

## **INFORMATION ON WRITTEN GUIDELINES**

Every food pantry should have a written set of guidelines to help the volunteers determine the eligibility of the clients. These guidelines should be written to ensure that everyone who comes in need is judged by the same standard. Your set of guidelines will have a lot to do with some of your operating policies but may have more to do with the reality of your community and the resources of your pantry program.

To come up with your own written guidelines, think about your pantry's priorities. You may want to consider:

1. Proof of client's residence (if you have chosen a service area).
2. Income (have income guidelines – some pantries use USDA income guidelines).
3. Employed, unemployed, low-employed.
4. Number of people in family or household (will you require birth certificates for children?).
5. Recent separation from source of income (will you require proof?).
6. Recent or chronic medical costs (will you require proof?).
7. Food stamps, AFDC family (not receiving yet, payments lost, trouble in being re-certified – will you require documents?).
8. Chronic need (will you require clients to apply for AFDC & food stamps if you feel help is needed more frequently than you can provide it?).
9. Number of times and how often a family can be served.
10. Does family have transportation (if not, will you deliver?).

Pantry guidelines will more than likely differ according to priorities and goals. For example, one pantry may prefer to automatically serve food stamp and AFDC families because they qualify for those programs and are low-income. Another pantry may strive to also serve more people who do not qualify for AFDC or food stamps but are low-income and in need.

When you decide on a set of guidelines, type them up and make them readily available should anyone be concerned about the fairness of distribution.

The Food Bank's concern is that food goes to needy people and that people are screened alike.