Incorporating Elements of Choice and Transitioning to a Choice Pantry

Presented by:

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OUTLINE

• Choice Pantry Tour
• Common Concerns
• Benefits
• Opportunities for Nutrition Education
What is a **Choice** Pantry?

- A choice pantry is a distribution structure that values the **personal needs and preferences** of food bank clients while offering a more dignified and efficient way to receive nutrition assistance.
Our transition to Choice

Box Distribution

Client Choice
The Choice Pantry

- A Choice Pantry appointment at FFP provides an average of 50 lbs of food per family.

- We serve up to 1,350 households per month with shopping appointments.

- The Choice Pantry model has been in effect for 2 years.
**SHOPPING GUIDE**

**PEOPLE IN HOUSEHOLD:**
Circle one:  1-3  4-6  7+

**STEP 1: COMMODITIES**
Take **1** of each commodity.
*No substitutions.*

**STEP 2: SHOPPING POINTS**
Spend the number of points written here on **other** items of your choice.

- **Dairy**
- **Fruits**
  - Fresh or canned
- **Vegetables**
  - Fresh or canned
- **Grains**
- **Protein**
- **Combination**
- **Miscellaneous**
**SHOPPING GUIDE**

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**Fruits & Vegetables**
(fresh, or…)

**Fresh Produce**
Today:
1 BAG OF FRUIT = 1 POINT
1 BAG OF VEGETABLES = 1 POINT
**STEP 1: COMMODITIES**

Take *1* of *each* commodity.

*No substitutions.*

**STEP 2: SHOPPING POINTS**

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*Each shelf is clearly labeled and color coded to match the Shopping Guide.*
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*No substitutions.

**STEP 2: SHOPPING POINTS**

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*Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or any other cereal grain.
STEP 1: COMMODITIES
Take 1 of each commodity.
*No substitutions.

STEP 2: SHOPPING POINTS
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*Meats, fish, beans, nuts, stews
*Tofu, fresh meats, & eggs can be found on the Protein shelf in the refrigerator.
STEP 1: COMMODITIES

Take 1 of each commodity.

*No substitutions.

STEP 2: SHOPPING POINTS

Spend the number of points written here on other items of your choice.

- **Dairy**: 4
- **Fruits**: 4
- **Vegetables**: 4
- **Grains**: 4
- **Protein**: 4
- **Combination**: 4
- **Miscellaneous**: 4

*Soups, meals in a box*
**SHOPPING GUIDE**

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*Condiments, spices, ingredients for baking
A volunteer makes sure shoppers have spent all of their points in all categories
Point System

- Assess food supply
- Estimate number of households to serve
- Adjust points accordingly
- Can readjust points daily or weekly depending on food supply
Common Concerns

Working with a Small Space

Balance creativity with practicality:

• Integrating storage space with your pantry space.
• Create a floor plan for smooth, easy flow
• Shelving units can create aisles
Adjusting Operation Hours and Scheduling Volunteers

- Volunteer tasks are shifted from food box assembly to working directly with clients and stocking pantry.

- Increasing distribution hours = a less crowded, more dignified food pantry “shopping” experience for clients.
Common Concerns

Teaching Volunteers and Clients to Work with the New System

• Allow clients to do as much of the shopping on their own as possible, while also offering as much assistance as a client may need or request.
Benefits

**Increased respect:**
- Offering clients a variety of choice provides a more meaningful service that allows shoppers to tailor their selections based on preferences and cultural or dietary needs.

**Increased dignity:**
- An atmosphere of participation and choice lends dignity to a process that is difficult and humbling.
Benefits

**Refined means of food acquisition:**
- Easier read of supply and demand for adjusting food orders and purchases and focusing food drives.

**Increased efficiency:**
- Shoppers will leave only with what they have chosen and can use, thus less waste.
A shopping experience based on balanced nutrition:

- FFP Shopping Guide based on Rainbow of Choice point system (Ohio State University Extension & partners)
- Based on the USDA MyPyramid Food Guidance System to teach shoppers about nutrition as they make food selections
Benefits of Choice Pantry:

*Increase opportunities for nutrition education:*

- Fresh produce recipe kits
- Recipe cards on shelves
- Taste tests
- Promote food bank cooking classes
- Meaningful volunteer opportunities:
  - Shoppers’ helpers learn & offer tips to clients
  - Learn while sorting foods for stocking
Opportunities for Nutrition Ed.

Nutrition Banking!

• Choice Pantry integrates nutrition education into all facets of food bank operations:

  – Distribution
  – Volunteer sorting & stocking
  – Food drives
  – Donor relationships
Opportunities for Nutrition Ed.

Fresh Produce Recipe Kits

- Encourages choosing fresh produce
- Encourages cooking from scratch
- Easy: nearly everything for recipe in bag
Opportunities for Nutrition Ed.

Recipe Cards

- Featuring foods available in pantry
- Additional nutrition info on back of recipe card
Opportunities for Nutrition Ed.

Taste tests

- Encourages choosing new produce items
Opportunities for Nutrition Ed.

Meaningful volunteer opportunities

- Warehouse sorting of foods into food groups
- Reading labels (protein example)
- Learning about nutritional importance of Choice Pantry system
- Shoppers’ helpers guide healthy choices
Opportunities for Nutrition Ed.

Promote food bank cooking classes

- Demonstrate recipes at classes using month’s USDA commodities & produce
Closing Discussion

- Questions
- Concerns
- Your Experience