

How to Become a Member Agency of Tri-State Food Bank

Member Agency Requirements – Things You Should Strive For.

Tri-State Food Bank has certain requirements that must be met in order for your food program to successfully gain access to our programs and products. The following is a list of requirements and helpful “Food Language Tips” for your group to follow:

1. Be an “established” food center. Tri-State Food Bank (TSFB) requires that all Partner Agencies applying for membership be active in food distribution. If you have been distributing food on holidays or on a monthly basis you qualify as “established.” Even if you have only been distributing food during the holidays or as special needs arise you are considered an established pantry. When describing your food outreach program make sure you state what you’ve done in the past and what you plan to do in the future.
2. Be a 501(c)3 nonprofit, or qualify under the 14 points church exemption.
3. Be “self-supporting” and able to provide your own food, money and staff.
 - a. Food – You will probably need other sources of food besides that provided by TSFB. There are several ways to gain food donations: Local food drives – Hand out flyers in your community asking for donations which will be picked up on a set date.
 - i. Ask your local food store manager for donations and for permission to set up a donation box in his/her store.
 - ii. Ask other clubs, organizations, churches, or places of employment to sponsor food drives for your center.
 - b. Money – The food from the TSFB is not always free of charge, so those in charge will want to know how you plan to pay for your product. One acceptable way of paying for the food is by including it in the budget and collecting donations.
 - c. Staffing – TSFB will want to know who is going to run the program. It can easily take a couple of hours to sort and stack product received from TSFB.
4. Distribute food to the community “at large” – TSFB requires that service be given regardless of race, ethnic origin, religion, sex, age, or any group membership.
5. Have “established” day(s) and hour(s) you are open to the community (Example: Monday 10:00 a.m. until noon.) You need to have established hours of operation for your center. You may distribute food at other times of the week from referrals or on an emergency basis.
6. Have “written” guidelines for accepting and refusing recipients. This is the time to determine which of the poor in your community will be helped. Set up a screening that works best for you and your clients. TSFB uses the 150% of poverty guidelines for one of its programs. There is no income verification required outside of the client’s self-certification that the information provided is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge. It is also possible to create restrictions based on service area including: county, town, or zip code.

How to Become a Member Agency of Tri-State Food Bank

7. Have a separate, locked storage facility with refrigerator and freezer space, if possible. You need to have a designated room for dry storage that has food stored at least 6 inches above the ground and 4 inches away from the wall. All windows need to be covered and you should have adequate heating, cooling and ventilation. Thermometers should be placed in each room, refrigerator and freezer storage area.
8. Keep accurate records – Most food banks are partially funded by government programs or grants which require them to report records, such as the number of people served. You may also want these figures available to show what you are doing in your community. You need to record how many people you serve and their age groups.

To fill out an agency membership application, visit www.tristatefoodbank.org and click on the Agency Resources page to complete the online form. For more information, please contact the TSFB Director of Agency Relations and Programs at 812-425-0775 or by email at agency@tristatefoodbank.org.