

School Pantry Program

Tool Kit



Good Shepherd Food

Bank

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Good Shepherd Food Bank (GSFB) is a proud member of the Feeding America Network. Our mission is to eliminate hunger in Maine by sourcing and distributing nutritious food to people in need, building strong community partnerships, and mobilizing the public in the fight to end hunger.

GSFB’s main warehouse and offices are in Auburn and we have satellite warehouses in Hampden, and Caribou. With over 600 partner agencies and growing, we are in the unique position to be able to help in serving nearly 200,000 Mainers every year.

Nearly one in four Maine children live in households that are considered food insecure by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This means that a quarter of Maine’s children are not receiving the nutritious food they need to grow, learn and thrive. Hunger is a problem that is harming our youth today, which means it’s a problem that will cripple our state in the future. In 2013, Good Shepherd Food Bank provided 200,000 meals for Maine children through our child hunger programs. Our goal is to grow that to 460,000 meals by 2018.

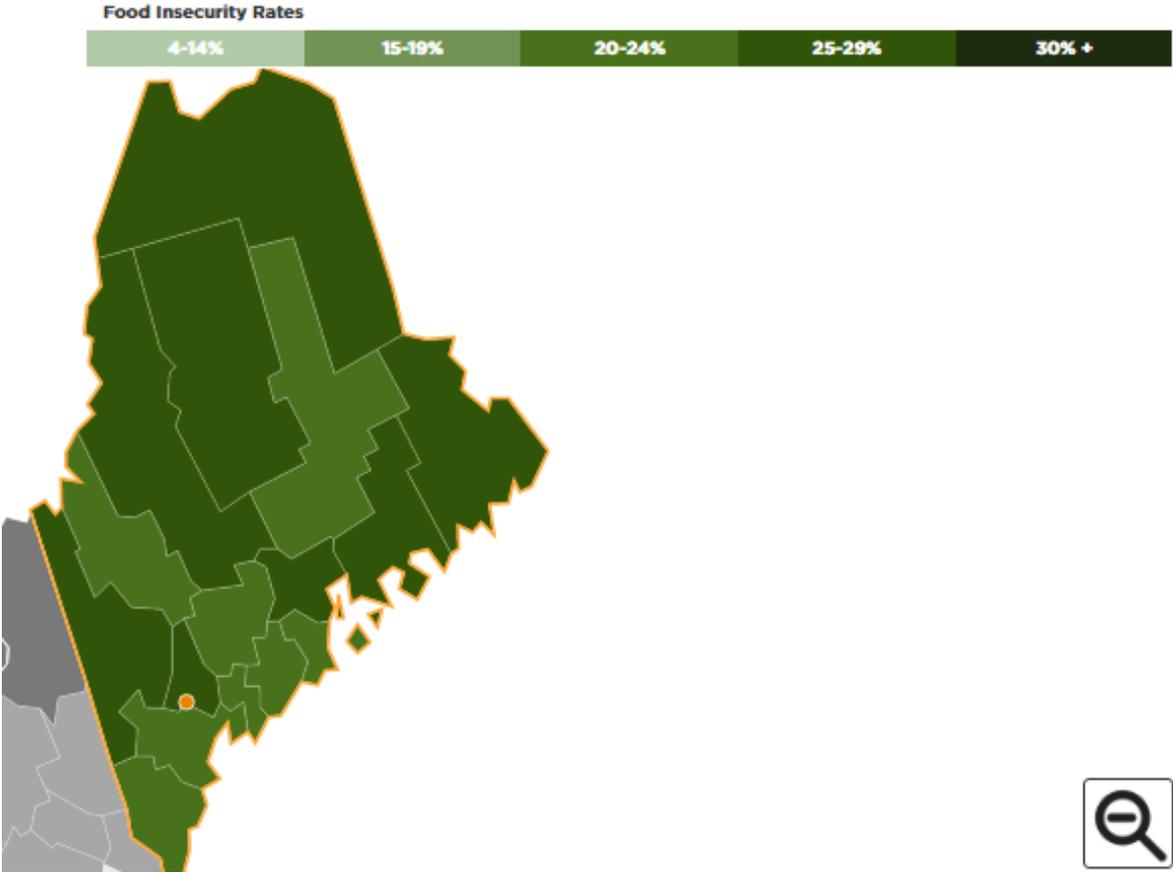
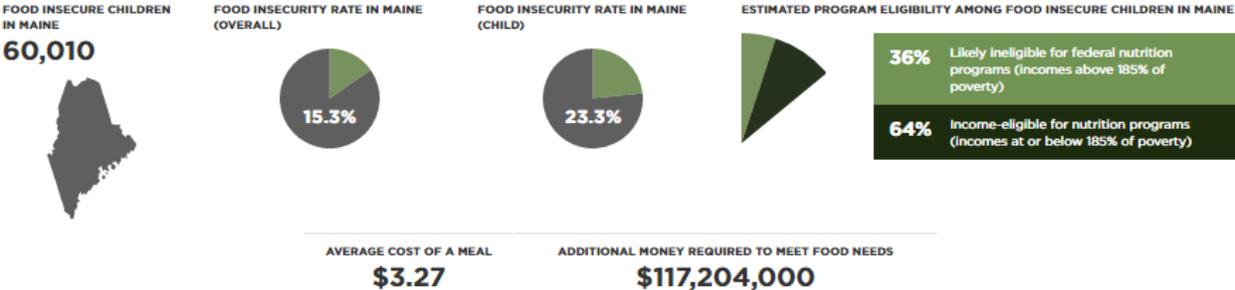


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Introduction

The purpose of this program manual is to assist interested individuals in the process of starting a School Pantry in their community. This tool kit will help to understand the different stages of planning, implementing and sustaining a School Pantry with Good Shepherd Food Bank (GSFB). It is important to read through the entire packet before you start to move forward to ensure you have a full understanding of the time and effort needed to start, and sustain, this program.

The School Pantry Program

Every day and in every school in Maine, there are children walking out the doors when the final bell rings worrying about where and how they will find enough food to fill their bellies before they walk back in. There is a solution. Before children head home to empty cupboards, the teachers and school staff that they already trust can bring them to the School Pantry to pick up an afternoon snack or dinner for their family.

In many communities, the school serves as the hub for resources, so school-based food pantries are a natural way to expand hunger relief efforts while targeting vulnerable populations that have been difficult to serve through traditional emergency food measures.

In the fall of 2012, Good Shepherd Food Bank launched a pilot partnership with the Portland High School Key Club, to open up Maine's first School Pantry. Since then, the School Pantry Program has gained support from local communities as well as corporate partners. During the 2013-2014 school year, the program grew to reach 39 schools in 13 counties.

What is a School Pantry?

A School Pantry is a food pantry located within a school. The goal of this program is to provide food insecure children with easy access to nutritious food, either during or outside of traditional school hours. The program provides a platform for community investment in the issue of child hunger. The program model is designed to be flexible to meet the unique needs of each school community, but to be considered a School Pantry site the following must be true of your operations:

1. The food for the program must be stored on school grounds for easy access to students and families.
2. Food must be distributed from the School Pantry a minimum of once per month from September – June.
3. Food must be given away free of charge to program participants.
4. Program participants cannot be discriminated against based on age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, disabilities, etc.

School Pantry sites can be operated in one of two ways. Community Sponsored School Pantry Sites are managed and funded as programs of a community based 501c3 nonprofit incorporated to serve

the ill, needy, or children, or a church. GSFB Sponsored School Pantry Sites are managed and funded as direct programs of the Food Bank.

Starting a School Pantry

Determining Readiness

Starting a School Pantry can be done in many ways, some connected to Good Shepherd Food Bank and some independently. We recommend reading through the case studies at the end of this manual to hear real life examples of how School Pantries are run. Some key questions to ask yourself and your community prior to starting the process of opening a School Pantry are:

- 1.) What is the need at our school and does a pantry seem like the best fit? (See Appendix 1 for Selecting the Most Appropriate Program Model tool)
- 2.) Is the school administration in full support of the program?
- 3.) Can you identify a space in the school that will respect student's privacy and store food safely?
- 4.) Is there a team of individuals invested both at the school and in the community to make the School Pantry successful and sustainable?

Site Eligibility

Due to the dramatic need for child hunger programming throughout the state, GSFB is only partnering with schools with **50%** or higher Free or Reduced Lunch rates. This is due to a number of different variables including; limited food supply, funding restraints, and staff size. Although the number may seem high it is important to note that Maine has around 400 schools with 50% or higher Free or Reduced lunch rates.

Schools that are **over 50%** free and reduced lunch rates are eligible to apply for partnership with a community based 501c3 non-profit willing to oversee the program as one of their organization's projects. *(See Getting A Program Sponsor for more information)*

Schools with free and reduced lunch rates of **70%** or higher are eligible to apply to be a GSFB Sponsored School Pantry Sites. Please note that acceptance of schools for direct programming will be extremely limited due to funding and staffing restrictions.

Good Shepherd Food Bank will review School Pantry applications twice yearly, from November 17, 2014 – January 21, 2015 and May 1, 2015 – June 30, 2015. Acceptance will be determined based on need, capacity of the applying partner, and a review of the Food Bank's internal resources to support the program. *(See Completing The Paperwork for more information)*

School Support

We recognize that every community in the state of Maine is different and the necessary contacts for program support are going to vary. However, it is extremely important to get complete support

from the school administration as early as possible. From our experience, at some schools it is necessary to gain backing from the school board while at others it is the principal that needs to give the approval. Wherever the consent needs to be confirmed, there needs to be a familiarization of the operating procedures of the program to ensure the school has the capacity in both staffing and facility to support the program. If the program site is approved, the program structure, location, degree of distribution size, and schedule should be planned in coordination with the Principal and his/her designee.

Community Support

Maine communities work hard to provide support to the food-insecure children in the state, recognizing that it truly does take a community to raise a child. The range of support that the School Pantry Program requires from the community can vary. Building community partners will help the school in establishing the necessary connections to funding and volunteer sources. Whether the sponsor is the local food pantry or not, it is a best practice to involve the food pantry in the whole process of developing the School Pantry. This will help to ensure partnerships are built and not competitions.

Becoming a School Pantry

Getting Started Without Good Shepherd Food Bank

Good Shepherd Food Bank is working hard to respond to the need of food-insecure children in the state of Maine but with limited food and funding resources, we cannot accept every school that wishes to start a School Pantry. Nevertheless, there are many ways your school can still operate a School Pantry without the Food Bank.

Start Small

The most successful School Pantries recognizes the size of their need and plan strategically on how to meet it. This often results in schools starting small to build a sustainable model. Some GSFB School Pantries that operated on their own prior to signing on with us, began their service through snacks to kids in school and slowly expanded to sending emergency meals home. To store food at the school, follow our food safety guidelines, outlined later on in the manual, as a best practice.

Finding a Partner Early On

Finding a non-profit in your community to sponsor your program from the start will only improve your chances of success. It will make on-boarding with us that much simpler as well as finding local support. Use existing hunger relief organizations in your community to learn best practices in your community. *(See Getting A Program Sponsor for more information)*

Shopping Wisely

If you are reading this manual it is likely that your goal is to feed hungry children in your community. To do so most effectively it is important to keep in mind nutrition and cost. The link between obesity and food insecurity is very real and puts certain responsibilities on the individuals providing food to these children. Taking into account the nutritional value of the food you are providing is critical to both the immediate need of the child and the long term health effects he/she could face. If you need help selecting nutritious options, please feel welcomed to reach out to us or your local [Healthy Maine Partnership](#). Although you will not be able to access the food discounts at GSFB, there are multiple ways to save money.

1. Coupon cutting (<http://www.couponmom.com/military--cut-out-hunger-31>)
2. Buying in bulk (<http://www.thekitchn.com/conscientious-cook-which-foods-64937>)
3. Buy at food discount stores (Family Dollar, Renys, etc.)
4. Look to see if there are opportunities for farm gleaning in your community (<http://www.umext.maine.edu/onlinepubs/htmpubs/4301.htm>)
5. Grow a School Garden
6. Host a School Appropriate Food/Money Drive (create a list of items your pantry needs and ask specifically for those so you can regulate what you are giving to the kids—nutrition is key!)

Making Your School Pantry a GSFB Partner Agency

Process Outline

1. Get a program sponsor
2. Complete paperwork
3. Schedule a program trainings

Getting a Program Sponsor

Why You Need a Sponsor

The first step in deciding whether or not your school is eligible to become a Good Shepherd Food Bank School Pantry Program site is to determine whether you are able to get sponsorship from a non-profit charitable organization, also known as a 501(c)3, that is incorporated to serve the ill, needy, or children, or a church. This distinction is key. Municipalities and parent teacher organizations are not eligible, as they are incorporated for other purposes. A best practice is to begin communication with your local food pantry early as they are often the best suited to support your School Pantry efforts.

Only schools with free and reduced lunch rates over 70% will be eligible to apply to be funded and managed as a direct program of Good Shepherd Food Bank. Selection will be highly competitive.

Finding a Program Sponsor

Within a community there will likely be many options to look for 501(c)3 or church sponsorship. Churches, food pantries, and rotary clubs have proven successful already with the program. It is helpful to have a lead person behind the sponsorship to enable a working relationship between them and the school site coordinator. The role of the program sponsor can range from heavily involved in all operations to simply providing the fiscal and legal sponsorship. Some sponsors shop for food, transport food from GSFb and organize food in the school. Additionally, they often serve as the liaison between the school and GSFb.

Building the Connections

When choosing a sponsor it is important to involve our Child Hunger Programs staff to ensure everyone involved is completely aware of their roles and responsibilities. We recommend organizing a planning meeting once potential partners are identified to discuss logistics and operations, from funding to administration, and determine whether your group has the resources necessary to make the program successful. You'll want to make sure the following people are in attendance: school principal, school site coordinator, sponsor program liaison, and if necessary a board member of the sponsor. Some first meetings are simply informative on program operations and expectations, others result in paperwork being signed and the scheduling of trainings at GSFb.

Completing the Paperwork

Step One: Complete a Child Hunger Program Partner Application.

The first step in becoming a School Pantry partnering with Good Shepherd Food Bank is to fill out our Child Hunger Program Partner Application. Applications will be accepted and reviewed twice yearly, between May 1st and June 31st and between November 1st and December 31st. A copy of our application can be found here, <https://www.gsfb.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/School-Application-2014.pdf>. If you have any questions about the application or the acceptance process, please contact Shannon Coffin at scoffin@gsfb.org.

Step Two: Accepted School Pantries will need to complete additional paperwork

School Pantry sites whose applications are accepted will be contacted by our Child Hunger Programs team and the following paperwork will be required before your site can begin receiving food from Good Shepherd Food Bank. Copies of required documents can be found in the appendix of this manual.

- Agency contract
 - o An agency contract will need to be completed by the 501(c)3 or church that is sponsoring you, this will enable your group to shop at Good Shepherd Food Bank and have access to additional benefits.

- The contract can be found here, <http://www.gsfb.org/help/partner-agency-resources/documents/>.
 - Any questions regarding this document should be addressed to the Vice President of Agency Services, Kathy Helming at khelming@gsfb.org.
- A Memorandum of Understanding
 - This document is between the sponsor and school
 - Legally it is best practice to establish a Memorandum of Understanding. A template of one is provided in the appendix, however the document is editable and made to be morphed to the expectations of both groups.
 - A program agreement with GSFB
 - This needs to be signed by both the sponsor and the school
 - The site information sheet is to be completed by the school. This will remind the group that a site coordinator at the school needs to be appointed.
 - Please note that if any of the information you provide on this sheet changes over time, it is required that you report it to the Child Hunger Programs team at GSFB.

Establishing Program Structure

Organizing Program Support

Prior to applying to become a School Pantry it is important to identify the people who will be supporting your program.

School Pantry Site Coordinator

The School Pantry Coordinator acts as the contact person for both the sponsor and Good Shepherd Food Bank. Additionally, this individual is expected to remain in touch with school administration as the program advances and changes are made. This person is on most occasions, an individual who is involved in all levels of the program structure. The responsibilities of the site coordinator include:

- Attending required school pantry program meetings and trainings
- Coordinating with school administration and staff
- Relaying training information to others involved in the program
- Coordinating ‘shoppers’ and/or online order placers
- Ensuring food is stored and distributed safely
- Training others on the process of tracking food distributed
- Maintain contact with GSFB, including sharing successes and complications

Shopping & Ordering

Your sites authorized shoppers are responsible for selecting food that is both safe and nutritious to distribute to students at the site. It is critical that prior to shopping or ordering the individual(s) look at the current stock to ensure food is not wasted. Ideally, all shoppers, whether online or in person, will have some training from either GSFB staff or the site coordinator on how to shop most efficiently for the population served. Every shopper should be educated on the budget of the School Pantry and the allowance for a shopping trip or online order.

School Pantry Helpers

These “helpers” can be parent volunteers, staff at the school, sponsor volunteers, or whomever the pantry sees fit. Being aware of the amount of time a volunteer is going to spend with children will help to determine if background checks are required. Utilizing school staff to serve as helpers will ensure that students always have access to food in times of need as they are on site during all operation hours. The duties of School Pantry Helpers will include:

- Maintaining first in first out rotation
- Continuing to monitor for food safety
- Help to meet the immediate need of children
- Tracking the amount of food distributed on the monthly tracking sheet
- Helping to distribute nutrition information is applicable
- Making sure there is enough support during distribution times

Pantry Location Requirements

Food safety components are the primary concerns around the pantry location requirements. However, a critical component is also to ensure control of the pantry. This requires that the location can be closed off and locked to prevent any unwanted actions.

Temperature

To ensure food in your school pantry is served safely, maintaining a safe temperature is critical. Finding a space within the school where the temperature can be controlled between 40-78 degrees is a requirement. If the pantry is utilizing a refrigerator or freezer than the temperature of each of those must be recorded on a daily basis. Attached in the appendix is a temperature log that is a helpful tool to ensure consistency. Our agency services team at GSFB will be monitoring your School Pantry at a minimum of once every two years. A temperature tracker of some sort must be present as part of this monitoring.

Storing

At GSFB there are many different product types that you can shop for including cleaning products, personal care, and food. If you determine there is a large need for some of these non-food items, we encourage you to utilize our supply within the salvage program. However, storing these products must be done in a regulated way. Chemical products absolutely cannot be stored in the same area as food. If space is limited, food and personal care can be stored on the same shelving as long as food

is stored above personal care products. The food must be stored at least 6 inches off the ground, this includes intermittent times when food is waiting to be shelved. Food must also be 4 inches away from the wall at all times, both of these measurements are in place to avoid pest problems. Pest control is mandated as well though your school regulations should already ensure that.

Cleanliness

Managing dirt and debris in the pantry is important for both pest control and other risk factors such as allergies. Regular sweeping and dusting of product is highly encouraged. Cans can become rusted as a result of dirt and advance the time frame of spoiling.

Distribution Models

The School Pantry Program operates in schools all over the country of resulting in an array of creative distribution models. Below are popular distribution models utilized by current GSFBS program partners. If you think of a model that is not included here, please reach out to our staff to talk through logistics.

Important factors to take into consideration when determining how to serve children in your school are access, timing, distribution and population. How are students going to gain access to the pantry, through referral or self-selection? When will food be distributed? How will food be distributed? Pre-packed or client choice are traditional models. Finally, to whom is the food distributed, students or parents? Identifying the answers to these questions will help you to build the strongest distribution model for your pantry.

Open Door Policy

Many schools decide that their school pantry will serve children at any hour while school doors are open. This ensures that food insecurity can be met at any level. Understanding the difference between chronic food insecurity and situational food insecurity may help to determine whether an open door policy is necessary. This model gives teachers the freedom to see a need in one of their students and respond to it immediately. In this situation it is best to have the pantry located in a place where it is constantly monitored to assure access and security. Some successful locations have been in nurse's offices, guidance counselor's offices, or the front office. In existing school pantries that operate with an open door policy it serves students who cannot afford an after school snack and students who need a grocery bag's worth of food.

Monthly Produce Giveaway

One of the great benefits of being GSFBS School Pantry Program Site is that the produce we have available is always free! This means for those school pantries that are on a tight budget, it is an opportunity for big cost saving with a nutritional punch. The model of the monthly produce giveaway is structured so that once a month a large order of produce and dry goods is dropped off. This event is a fantastic opportunity for nutrition education as well as resource outreach. Some schools have run the giveaway in sync with an event already going on at the school, such as a sports game or parent teacher conferences. Monthly produce giveaways are a great way to reduce stigma in

high need schools, usually this is done by combining produce distributions with other community resources and opening the event to the entire school community. This model is also exceptionally helpful for those schools that do not have access to refrigeration as it operated as a ‘just in time’ distribution. Dry product can also be distributed or stored in the on-site pantry to stock for other needs throughout the month.

Backpack Style

Good Shepherd Food Bank also runs a program called the BackPack Program which sends students with set menus of food in pre-packed bags every Friday before the weekend. The style of this program is appealing to many, but it does not allow for customization for individual children or the distribution of fresh produce. Some school pantries mix these two models by utilizing volunteers, school staff, and/or older students to pack bags for kids to take home every week from their School Pantry. This style is most appropriate for families that you know are facing chronic food insecurity. The bags can be tailored to the individual needs of the student and/or family, or mainstreamed to simply provide a source of each major food group.

***Important Reminder:** Regardless of the distribution model or models you incorporate into your program, you’ll want to start thinking early about how you will protect the dignity and privacy of students and families that you serve.*

Transportation Considerations

One important part of your School Pantry Program to consider is how you will get food from the GSFB warehouses in Auburn and Hampden, or from Catholic Charities in Caribou. While delivery may be an option in some communities it cannot be guaranteed for every school. Picking up online orders at our warehouse or sending volunteers to shop is a great way to utilize community volunteers who are available to help out during school hours. For more information about the warehouse closest to you and their hours of operation click here <http://www.gsfb.org/contact/>. If you would like to inquire about possible delivery options please call our Child Hunger Programs Team at (207) 782-3554.

Managing Your Pantry

After completing the process of determining the need in your community, finding a sponsor, meeting with GSFB’s Child Hunger Programs Team, and designing your pantry model, you are now ready to begin serving your community. However, there are some very important key skills to keep in mind during the process.

Identifying Hungry Students

First and foremost, you need to identify students that are facing food insecurity in your school. Some students will self-identify if you make the efforts to announce the new service over the intercom or send home notices. Other students will attempt to hide their needs. Share Our Strength is a national hunger relief organization which created a tool for schools to help identify hungry students. Please find the handout in the appendix.

Making Students Comfortable

It is very important to take the time to familiarize the individuals you are hoping to serve with the new program. In the case of the School Pantry Program, this is the students and parents. The size of need in your school is going to dictate how you help to make students and parents feel comfortable asking for food. If the need at your school is relatively small, keeping the pantry discrete and private is traditionally more successful. However if the need at your school hovers around 65% or more free or reduced lunch students, then eliminating stigma is best done by making the resource very well known. The fresh produce giveaway model is an important part of making individuals in the school community feel comfortable. It can very easily be framed to be part of school programming and simply a program offered. For tips on this please feel welcomed to reach out to our staff and/or review the case studies in the appendix.

Connecting Students to Other Resources

The School Pantry has been noted as building a stronger connection between parents and school staff because it allows the school to assist families in a new way. To take full advantage of that, it is fantastic when other information on resources in the community is available. Examples include; WIC, Food Stamps, Free or Reduced Lunch applications, health clinics, nutrition handouts, and many others. Utilizing your Healthy Maine Partnership branch to help disseminate some of this information will bring in another community advocate for nutrition.

Successful Shopping

GSFB School Pantry Program sites will have the ability to order food online as often as once per week and/or shop at our Auburn, or Hampden warehouses twice per week. You will notice on your first visit to a GSFB warehouse or our online ordering portal that there are different types of product available.

- Salvage Product: Salvage Product is product we receive through channels such as food donations, food rescue, and donations from grocery stores around that state. These dry goods are most typically \$.16 a pound or less and can be shopped for in person and/or ordered online.
- Fresh Produce: GSFB regularly receives donated, and purchases, fresh produce for our partner agencies and program sites. Fresh produce is always available with no shared maintenance fee or charge.
- Purchased Product: For the merchandise you do not find in salvage, we have purchased food. This food has been identified as priority items that pantries are always looking for but difficult to find. Due to having such a large hunger relief network in the state we are able to purchase this product at wholesale cost and turn that price around to you. Resulting in lower cost than in store but higher cost than salvage product.

As discussed earlier, as part of the onboarding process GSFB staff will train you on successful shopping for the School Pantry. To maintain these best practices it is important to create some

structure around who shops or orders, and the types of food they should be looking for. You will be allowed to have five individuals listed as designated shoppers, but only one log-in for online ordering. GSFB School Pantry Program Sites wishing to order online will be trained by our Agency Services Specialist.

Budget and Nutrition Planning

Keeping a low operating budget AND providing nutritious food is likely easier than you would expect. To start, utilizing our free fresh produce is key, this can be done with either just-in-time distributions or with refrigeration. To find access to a refrigerator, seek out local donors or some underutilized refrigeration already in the school. The average cost of feeding one child through the School Pantry Program is approximately \$125 for a school year. This can be significantly higher if you use more purchased product or significantly less if you heavily distribute produce.

Recording Keeping

Keeping accurate records of how many children and families your program serves is a crucial part of the School Pantry Program. Every month you will receive a link to an online reporting form where you or someone from your organization will need to record how many unique visitors you had at your School Pantry. Below you will find an example of our reporting tool and the instructions for filling it out. We do not require any identifying information such as name, age, grade, or family income to be collected at any time. If your school hopes to capture more data, you are welcome to however we caution you to be sensitive to individual's desire for privacy.

Additionally, each time you receive an order or shop at one of our warehouses, you will receive an invoice documenting what product you accessed, how many pounds, and the total cost and/or shared maintenance fees. These should be stored at your School Pantry site or with your nonprofit sponsor for two years.

GSFB Contacts

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Appendix

Case Studies

It All Started with Two Dozen Muffins and a Wooden Crate of Clementines

Where: East End Community School in Portland, Maine

What: School Snack Pantry

Background: Katie Wallace, a parent volunteering in her child's kindergarten classroom, noticed that some children did not bring a snack from home and so did not have any food to eat at snack time. Katie later reflected "it was excruciating to witness the handful of children watch their friends eat while they went without. I only had to see that once." The next week Katie brought in two dozen muffins and a wooden crate of clementines. Soon a couple more moms were bringing snacks too. Katie said, "That was how it started.... This was "our" problem and for now that was "our" solution."

Katie continued her efforts and gradually began to raise funds bit by bit to provide snacks to help students in all 24 classrooms in the school. Katie used limited funds that were donated by community members she knew and people who found out about her efforts to purchase boxes of pretzels, crackers, granola bars, etc. and distributed them to teachers. Teachers used these snacks during snack time to give food discretely to children who did not bring snacks from home.

Katie became a familiar face in the hallways of the school as she made her weekly rounds to the classrooms. A friend wrote an article in the local newspaper, *The Munjoy Hill Observer*, which brought in more donations. The EECS Parent Teacher Organization connected with Katie and helped raise additional funds. A parent researched and applied for additional funding to keep the program going which included a month of funding provided by the local branch of Bangor Savings Bank. Another parent donated a refrigerator. The program existed month to month until eventually EECS was selected by Good Shepherd Food Bank to take part in a school snack pantry pilot project that allowed the program to purchase non-perishable items at a greatly reduced cost and provided access to fresh fruit and vegetables at no cost. A donation of \$4,000 from Morgan Stanley to Good Shepherd Food Bank to benefit EECS funded the program from April 2013-August 2014.

Compelling Reason for Why: Many Mainers are facing greater and greater economic challenges each year; EECS families are no different. There are EECS families living without adequate food, heat, electricity, and clothing. Based on federal poverty guidelines, 79% of students at EECS qualify for free lunch (based on October 2011 data). While each child at EECS faces unique circumstances, programs like the snack pantry help level the playing field for all to obtain a solid education that will lead to a path out of poverty. School leaders, teachers, staff, and parents continue to work together to try to meet the basic needs of students and enhance a sense of community ultimately to educate students to their best potential.

The school offers free breakfast in the classroom to all students through a federally funded program. A healthy snack of fresh fruit or vegetables is offered to all EECS students three mornings a week (Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday) through another federally funded program. Families are expected to send their children to school with a healthy, mid-morning snack on Mondays and Wednesdays. At least half a dozen students per classroom routinely do not bring a snack from home. The Snack Pantry fills the gap for students facing hunger while at school and provides additional resources to send home to the students in need.

Before the new partnership, it cost approximately \$75 per week just to get a box of crackers into each classroom. The partnership now provides free produce, bread, and dairy, salvage food at 16 cents per pound, and food by the case at cost. Teachers now receive multiple boxes of snacks in their classroom and fresh produce on occasion. The nurse's office now houses the Snack Pantry which has a cabinet with shelves of cereal, oatmeal, mac and cheese, rice, pasta, and canned vegetables to be sent home. Teachers and social workers have been able to use the pantry as a resource for students that need to bring food home to get through the evenings and/or weekends and breaks.

Katie reflected on the growth of the program: *“The food security that this snack pantry has created for so many children and families is remarkable. So many people came together over the last four years in so many small, quiet ways, and created something immeasurable in its importance. For plenty of kids this isn't an issue, but for the kids for whom food security is a source of stress, anxiety, or shame, this is a miracle.”*

The Model

The Snack Pantry is a partnership between East End Community School and Good Shepherd Food Bank. EECS parent volunteers pick up non-perishable snacks at a greatly reduced cost from the Good Shepherd warehouse. Fresh produce, dairy, and bread is available for free. Snacks are transported in a volunteer's car and stored (in accordance with all Good Shepherd food storage guidelines) in the Snack Pantry cabinet and refrigerator in the nurse's office.

The Snack Pantry Program:

1. Provides snacks for teachers to distribute as needed to students who do not bring a snack from home on days a school snack is not provided.
2. Provides fresh produce, as available, for all EECS students. Teachers may choose to send produce home with students or use it as an additional classroom snack.
3. Assembles bags of food for use over weekends and/or school breaks for designated students. Teachers contact the school nurse or social worker to add a student to the list. Teachers are always welcome to select items from the pantry in the nurse's office to supplement for students as needed.
4. Offers fresh produce, as available, to all EECS families at school events such as Back to School Night, Parent-Teacher Conferences, etc.

Challenges the Program Faced

Our program is entirely parent-run and limited by storage space and volunteer capacity. The food pick-up, transporting, unloading, sorting, and classroom distribution typically requires at least a four hour time commitment each week. The assembly of 50+ bags to send home is an additional time commitment of several hours. A school-wide fresh produce distribution requires coordination of volunteers and logistics with the school's lunch program in order to use the cafeteria as a staging area.

Initially volunteers sent home bags of food every weekend but that was not sustainable with only two regular volunteers. Bags were then assembled and sent home before long weekends and school breaks. Hannaford donated tote bags for students to reuse, however, very few students returned the bags and so a shift was made to plastic bags also donated by Hannaford.

Bringing a food pantry to a school is a new concept for some. There have been a few negative comments from bystanders questioning the quality of the salvage food, i.e. expired dates on the packaging and/or the use of non-perishable snack food that is high in carbohydrates. These few comments are in the minority and are more likely a reflection of the bystander’s lack of awareness and understanding of the problem of food insecurity and the need of some families to rely on “food bank” food for survival.

In fact, a school-based, food pantry program is likely to help reduce stigma for students receiving free food. School pantry food is offered broadly, i.e. fresh produce to all students, snacks to students who may not be food-insecure but have just forgotten to bring it in one day. Students are already familiar with being offered “free” food through the breakfast and lunch program and so additional food being offered is not unusual in the school environment. The school snack pantry seems like a natural solution to link up students in need with surplus food in a way that builds community for all.

Partners Contributing to this School Pantry

- East End Community School
- East End Community School P.T.O.
- Good Shepherd Food Bank
- Morgan Stanley
- Arthur E. Davis, Jr. Family Charitable Fund of the Maine Community Foundation
- Bangor Savings Bank, Middle Street Branch
- Hannaford Supermarkets

For More Information:

Alison Grey Murray (EECS Parent Volunteer), Site Coordinator, wharey@yahoo.com

Fundraising for School Based Food Pantry

Where: Waterville, Maine

What: Gabbie and Alice’s Purple Panther Pantry

Compelling Reason for why:

School staff reporting extreme numbers of children in need of food outside of school. Percentage of students on free/reduced lunch support staff observations. Children who are hungry have more emotional, behavioral, health and academic problems. This impacts not only them but also the teachers who are working with them, as well as classmates getting less instruction time and more disruption. Something needed to be done.

George J. Mitchell School: Waterville’s only public elementary school with grades K-3.

		Percentage of Total Population
Total Student Population	551	100%

Students Receiving Free Lunch	354	64%
Students Receiving Reduced Lunch	24	4%
Students Paying for Lunch	173	32%

*data taken 1/27/2014

Educare of Central Maine: Early learning center attached to the George J. Mitchell School serving children from birth to age five. Placement in Educare is income based with preference given to low income families.

		Percentage of Total Population
Total Student Population	210	100%
Students Receiving Free Lunch	178	85%
Students Receiving Reduced Lunch	6	3%
Students Paying for Lunch	26	12%

*data taken 1/29/2014

The Model:

Our pantry provides food available every day school is in session that families with a child enrolled in the Mitchell School or Educare of Central Maine can take home. Food is sent home with kids, with parents and on occasion delivered to their homes. It also provides single-serving healthy snacks that the teachers can keep in their classrooms to give to students who do not have anything to eat at snack time.

In order to make this a stable long term resource, we wanted to raise enough money to fund the pantry for several years as a “rainy day fund”, while continuing to raise funds to operate on. Our initial goal was to raise \$5,000 in the 2013-2014 school year.

To help get the message out to our community, we utilized the media and it worked in our favor in a big way. We had an article in our local paper, and one on the local news, and through that received in the first month over \$12,000 in cash and grants- we were now funded for three years.

In February we were approached by two second grade girls who wanted to help. For their birthdays they were asking for food for the pantry in the school- their teacher asked if when they brought it in, if the PTO could “make a big deal about it” to not only thank them, but to inspire other kids to look around and see what they could do to make the world better. We turned to the media again, and started a furious social media, letter and phone campaign, as well as setting up a crowdsourcing website. The girls were in the paper, on the local news and radio, and on Yahoo.com’s good news blog. They have been giving interviews about the need in our school, and how they wanted to help. It got a lot of attention, and when they brought the food they had collected to the school, they found out that they had also raised over \$16,000- four more years of food was now in the bank- but

they weren't done. The selflessness of their birthday wish caught the attention of Ellen Degeneres, who invited them to come be on her show where she presented them with \$20,000 to donate to the school - five more years of funding was secured.

As of July 1, 2014 we have raised over \$55,000 to support the food pantry, which has been named after the two girls who not only raised the most money to support it, but also became the very public faces of helping end food insecurity for kids in our community. They have kept this problem front and center in the mind of our community, and have inspired other kids and adults to try to do something.

What we did to help make all this happen was contacting people. Contact the media, contact your mayor, senator, governor, president. Contact the high profile philanthropists in the community and the talk shows and magazines that have in the past been supporters of things like this. The lesson that was learned, and that made this so very successful is that it isn't that people don't care, it's that they don't know there is a problem. Raising awareness was all we had to do, and then the support came pouring in.

Challenges the Program Faced:

What to do and how to manage all the funds we had, and the taxing of such. Space, and predicting how much food would be needed. It took us awhile to get our arms wrapped around how much and how often to re-stock.

Partners Contributing to this School Pantry:

Major donors: Senator George J. Mitchell
Bill Alford
Ellen Degeneres/Shutterfly
Gabbie St. Peter & Alice Willette
Maine State Credit Unions Association

For More Information:

Jennifer Johnson
George J. Mitchell School PTO President
207-314-8449
MitchellSchoolPTO@gmail.com
<https://www.facebook.com/MitchellSchoolPTO>

Forms and Resources

1. Recognize the Signs of Child Hunger
2. Selecting the Most Appropriate Program Model
3. School Pantry Program Agreement
4. Memorandum of Understanding-Fiscal Sponsorship
5. School Pantry Monitoring Form
6. Monthly Participation Report
7. Non-Discrimination Policy
8. Cooler/Freezer Log
9. School Pantry Report Card



**SHARE OUR
STRENGTH**
NO KID HUNGRY



RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS OF HUNGER

"You do not need to ask which child is hungry because you can see it in their eyes and their actions. They are less attentive in school and it shows on their grades and test scores."

*-Lisa, Elementary School
Teacher, Saegertown, PA*

**LEARN MORE ABOUT HUNGER
IN OUR CLASSROOMS AT
[STRENGTH.ORG/TEACHERS](https://strength.org/teachers)**

Most kids won't tell you that they don't have food at home. But you can look for the signs.

Every parent knows that a hungry child is at risk. Hungry children can't grow, develop and learn like other kids. They have trouble focusing and getting along. Children who aren't getting enough food at home might complain often of headaches, stomachaches and other ailments. They will likely fall behind in virtually every way.

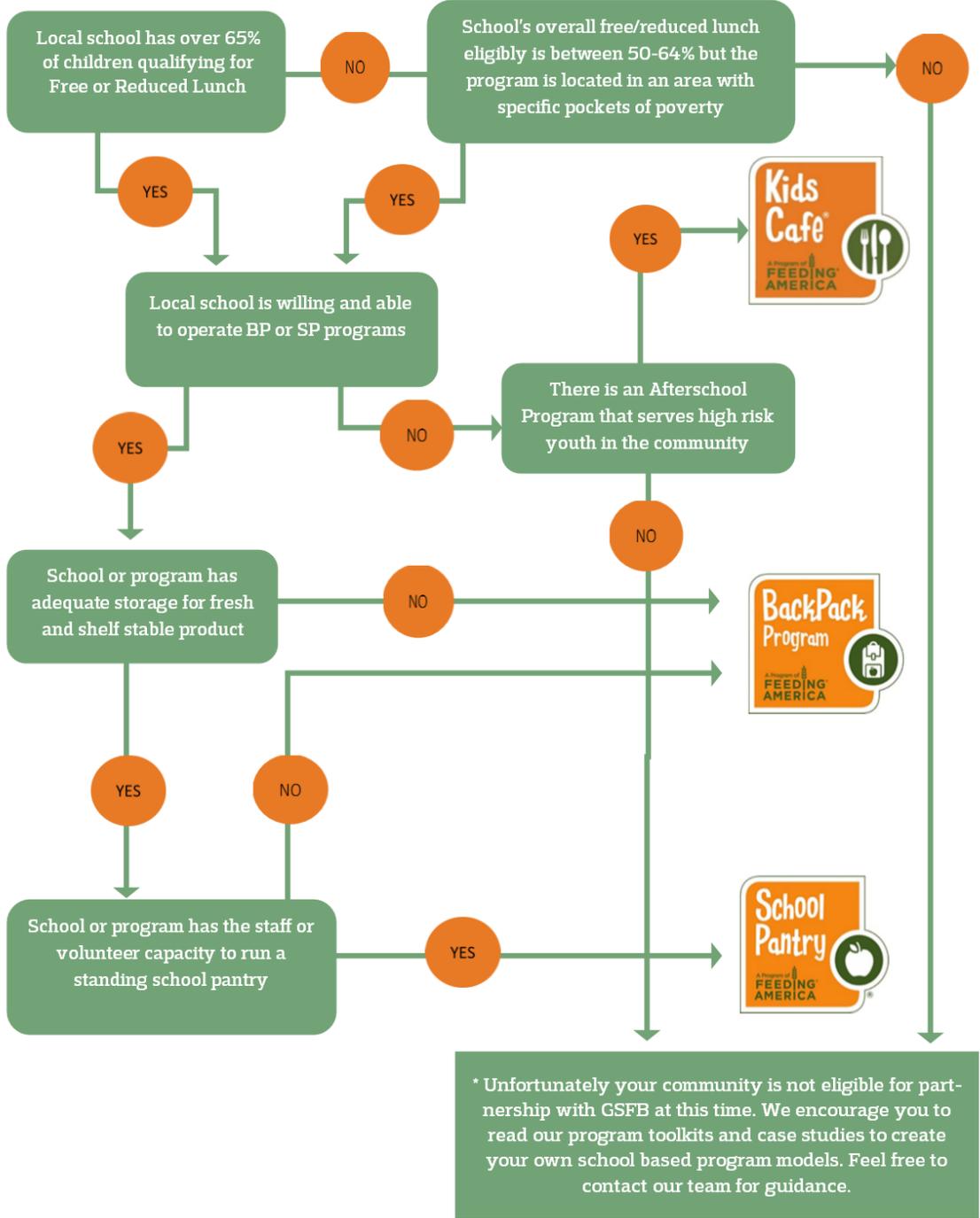
Here's how to recognize the signs of hunger. A child facing hunger may:

- Suffer from poor health, feel sick or tired often
- Sleep in class
- Have difficulty with math and language skills
- Be more aggressive and fight with classmates and teachers
- Feel anxious and have difficulty concentrating
- Exhibit slower memory recall
- Underperform and have poor grades
- Frequently miss school or arrive late

If you know a child who exhibits these behaviors, there may be more going on than what you are observing. Look deeper and when you find hunger, do something to help.

You can find resources at your school, your local food bank, and at strength.org/teachers.

What Program is Best For Your Community?





School Pantry Program Partnership Agreement

The terms of the following Agreement have been agreed upon and understood by Good Shepherd Food Bank and _____ (School Partner). By signing this agreement, both parties acknowledge their respective duties and responsibilities related to the administration of the School Pantry Program. The School Pantry Program meets the needs of hungry children by providing a readily accessible source of food assistance to low-income students and their families.

The School Partner agrees to:

1. Distribute food supplied by Good Shepherd Food Bank/Partner Agency to at risk children free of charge.
2. Have staff and volunteers with repetitive contact with children pass a National Background Search.
3. Ensure that the pantry site complies with all applicable federal and local statutes, ordinances and regulations.
4. Inform the Good Shepherd Food Bank and Partner Agency of any changes in School Pantry Program personnel, days & hours of operation, and/or number of children served.
5. Provide necessary information about the school/site.
6. Identify children that meet the eligibility guidelines for your school/site.
7. Use school records to identify food allergies the child may have (peanuts, milk, etc.) and flag their name so that those items will not be distributed to them.
8. Be available for at least one annual site visit by Good Shepherd Food Bank
9. Distribute food through the School Pantry a minimum of once per month throughout the school year.
10. Participate in periodic program evaluations from Good Shepherd Food Bank (*including but not limited to submitting quarterly program stories and completing end of year staff surveys*) and submit monthly counts of the amount of students who have accessed the pantry.
11. Communicate problems and requests to the Partner Agency & Good Shepherd Food Bank in a timely manner.

Good Shepherd Food agrees to:

1. Appoint a primary contact for the School Pantry Program providing oversight and leadership in program research, design and development, and collaborative guidance in program implementation. (*GSFB*)
2. Ensure that program partner meets national and local School Pantry Program objectives through annual monitoring inspections and periodic site visits during designated hours of operation. Any issues needing to be addressed will be communicated in writing to the program partner within seven business days. (*GSFB*)
3. Provide fiscal support for the operation of the School Pantry Program. (*Partner Agency*)
4. Provide or coordinate training opportunities for School Pantry Program staff and volunteers as appropriate such as program administration, safe food handling and nutrition education. (*Partner Agency & GSFB*)

This Agreement may be terminated at will by any party with written notice delivered to all parties not less than 30 days prior to the desired date.

Partner School Principal Signature

Date

Good Shepherd Food Bank President Signature

Date

Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement

This Agreement made this **XX** day of **MONTH, YEAR**, by and between **THE SCHOOL**, located in the **NAME OF TOWN**, County of **COUNTY** and the State of Maine, and the **AGENCY NAME**, a 501(c)(3) public charity, also located in said **TOWN**, County and State.

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, the **THE SCHOOL** wishes to take advantage of the services of Good Shepherd Food Bank in running its School Pantry Program; and

WHEREAS, Good Shepherd Food Bank's agreement with Feeding America only allows it to work through 501(c)(3) private charities and not public schools; and

WHEREAS, **THE AGENCY** has agreed to act as the sponsor of such a program; and

WHEREAS, the parties wish to clearly define the rights, duties and obligations involved with said sponsorship;

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties hereto agree as follows:

1. **THE AGENCY** agrees to complete the Good Shepherd Food Bank agency application, and agree to the Agency Contract and submit the same as to the sponsor for the **TOWN** area, which said application will be completed with the assistance of **THE SCHOOL**.

2. **THE SCHOOL** agrees, through its Principal and other staff and volunteers, to administer or help fund said program on behalf of **THE AGENCY** according to the Good Shepherd Food Bank Agency Contract.

3. Further, **THE SCHOOL** agrees to be responsible for overall oversight of said program and the compliance with the Good Shepherd Food Bank Agency Contract, including indemnifying and holding harmless, **THE AGENCY**, from all liabilities, claims, losses, causes of action, or suits at law.

4. **THE SCHOOL** shall ensure full compliance with the Agency Contract's compliance standards, and permit Good Shepherd Food Bank to monitor said program as specified within said contract.

5. This Agreement shall be for the term of one year and shall automatically renew unless terminated by either of the parties on sixty (60) days prior notice before the end of term hereof. Should **THE SCHOOL** fail to comply with the Agency Contract standards and **THE AGENCY** receive notice from Good Shepherd Food Bank, it will forward notice of such non-compliance immediately to **THE SCHOOL** and **THE SCHOOL** shall either bring itself into compliance within a reasonable period or **THE AGENCY** shall have the right to terminate this relationship based on said non-compliance.

6. This Agreement shall be enforceable under the laws of the State of Maine and shall be binding upon the parties hereto, their successors and assigns.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement the day and year first above written.

WITNESS:

THE SCHOOL:

NAME-Principal

WITNESS:

THE AGENCY

NAME:Director/President



Good Shepherd

FOOD BANK OF MAINE



School Pantry Program – Monitoring Form

CONTACT INFORMATION

Site Name: _____

Site Contact: _____

A. MONITOR INFORMATION

Monitor Name: _____

Monitor Title: _____

VISIT INFORMATION

Date of Visit: _____

Person Interviewed: _____

PROGRAM AGREEMENT STANDARDS

1. Are pantry food/supplies offered free of charge to children? Yes No N/A
2. Has at least one regular staff and/or volunteer on site received food safety training? Yes No N/A
3. Do staff and volunteers with direct repetitive contact with children receive a national background check? Yes No N/A
4. Is food distributed at least once a month? Yes No N/A
5. Is the distribution of "Foods to Encourage" emphasized in some way? Yes No N/A

STORAGE – GENERAL

1. The school pantry location is: Brick & Mortar Mobile
2. Are non-perishable foods stored at least 6 inches off of the ground? Yes No N/A
3. Are non-perishable foods stored at least 6 inches below the ceiling? Yes No N/A
4. Are non-perishable foods stored away from the wall to facilitate cleaning and inspection? Yes No N/A

- 5. Are non-perishable foods stored in a temperature controlled space? Yes No N/A
- 6. Are all foods stored away from cleaning materials and toxic chemicals? Yes No N/A
- 7. Are all foods stored in a clean and sanitary condition? Yes No N/A
- 8. Are there signs of pests where foods are stored? Yes No N/A

If "yes" please describe:

- 9. Does the facility complete internal pest inspections? Yes No N/A
- 10. Are foods stored in a space that has restricted access/is lockable? Yes No N/A

STORAGE – PERISHABLE

- 1. Are perishable foods stored properly in approved* refrigerators/freezers? Yes No N/A
*Some health departments require usage of commercial refrigerators/freezers.
- 2. Do all cold storage containers have thermometers? Yes No N/A
- 3. Are all thermometers calibrated at least annually? Yes No N/A
- 4. Temperature inside refrigerator:
- 5. Temperature inside freezer:
- 6. Are temperatures of cold storage units documented twice a day? Yes No N/A
- 7. Have there been any issues with perishable foods? Yes No N/A

If "yes" please describe:

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. If problems were noted during the last visit, have they been corrected? Yes No N/A
- 2. List problems identified:

- 3. List recommendations/ corrective actions as needed:

4. Other comments/observations:

SIGNATURES

By signing this form, I agree that the information recorded herein during this monitoring visit is accurate.

Monitor (Print)

(Signature)

Date

Site Staff Interviewed (Print)

(Signature)

Date

School Pantry Monthly Participation Report

Please try to count UNIQUE visitors to your school pantry, meaning if a family receives a bag of food every week you would only count them 1 time per month.

* Required

Reporting Month *

Choose ▼

School *

Choose ▼

Children Served *

The number of children served with snacks or other food meant only for them

Your answer

Families Served *

The number of families who receive bags or boxes of food on a regular basis

Your answer

Produce Distribution Participation *

The number of individuals who attend monthly produce distributions

Your answer

SUBMIT

Non-Discrimination Policy

ATTENTION SCHOOL PANTRY PARTICIPANTS

Good Shepherd Food-Bank prohibits discrimination in all its programs and member agencies on the basis of race, religion, color, age, sex, disability, national origin, or political affiliation.

To file a complaint of discrimination write to Vice President of Agency Relations, Good Shepherd Food-Bank, PO Box 1807, Auburn, ME 04210-1807 or call 207-782-3554.



Good Shepherd
FOOD BANK OF MAINE

partnering to end hunger

School Groceries Report Card

 = Yes, I agree!

 = I somewhat agree

 = I do not agree

  	I like the food that is available to take home.
  	I get to take home enough food
  	I share the food with my family
  	I like to take home fresh fruits and vegetables
  	I feel comfortable taking food
  	I have learned something new about nutrition