

# Minimum Standards Required to Become a Partner Agency

BVFB welcomes non-profit organizations, churches, and other groups that want to help in the cause of alleviating hunger in the Brazos Valley.

Please know that the commitment, time, and resources needed to run an effective food pantry or feeding program are great.

All agencies/programs that wish to become partner agencies of BVFB, to acquire food to distribute, must meet certain standards as well as agree to abide by certain terms and conditions.

Even if an agency meets the standards and agrees to abide by terms and conditions, BVFB still has the right to refuse membership based on the following:

- Lack of demand for food assistance in the community to be served
- Volume of food assistance programs already in the community
- BVFB resources required to service the agency and manage contract compliance
- Other factors deemed relevant by BVFB's New Agency Approval Committee (NAAC)

## Specific Standards

2 types of Partner Agency organizations qualify to apply for BVFB Status:

501c3 – independent non-profit Organization

IRS Qualified Church Organizations

The agency must have qualified under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Code as a tax-exempt organization.

or

Be a church or other religious organization as described in Section 170(c)2 of the IRS Code to which deductible contributions may be made.

To demonstrate this, the potential partner agency must present one of the following:

- Determination letter from the IRS. A determination from the IRS that is an “advance ruling” will only be acceptable during the period before a final ruling must be issued.
- IRS listing – an agency’s listing in the current edition of the IRS Cumulative List of Organizations.
- Group exemptions – An agency which is a subsidiary of a larger 501(c)3 status must submit a copy of the larger organization’s status (i.e., a local Catholic Church may submit the national Catholic exemption letter).
- Unincorporated church – Any applicant organization which is a church and does not have 501(c)3 status must submit a Church Qualifier Application completed and signed by the Chief Executive Officer affirming that the organization is in fact a church and has not applied to the IRS for 501(c)3 status and been denied, has not had its 501(c)3 status revoked by the IRS, and essentially meets the criteria employed by the IRS in defining a church.

In addition to meeting the criteria of being a tax-exempt organization or church, partner agencies must:

- Feed the needy, the ill, and/or children (defined as all children under the age of 18)
- Supply food directly to clients in the form of meals or food bags and/or boxes regularly - at least once a month on set scheduled days and hours.
  - \*The schedule must be made and displayed publicly so the community is aware of the program.
- Strictly adhere to eligibility criteria for distribution of food that is part of state and/or federal programs. Some of BVFB's product is obtained through government channels (USDA/TDA) and thus has restrictions regarding its distribution. Specific criteria, policy, and procedure can be found in [The Emergency Food Assistance Program\(TEFAP\)Handbook](#), see Appendix, page 66 or by contacting the Agency Relations/Mobile Pantry Coordinator at BVFB.
- Distribute all BVFB product to all persons who qualify for food assistance and not discriminate against any person based on one's race, color, citizenship, religious status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, political affiliation, unfavorable discharge from the military or status as a protected veteran.
- Have the capacity to receive, store, and distribute food safely and efficiently according to BVFB standards.
- Serve a minimum of 50% low-income clients if providing recreational services for which tuition or fees are charged. Primary service must be to individuals in need.
- Conform to the Agency Agreement and Liability Release standard as set forth by BVFB to maintain membership status.
- Be a member of and receive services from only BVFB (and no other Food Bank).
- Agree to support the BVFB with per pound Shared Maintenance\* contribution.
  - \* Collecting, sorting, packaging, handling, and storing food costs money. Partner agencies agree to help off-set a portion of these costs through a Shared Maintenance fee that is assessed on product received. The current fee is 15 - 19 cents (15-19¢) per pound. There is no Shared Maintenance fee on perishable products (breads and produce). Additional costs may be incurred by partner agencies who select products acquired through purchase.
- Be licensed or certified by health authorities, if required by the County.
- Allow monitoring by BVFB representatives (staff or volunteers) as requested.
- Limit food requested to an amount that can be distributed or consumed within a period of 30 days.
- Agree to contact BVFB before soliciting food from major donors – manufacturers, processors, distributors, brokers, wholesalers, etc.
- Keep records on clients (food pantries) and on food distribution and make those records available to a BVFB representative as requested.
- Use BVFB products only in a manner related to its exempt purpose and solely for the feeding of people in need stated by the Agency Agreement.
- Notify the BVFB of any changes in programs, personnel, addresses, contact phone numbers, and e-mail addresses.
- Complete Food Safety Certification and maintain certification by at least one staff/volunteer while agency is a Partner Agency, see Appendix, page 48 for training opportunities.
- Conduct and document annual Civil Rights Training with all of your staff/volunteers annually, see Appendix, page 72 and 73.
- Maintain temperature logs on any refrigerators/freezers at your site, see Appendix, page 127.
- Maintain pest control of food distribution storage and distribution site with supporting documentation.
- Agree NOT to:
  1. sell food received from BVFB
  2. exchange food received from the BVFB for good, services, or donations
  3. charge for meals served or food bags and/or boxes distributed.

# Process to Become a BVFB Partner Agency



## A. Meet Minimum Standards:

Carefully review the Minimum Standards outlined in the “Minimum Standards Required to Become a Partner Agency” section of this manual. If your feeding program can adhere to these minimum standards, proceed to step B.

## B. Complete BVFB Application:

Complete the partner agency application, make copies of all required documentation outlined in the application, and return all paperwork to the BVFB Agency Relations/Mobile Pantry Coordinator. This application can be found on our website ([www.bvfb.org](http://www.bvfb.org)) or by contacting the Agency Relations/Mobile Pantry Coordinator at (979) 779-3663 ext. 110.

- If the feeding program will occur at a church, the pastor of the church must sign off on the application, giving permission for use of the church (and/or its associated buildings).
- If a partner agency wishes to utilize BVFB products for more than one feeding program, a separate application must be submitted for each program.

## C. Pass a Site Inspection by a BVFB Representative:

1. The Partner Agency must have adequate, clean, dry storage for all products received from the BVFB at any one time.
  - a. Product must be:
    - Stored in a secure room that will prevent entry of bugs and rodents.
    - Stored on non-porous surfaces (no bare wood, rusty metal, or shelf-liner). Paint wood/metal with light-colored, oil-based enamel paint.
    - Stored properly. No repackaging of products.
    - Kept, whether in bags or boxes, six (6) inches off the floor. Storage on pallets or shelves four (4) inches of clearance from the floor and walls and two (2) feet of clearance from the ceiling.
    - Stored safely. The Agency guarantees that non-food items are stored separately from food. Non-food items should not be stored above or mingled with food. Do not store near steam or heat.
    - Kept in a clean and orderly area.
      - a. Refrigerators and freezers should be wiped down as soon as spills occur.
      - b. Cleanliness is defined as the site being free of spills, debris, and waste.

2. The Agency must keep the temperature of the pantry at a level that maintains the integrity of the food and product being stored there. Proper ventilation is important.
3. If the Agency receives perishable food from BVFB (produce, frozen items, etc.), it guarantees that it has adequate cooler and freezer space to store, transport, and deliver it safely.
4. The Agency must store all perishable items at safe temperatures.
  - a. Average safe temperature for refrigerators is 34°F to 40°F.
  - b. Average safe temperature for freezers is -15°F to 0°F.
5. The Agency agrees to maintain temperature logs, recorded every 48 hours. All refrigerators and freezers are required to have thermometers.
6. The Agency must have visually displayed state licensed pesticide application.
7. The Agency must have reasonable fire protection measures in place (i.e., fire extinguishers).
8. If the Agency distributes USDA Commodities, the Agency confirms:
  - All USDA grain products (flour, corn meal, rice, etc.) must be kept under 70 degrees Fahrenheit or refrigerated from May to September to deter contamination by pest invasion.
  - Must store USDA Commodities in a manner in which they are distinguishable from non-USDA Commodities in the storage area or unit.

D. Be Voted in by BVFB's New Agency Approval Committee (NAAC):

BVFB's NAAC will review your application as it is received. The information contained in your application, the outcome of your site visit, and confidence that the BVFB Agency Relations Coordinator has in your ability to adhere to all standards are taken into consideration by the NAAC before voting. The BVFB Agency Relations/Mobile Pantry Coordinator will give their opinion based on your program's demonstrated organization, structure, sustainability, and capacity to serve the targeted population.

\*Please ensure the application is legible, thoroughly completed, and clearly describes your program (or intended program).

E. Notification of Outcome of NAAC Vote:

If not voted in, your agency will be contacted via writing by the BVFB Agency Relations Coordinator and notified of the decision. This written notification will be sent via email and US Mail.

If voted in, your agency will be contacted via writing by the BVFB Agency Relations Coordinator and notified of the decision. This notification will be sent via email and US Mail.

\*Once an agency is voted in and notified of this decision, the agency is required to register their program with 211 – First Call for Help. This can be done by calling the local United Way at (979) 696-4483 and asking to speak to the Director of I&R Services.

# Commonly Asked Questions once approved as a BVFB Partner Agency

## How soon can I order food?

*Agencies can order food once they have been approved by the NAAC and gone through new agency orientation. New agency orientation will typically take place within 1-2 weeks after a formal NAAC approval.*

## Can we pick up our order or have it delivered?

*Either option is available for all partner agencies. Delivery is only available to orders over 1,500 pounds.*

## How do I place an order?

*A link to the online ordering website can be found on the Agency Portal of the BVFB website. Your agency will receive login info upon acceptance.*

## How often can we order food?

*Your agency may order food as often as your agency needs and is able to support.*

## How do I pay my invoice?

*New partner agencies are expected to pay invoices upon receipt of product. After this period, partners can use their current statements which can be downloaded from the portal – see page 41*