products and for assuring that all products are used only according to approved program purposes.

12.) Per the Food and Drug Administration's Good Manufacturing Practices (CFR 21), while transporting product, it must be protected from potential biological, chemical or physical contaminants.

### **Food Safety Training**

1.) All agencies must have at least one member attend a food safety training provided by MFB a minimum of **once every two years**.

2.) Agencies must comply with local health department food handling safety regulations set forth by state and county regulations.

3.) If the agency's local county health department requires individuals from the agency to obtain a food handler's safety card issued by the WV Department of Health this requirement must be met.

4.) In the event the individual who has been trained in food safety by MFB leaves the agency, MFB must be notified within 10 days and another representative from the agency must be trained by MFB within 30 days.

5.) Agencies who do not have a representative trained in food safety by MFB will have ordering privileges suspended until this requirement is met.

6.) The food safety training is available online at [mountaineerfoodbank.org](http://mountaineerfoodbank.org) under Agency Information.

7.) Agencies whose food safety training has expired will be suspended until the training is taken online and submitted to MFB. It is the responsibility of each agency to monitor when their food safety training is due.

### **Monitoring**

Mountaineer Food Bank will monitor each agency prior to agency approval and a minimum of once every two years. The monitor will review our guidelines regarding Agency Eligibility, Record Keeping, Client Eligibility, and Safe Food Handling with the agency representative. Agency personnel changes require immediate contact with Mountaineer Food Bank Agency Relations Staff. The originally monitored site is the only approved food storage area for your agency. In the event that food must be stored in a different location than the originally monitored site due to an emergency (i.e. leaking roof) you must notify Mountaineer Food Bank and the new storage location must be monitored.

## **Food Bank Warehouse**

- 1.) Agency representatives are not allowed in the warehouse except at the loading area or when accompanied by MFB personnel.
- 2.) Each membership is an agency account and is to be handled as such. Personal shopping unrelated to your agency is prohibited.
- 3.) Agencies are responsible for loading their own vehicles. This is standard operating procedure at both the warehouse and drop sites.
- 4.) If you order more than your vehicle can transport and are unable to return the same day to pick up the remainder, all product left over is returned to our inventory. A restocking fee may apply.
- 5.) Agencies picking up refrigerated or frozen items such as meat, produce, dairy and deli items are required to maintain appropriate temperatures during transport of product. Approved devices include temperature controlled coolers, thermal blankets or active temperature devices (e.g. refrigerated truck). Partner agencies are responsible for acquiring and maintaining these devices.
- 6.) Warehouse pick-ups must be pre-scheduled with the Inventory Clerk. Regular warehouse pick-up times are Monday-Friday from 1:00pm-4:00pm.

## **Truck Delivery**

- 1.) It is the agency's responsibility to meet the truck at the drop site at the prescheduled time. The truck will proceed to the next drop site and any agency who has not picked their order up will have that order taken back to the warehouse and cancelled and a \$20 restocking fee charged to the agency. Agencies are responsible for providing protective coverage for all product, e.g., enclosed vehicle or for open bed pick-up trucks or trailers, the use of a hard shell covering or tarp.
- 2.) Each agency must bring adequate transportation to accommodate transporting the agency's entire order. In the event that the agency is unable to transport all product in one trip, a representative of the agency is required to stay with the balance of their order until the agency can arrange adequate transportation.
- 3.) It is the agency's responsibility to load their own vehicle(s). The MFB truck driver is not responsible for loading agency's vehicles at the drop site due to insurance liability.
- 4.) It is the responsibility of the agency representative to verify that all product is accounted for. Once an agency has signed the invoice and taken possession of the products the responsibility lies with the agency.
- 5.) In the event that an order or product is not distributed to an agency the MFB truck driver is required to return that product to MFB. It cannot be distributed to another agency.

6.) After unloading, the driver will provide each agency with an invoice. In the event this invoice is incorrect a corrected invoice will be mailed to the agency the next MFB business day.

7.) Agencies picking up refrigerated or frozen items such as meat, produce, dairy and deli items are required to maintain appropriate temperatures during transport of product. Approved devices include temperature controlled coolers, thermal blankets or active temperature devices (e.g. refrigerated truck). Partner agencies are responsible for acquiring and maintaining these devices.

### **Restocking Fee**

In the event that an agency places an order and fails to meet the delivery truck to pick up their order there will be a restocking fee in the amount of \$20.00. Cancellations can only be made by contacting the Inventory Clerk via phone.

### **Billing & Payments**

1.) Payment is expected within 14 days of receipt of the invoice.

2.) It is the agency's responsibility to contact MFB within 1 business day of receiving your order to report errors on the invoice or damaged product. Any incorrect products or damaged products must be returned to MFB or a picture of the product must be emailed to **MFB within 24 hours in order for the agency to receive credit.**

3.) It is preferred that all payments to MFB be made by agency check. MFB prohibits cash payments and is unable to accept credit cards. *When paying by check, please include the agency name, invoice number or a copy of the invoice to ensure proper credit to the agency's account.*

4.) If your check is returned to MFB due to insufficient funds, your account will be charged a \$10.00 service fee. The agency will be required to issue another check for the amount of the account balance.

5.) Any agency that has two or more returned checks within a year will be required to pay by certified bank check at the time of service for a period of one year.

6.) Account balances that are beyond 30 days past due will result in the agency's account being placed on hold. During this time agencies will not be able to place orders and any undelivered orders will be cancelled. If an agency foresees that it will not be possible to pay the account in full then it is necessary for the agency to contact MFB to make payment arrangements. *Any agency that has been placed on hold or suspended will not be permitted to participate in any other Mountaineer Food Bank feeding programs, e.g., TEFAP/CSFP commodities or retail pick up.*

7.) Account statements will be mailed the first week of each month.

**Account Changes**

In the event of personnel changes, demographic information changes, or ordering privilege additions or terminations it is the responsibility of the agency to notify MFB in writing. The agency is also required to complete an agency update form which must be submitted to MFB and signed by the director of the agency within 30 days.

**Fees**

Product Category	Cost	Transportation
General Inventory	\$0.19 per pound	\$0.08 per pound
USDA	\$0.00	\$0.00
Dairy, Bakery, Produce,	\$0.10 per pound	\$0.00
Purchase Program	As stated	\$0.00

\*Occasionally MFB has products available at no charge. There is no transportation fee added to these items.

General Inventory-product distributed to MFB that is redistributed to our agencies.

Purchase Program-bulk purchases direct from the manufacturer available to agencies at wholesale cost or lower.

USDA/TEFAP-government commodities distributed to qualifying agencies via MFB.

**Violations Policy**

Our food bank is required by the IRS to enforce proper and legal product usage. Therefore, the following violations to your agency’s membership agreement are strictly prohibited, and any violation may result in restriction or termination of membership.

A. Violations

- 1.) Exchanging any donated food or grocery product for money, property or services.
- 2.) Using any donated food or grocery product in a manner not related to the exempt purposes of your agency.
- 3.) Being delinquent in payment of food bank fees or any agency check being returned for non-sufficient funds. Any agency that has been placed on hold or suspended for failure to fulfill financial requirements will not be permitted to participate in any Mountaineer Food Bank or USDA programs administered through the food bank.
- 4.) Storing or transporting any donated food or grocery product improperly.
- 5.) Stockpiling any donated food or grocery product in excess.

- 6.) Inadequate record keeping.
- 7.) Any violation of any state or local statute, ordinance, code or regulation related to the handling or storage of food and grocery products.
- 8.) Termination or expiration of your 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service. This document must be current and on file at the food bank.
- 9.) Any discrimination in service delivery based on race, color, citizenship, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation including gender identity, unfavorable discharge from the military, or status as a protected veteran is strictly prohibited.
- 10.) Agencies must utilize some criteria for ensuring that products distributed by the program will be received by the ill, needy or infants as outlined in Section 170(e)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- 11.) Using an individual's home for product storage.
- 12.) Food safety violations which create imminent health hazards will result in product hold until the issue is satisfactorily resolved as determined by the Mountaineer Food Bank.
- 13.) Redistribution of product: Agencies are not permitted to share food received from MFB with other food distribution programs. Food procured from MFB is intended for clients who are ill, needy or infants.

#### B. Procedures for Addressing Agency Violations

The food bank will handle each agency violation as a reason for terminating agency membership. The purpose of our mission is to ensure that food products are available to the needy, through the responsible efforts of our agencies. The following procedures will be applied to any agency violation:

- 1.) Shipment of food bank product may be immediately suspended.
- 2.) An agency found to be in violation of any of these requirements shall be issued a warning, addressing the issue of concern and the corrective action required.
- 3.) Member agencies who have violated MFB policy will be notified in writing of the probationary status of the agency. The agency will be given a reasonable amount of time to correct the violation, if the violation is correctable, but will not be allowed to order from MFB until the issue has been resolved.
- 4.) If compliance is not accomplished as determined by the food bank, the agency's membership will be terminated. Upon termination, an agency will lose the privileges of a member agency for a period of no less than six months. After the six month mandatory termination period an agency

may be permitted to reapply for membership as a new agency pending determination that those factors responsible for termination have been completely addressed.

5.) Written notice of appeals must be submitted to the Executive Director of MFB within 30 days of an agency's termination due to violations. All decisions of the Executive Director are final.

### **Agency Grievance Process**

It is the intent of Mountaineer Food Bank to treat all agencies in a just manner. The Agency Grievance Process may be utilized by any agency that believes it has not been treated as such.

- 1.) In the event that a terminated or suspended agency would like to begin the Agency Grievance Process, written notification from the member agency director should be addressed via certified mail to the Director of Agency Relations within 10 business days. The Director of Agency Relations will then attempt to resolve the grievance. The Director of Agency Relations will inform the MFB Executive Director of the situation and the action taken.
- 2.) If step one achieves a mutual agreement between the agency and MFB, the Director of Agency Relations will develop a written report within 15 days which will include details of the grievance and the actions taken to resolve the grievance. The report will be then be signed by appropriate representatives of both MFB and the agency indicating mutual understanding and agreement. The Director of Agency Relations will distribute copies of the written report to the agency and MFB Executive Director as well as place a copy in the agency's permanent file.
- 3.) In the event that a mutual agreement cannot be reached, the agency may request a formal meeting within ten days with the Executive Director and the Director of Agency Relations the decision. The written request should include the details of the grievance and reasons for not accepting the resolution presented in Step 1. After the formal meeting has taken place, the Executive Director will render a decision within 15 days. Should this meeting result in a mutual agreement for all parties concerned, the Director of Agency Relations will develop a written report indicating mutual agreement and understanding and distribute it to the agency and the MFB Executive Director for signatures within 15 days. A copy of the signed report will be placed in the agency's permanent file.
- 4.) If the formal meeting between the Executive Director, Director of Agency Relations and the agency does not result in a mutual agreement being reached, the agency will be terminated and unable to reapply for possible membership for a period of at least six months.

**This decision is final and the grievance process is complete.**

## **Back Pack Program**

The mission of the Back Pack Program is to help solve child hunger by providing nutritious and easy-to-prepare food to children to take home on weekends and during school vacations when other resources are not available. Each agency who participates in the Back Pack program agrees to adhere to the following stipulations:

- 1.) Distribute healthy, nutritious food to children free of charge.
- 2.) Provide Back Packs a minimum of once a month while the program is in operation.
- 3.) Ensure the school and/or program complies with all applicable federal and local statutes, ordinances and regulations.
- 4.) Ensure staff and volunteers with direct repetitive contact with children pass a national background check.
- 5.) At least one representative must receive food safety training from MFB once every two years.
- 6.) Be available for an on-site monitoring visit at least once every two years from Mountaineer Food Bank.
- 7.) Store Back Pack Program food in a secure, sanitary and temperature controlled place away from cleaning materials and toxic chemicals. All food must be stored 4 inches off the floor, away from the wall and 6 inches below the ceiling.
- 8.) Distribute the Back Packs to program participants in accordance with the pre-determined schedule (of your own design).
- 9.) Keep accurate records, submit reports and provide necessary information as requested.
- 10.) Identify a Back Pack coordinator to be the primary contact for the Back Pack Program.
- 11.) Receive deliveries on the designated day and time.
- 12.) Inform Mountaineer Food Bank in writing of any changes in Back Pack Program personnel, days/hours of operation and/or number of children being served.
- 13.) Coordinate with schools the amount of back packs/bags of food needed per week based off the school's assessment of need.
- 14.) Coordinate with schools in regards to food allergies. Identify food allergies and set up system so that the school can identify foods/bags with potential allergens.
- 15.) Communicate problems and requests to Mountaineer Food Bank in a timely manner.

### **School Food Pantry Program**

In 2016 Mountaineer Food Bank initiated the School Food Pantry Program (SFPP). Currently MFB operates in three high schools and two middle schools throughout our service area. Storing food on school grounds ensures food resources will be available throughout the week and outside traditional school hours. This program is focused in middle and high schools due to backpack programs focus in the elementary arena. If a local school is interested in developing a pantry, an application process is followed and a sustaining financial plan is required. The program model is designed to be flexible to meet the unique needs of each school community. This program provides a platform for community investment in the issue of child hunger. To be considered a School Pantry site the following must be true of your operation:

- 1.) The food for the program must be stored on school grounds for easy access to students.
- 2.) Food must be distributed from the school food pantry a minimum of one time per month, with weekly distributions preferred, for the duration of the school year.
- 3.) Food must be given to participants free of charge.
- 4.) Program participants must not be discriminated against based on age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, disability, etc.

For more information please contact Agency Relations at 304 364-5518.

### **USDA/TEFAP Government Commodity Program**

Mountaineer Food Bank serves as a distribution site for USDA commodities. Agencies that participate in the USDA program must adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Emergency Food Assistance (TEFAP) Agreement to Participate as well as the following:

- 1.) Agencies may not require referrals for client participation in the Commodity Program. Agencies are to distribute commodities to clients on an emergency basis. Food Pantry Recipient Applications are the only basis to determine client eligibility.
- 2.) Agencies may distribute regular donated food products along with and at the same times as USDA commodities. If USDA commodities are distributed to a client, TEFAP guidelines must be strictly adhered to, along with any other additional policies established by MFB pertaining to the receipt, handling and distribution of this product.
  - a. Determination of eligibility is based on self-declaration of income only, no proof of income is required ever. The USDA and no other agency will coordinate a means test for household eligibility.
  - b. The site cannot require households to have lived in the area for any period of time before they apply for TEFAP.

c. Homeless persons, or people who have just arrived in the area, may not be able to provide an address. This does not disqualify them for TEFAP.

3.) Commodities are to be distributed in original packages for household consumption only. **Repackaging of commodities is prohibited.**

4.) Commodities are to be distributed within a reasonable amount of time. Hoarding of USDA commodities is strictly prohibited.

5.) Each agency that distributes USDA commodities is required to make a public service announcement once every two years. This can be done via radio or newspaper. The agency must retain proof that the public service announcement has been given to the public.

6.) Pantries that receive TEFAP are required to submit a quarterly report by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month following the end of the quarter. Pantries must send quarterly reports by US mail or email.

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter: July, August, September due by October 15<sup>th</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter: October, November, December due by January 15<sup>th</sup>

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter: January, February, March due by April 15<sup>th</sup>

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter: April, May, June due by July 15<sup>th</sup>

7.) Pantries who do not submit their TEFAP quarterly report will not receive a USDA allocation. Late submissions will not receive the next month's allocation. It is the responsibility of each pantry to make sure that their quarterly report is submitted by the due date. Agencies who fail to submit a TEFAP quarterly report will be removed from the program. The agency may reapply to the program after six months. Please note there is a waiting list for each county.

8.) Pantries using spreadsheets for TEFAP quarterly reporting that are not issued by MFB are required to include that correct identifying information for their agency. Pantries must use the name of the agency that was initially used on the member agency agreement. Pantries must also include the county the pantry is located in.

9.) **Pantries/WVOS that do not order two consecutive allocations will be automatically removed from the TEFAP program and must request reinstatement.**

10.) New member agencies that request to participate in TEFAP must complete a 90 day probationary period prior to be considered for the program. New TEFAP agencies will be considered on an "as needed" basis for areas/counties that lack adequate food access.

Agencies are prohibited from asking for proof of income and social security numbers of patrons.

## **Retail Store Donation Program**

Feeding America initiated the retail store donation program to facilitate a donation of food by national donors to local communities through affiliation with a Feeding America Member Food Bank. Mountaineer Food Bank acts as the member of Feeding America for 48 West Virginia Counties. The donations made by Feeding America national donors are monumental in the continuing effort to provide food for the hungry in WV. Because the Feeding America national donors are given credit for their donations, all stores must coordinate the pick-up of donated product through Mountaineer Food Bank.

In order to take part in the retail store donation program agencies are required to be members of Mountaineer Food Bank. Individual pantries, soup kitchens, etc. who are not member agencies of MFB are not permitted to pick up donations at Feeding America stores, e.g. Wal-Mart, Aldi, Food Lion, Kroger, etc., and are in direct violation of the contract between Feeding America and the donors. In order to ensure appropriate credit for Feeding America donors, MFB agencies must adhere to guidelines set forth by the Retail Store Donation Program Contract. Per the contract, Mountaineer Food Bank always acts as the liaison between Feeding America donors and MFB member agencies. MFB will assign retail store pick-ups to agencies as necessary.

- 1.) The agency agrees to act as an extension of Mountaineer Food Bank to pick up and distribute appropriate donations from the retail store assigned by Mountaineer Food Bank.
- 2.) The agency agrees to submit donation poundage reports containing complete information to Mountaineer Food Bank's satisfaction in a timely manner.
- 3.) All donation poundage reports must be submitted each Monday (weekly) through the agencies online account. Agencies may request in writing to submit reports via phone under special circumstances only. If the agency does not pick up during any given week a zero pounds report must be reported online.
- 4.) As a representative of MFB, agency staff and/or volunteers will present I.D. issued from MFB upon picking up each donation.
- 6.) The agency agrees that any additional donation pick-ups or collection of alternate products other than in the original agreement must be approved in writing by MFB prior to the collection of goods.
- 7.) The agency agrees that all donations will be immediately taken back to their facility to be accounted for. Product may not be distributed in any manner at the retail store facility.
- 8.) The agency agrees that it will not solicit the retail store in any manner.
9. Partner agencies picking up refrigerated or frozen items such as meat, produce, dairy, and deli items are required to refrigerate these items during transport.
  - a. Approved devices include temperature controlled coolers, thermal blankets, or active temperature devices (e.g. refrigerated truck). Partner agencies are responsible for

- acquiring and maintaining these devices.
- b. Specific donor requirements always supersede the usage of active versus passive refrigeration devices (e.g. a donor requires a refrigerated truck).
- 10.) Partner agencies are required to record temperatures for refrigerated or frozen items at the time of pick-up and delivery. This information should be documented on your donation poundage report and kept in your records.
- 11.) In the event that the amount of product being picked up is in excess of what your agency can appropriately store or distribute in a timely manner, the agency agrees to notify MFB immediately to discuss options. The agency is not permitted to transfer product to other agencies.
- 12.) **The agency agrees that the following actions are not permitted and will lead to immediate termination of the contract and the agency's status as participating in the retail store donation program.**
- a. Failure to collect donations for the retail partner at the assigned date/time, without contacting MFB.
  - b. **Failure to submit donation poundage reports in the appropriate time frame (one week).**
  - c. Failure to exhibit professional behavior while collecting donations from retail partners.
  - d. Failure to maintain donor/food bank food safety standards regarding cold chain storage and distribution of product.
  - e. Failure to adhere to any other agreed upon terms of the contract.
- 13.) In the event of significant changes in the agency's program, e.g. change of agency director, the agency agrees to notify MFB within 30 days of the change.

\*Once your agency has been terminated from the retail pick-up program due to non-compliance all pick-ups of donations at the retail store are to immediately stop. MFB will assign another agency to that store and the store management will be notified.

### **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)**

Late in 2016, West Virginia became the 48<sup>th</sup> state approved by the USDA to provide food supplement boxes to WV seniors. Funded in early 2017, this program is administered by the West Virginia Dept. of Agriculture through West Virginia's two food banks, Mountaineer Food Bank and Facing Hunger Food Bank. In April 2017, Mountaineer Food Bank piloted this senior food box program in four West Virginia Counties (Gilmer, Harrison, Raleigh and Hampshire) and has been so successful that we are expanding into two (Marion and Wood) additional counties. Facing Hunger Food Bank operates pilot CSFP program in the counties of Cabell, Wayne, Lincoln and Kanawha. To be eligible for CSFP you must be a resident of West Virginia, be 60 years old or older, meet the 130% FPL income guidelines. Commodity Supplemental Food Program provides eligible seniors a free, nutrient dense food box each month packed with up to 40 lbs. of low sugar, low sodium, and protein rich self-stable food.

If you have questions about this program or would like more information, please contact Agency Relations at 304 364-5518.

### **Ordering**

Agencies are responsible for placing orders within the confines of MFB's online ordering system. Agencies should be familiar with the monthly delivery calendar which denotes the day MFB's delivery truck will be in each county as well as the order by date for that delivery. Agencies should print a hard copy of the calendar which is located on the home page of the online ordering website as well as at mountaineerfoodbank.org under the Agency Information tab. Delivery days may change from month to month due to holidays and MFB closure. Agencies must refer to the MFB delivery calendar to determine the last day to order for the delivery truck each month and to determine the date the MFB truck will deliver to your county. Orders must be placed a **minimum of 2 MFB Business Days by 3pm** prior to the delivery or pickup date. Instructions for placing an online order may be found at mountaineerfoodbank.org under the Agency Information tab.

### **Is The Food Still Good?**

A basic guide to package codes and dates.

The codes and dates printed on food packages have different purposes. If a food appears to be "outdated" **it does NOT automatically mean the food is unsafe or unusable**. The USDA states that "Best By" dates are intended to tell you how long the product will retain its best flavor or quality. **It is NOT a safety date**. Foods may be eaten after the date if they have been properly stored and handled.

**Code Date:** Manufacturers may stamp numbers on products so they know when and where they were produced. This is helpful if there is a recall and foods need to be taken off the shelf.

**Manufacturing or Packaging Date:** Product may be stamped with a date preceded by "MFG." This date can be used along with recommended shelf life for guidance on how long a product will have its best flavor and quality.

**Best If Used By Date:** This is the date by which the product is at its highest quality, but can still be safely consumed for a period of time after the date. The length of time is dependent on the product and its storage.

**Expiration Date:** This is the date the manufacturer recommends the product be used by for best quality (flavor, color, texture). If stored properly, items remain safe and wholesome. However, flavor, color, and texture may change slowly.

**Pull or Sell-By Date:** The manufacturer recommends this be the last day the product be sold in a retail store. The product will remain safe and wholesome for a reasonable amount of time for use after purchase. The amount of time depends on the product type and storage conditions.

**Freezing:** Many products can be frozen to extend the acceptable storage time. Freezing a product holds it in its present state. Bacteria cannot grow in the freezer. However, freezing will not kill bacteria if it is already present.

### **Contacts**

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