



Dear Agency Representative:

Thank you for your interest in becoming a member agency of the Redwood Empire Food Bank (REFB). Our mission is *to end hunger in our community*. We intend to work towards this goal with your help. The Food Bank is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit, which distributes food to charities with 70% or more of their service benefiting low-income people. In this letter you will find information on membership requirements, the application process and our Shopping Program.

What are the requirements for membership?

1. Provide a copy of your letter of determination from the Internal Revenue Service verifying that your organization is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization under section 501 (c)(3) of the IRS code. A religious organization can use the IRS letter from its national congregation if it can show that it is a congregation member.
2. Submit a list of your Board of Directors.
3. Pay an application fee of \$50 from the checking account of your agency.
4. Pay an annual agency fee of \$50 from the checking account of your agency. (This fee will be waived during the first calendar year of your application.)
5. Fill out and sign the enclosed application for membership.
6. Distribute the food obtained from the REFB without charge, request for donation or any other exchange of services or participation in activities, including religious services.
7. Serve people without regard to race, creed, national origin, age, sex or disability.
8. Agree to regular inspections, scheduled and unscheduled, as well as monitoring every two years by the REFB as required by our affiliation with Feeding America.
9. ***Have at least one key food handler within your organization trained in safe food handling. REFB will provide mandatory training once a year.***
10. ***If Agency prepares meals, their key food service program staff are required to meet local commercial food safety standards. A copy of current Safe Serve training must be provided for to the REFB for the Agency's file.***
11. Provide a safe, clean, dry and secure place to store food off the floor.

What is the Shopping Program?

Agencies who are members of the Redwood Empire Food Bank can shop at our warehouse much as they would at a grocery store, but at greatly reduced prices. Each agency designates who will be allowed to shop for their agency. Approved shoppers can be added or deleted from this list at any time by submitting changes on letterhead.

Certain categories of food that the REFB distributes, such as bread and produce, are free to member agencies. For other donated food items agencies pay a *shared maintenance* fee of 19 cents per pound. This fee helps to defray operating costs such as transportation and utilities to run our large walk-in freezer and cooler, and is not related to the value of a particular item. Additional, non-donated items that REFB purchases are available at *Wholesale Marketplace* prices, and the cost for these products will vary by the item.

Member agencies cannot request or accept cash or in-kind donations in association with distribution of REFB products. Agencies must pay for REFB food with donations, fundraising events or grants that occur separately from their food distribution.

What kinds of food are available?

The REFB solicits donations of surplus and unmarketable food from manufacturers, retailers, farmers, brokers and from the local community in the form of food drives. The types of donated food are varied and change daily. The REFB also purchases staple food items by the truckload directly from wholesalers and can offer these items at a significantly lower cost than retailers. Items such as pinto beans, rice, canned fruit and vegetables, powdered milk, peanut butter, tuna and macaroni & cheese are usually available in our Wholesale Marketplace.

What are the priorities in food distribution?

The first priority of REFB is distributing food to residents of the community who face the greatest risk of hunger. The REFB establishes priorities for food distribution based on this need. Certain food donations may not be available to all agencies. If a small amount of a particular item is received, it may only be distributed to agencies that fall in the category of the highest priority. Food pantries, soup kitchens and rural food programs will receive the highest priority.

What is the application process?

The first step is to submit a completed application with all the supporting documents. Based on your application, the REFB staff will determine if you are eligible to become a member agency. If eligible, a REFB staff member will conduct an on-site monitoring visit to your agency. After that, the REFB will make final approval. Approval is based on a variety of factors including location, refrigeration and storage capabilities, and staffing. Completion of this application does **not** guarantee membership. We reserve the right to refuse membership to programs not meeting our criteria and mission. If you have questions about the application process, contact me at 523-7900.

Sincerely,

Jackie Klamt
Agency Relations Coordinator

