



**HUNGER  
PREVENTION  
COUNCIL**

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**PIERCE COUNTY**

# **Volunteer Handbook**

**Hunger Prevention Council of Pierce County, Inc.**

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*Our mission is to  
reduce hunger  
and provide  
access to  
healthy foods  
across Pierce  
County.*

## **To Our Volunteers**

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### **Thank you!**

Our food pantry could not operate without a group of committed, long-term community volunteers. Volunteers play a key role in helping us fulfill our mission. It is crucial that we continue to promote a favorable and lasting impression of Pierce County Food Pantry in the minds of everyone with whom we interact, including clients, donors, media, volunteers and the general community. Our volunteers are important to us and we ask for your help in creating a safe and meaningful volunteer experience. With that, all volunteers must review and acknowledge receipt of our organization policies and procedures. We appreciate your service!

### **About the Handbook:**

This handbook is designed to introduce you to the Pierce County Food Pantry and to provide a basic overview of the policies and procedures that provide all of us guidance and direction at the food pantry. As a volunteer, you are provided with a safe work environment, necessary job training, supervision, evaluation and recognition.

In return, we expect you to honor your commitment to the Pierce County Food Pantry, respect other staff members and perform your assigned duties to the best of your abilities.

As our organization grows and changes, there will be a need to modify policies, practices and other information in this handbook. An up-to-date copy of this handbook can always be found at the registration desk.

If you have any questions or need any clarification of the information contained in this handbook, please contact the pantry coordinator.

Pierce County Food Pantry Coordinator  
Hunger Prevention Council of Pierce County, Inc.  
[hungerprevention@gmail.com](mailto:hungerprevention@gmail.com)  
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## Policies and Procedures

### Hours of Operation

The Pierce County Food Pantry distributes food on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30am – 12:00pm and Wednesday from 4:00 – 6:00pm. Volunteer drivers, stockers and cleaners are needed at other non-operation hours.

### Scheduling & Sign In

Each volunteer decides how much time to give volunteering at the Pierce County Food Pantry. Each volunteer works with the pantry manager during orientation to determine the times and duties that work best for the individual and the pantry. A monthly schedule will be posted for volunteers to sign up for shifts.

Please sign in and out on the volunteer sign in sheet. Tracking volunteer hours is vital to our grant funding process.

### Training


Volunteer training typically includes a tour of the facility and an introduction to the other volunteers with whom you will be working. The pantry manager will meet with you to explain rules, regulations and procedures.

The pantry manager or their delegate shall have primary responsibility for design and delivery of on-the-job training of volunteers.

Volunteers will be informed of hazardous aspects, materials, equipment or processes that they may encounter while performing volunteer work. Volunteers will be trained and equipped in methods to deal with all identified risks.

### Equal Opportunity

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.



Low income individuals are at increased risk for both food insecurity and obesity.  
~*The State of Obesity*

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Form, (AD-3027) found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
  - i. Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
  - ii. 1400 Independence Avenue, SW
  - iii. Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## **Harassment Policy**

The Pierce County Food Pantry wishes to provide its volunteers with a professional and congenial work environment. The Pierce County Food Pantry expects its volunteers to treat one another with courtesy, consideration, and professionalism.

The Pierce County Food Pantry strictly prohibits discrimination or harassment. The Pierce County Food Pantry will not tolerate conduct by any volunteer, which harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's work or creates an offensive or hostile work environment.

## **Grievance Procedure**

If you have a problem or complaint, you should feel free to submit a complaint to the pantry manager. You are encouraged to bring your concerns up for discussion. If your concerns cannot be settled at this level, you have the option of filing a written complaint with the board of the Hunger Prevention Council of Pierce County.

## **Drug-Free Environment**

The Pierce County Food Pantry strictly prohibits the use, sale, dispensing, possession, or manufacture of illegal drugs and alcohol in the workplace or while engaged in Pierce County Food Pantry activities.

## **Smoking**

The Pierce County Food Pantry is a non-smoking facility. Please refrain from smoking within 20 feet of all entrances of the building. No smoking is allowed in Hunger Prevention Council vehicles.

## **Absenteeism and Substitution**

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties as scheduled. When a volunteer expects to be absent from a scheduled day, the volunteer should inform the pantry manager as far in advance as possible so that alternate arrangements can be made.

## **Review, Evaluation, Termination of Volunteer Service**

Each volunteer is encouraged to review and evaluate each activity that he/she is involved in at The Pierce County Food Pantry. The Pierce County Food Pantry believes in constructive evaluation of projects and welcomes new ideas from volunteers. The Pierce County Food Pantry strives to utilize volunteers efficiently and in a way that creates the most positive outcome for both the volunteer and the Pierce County Food Pantry. Volunteers are encouraged to bring to the attention of the pantry manager any issues concerning volunteer matters. Volunteers have an opportunity to present their concerns and complaints through an open communication procedure.

If at any time a volunteer at the Pierce County Food Pantry is in conflict over a volunteer position, staff or volunteer behavior, and/or general problem, the Pierce County Food Pantry has the authority to request written complaints from all parties, discuss termination of volunteer activity, move the volunteer to a new position, or request the volunteer to discontinue volunteering at the Pierce County Food Pantry.

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the Pierce County Food Pantry may be subject to dismissal. Possible grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct or insubordination; being under the influence of alcohol or drugs; theft of property, food or other donated items; misuse of organization equipment or materials;

abuse or mistreatment of clients or co-workers; failure to abide by organization policies and procedures; inability to meet mental or physical standards of performance, and failure to perform assigned duties.

## **Records**

Every volunteer is entered into the Pierce County Food Pantry's record database. Each activity the volunteer is involved with and the number of hours are recorded in his/her file. Please notify the pantry manager with change of address, phone, and email as needed.

## **Benefits**

The Pierce County Food Pantry says thank you to volunteers in a variety of ways. Throughout the year, thank yous are given for different projects and volunteer involvement. The Pierce County Food Pantry searches for creative and new ways to thank and recognize volunteers, hoping to surprise volunteers who go above and beyond the call of duty. Suggestions are welcome!

## **Media**

If any media outlet contacts you regarding information or an interview about the Pierce County Food Pantry, please refer them to the pantry manager.

## **Childcare**

Childcare is not provided for volunteers during volunteer service. Children must be 12 or older to volunteer and accompanied by an adult if under the age of 16. We do have programs available for children under 12 to help encourage their involvement in our mission.

## **Inclement Weather**

If the Ellsworth School District cancels school due to weather, the Pierce County Food Pantry will be closed. If the pantry is closed, do not report for your volunteer assignment. In the event of inclement weather, use your best judgement. If you do not feel safe traveling to the Pierce County Food Pantry for your volunteer assignment, contact the pantry manager and inform him/her of the situation. You are not required to report to the food pantry in the event of inclement weather.

## **First Aid/Emergency Procedures**

A first aid kit is located [REDACTED]. In the event of an accident or injury, notify the pantry manager immediately. You may be asked to fill out an accident report.

In the event of a fire, you are instructed to take the nearest exit, proceed out of the building immediately, and congregate at the north end of the chiropractor building. Call 911 for an emergency.



## Nutrition Policy

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### 1. Guiding Principles

Pierce County Food Pantry will:

- Commit to supporting the health of our clients by prioritizing the distribution of recommended USDA's *MyPlate* foods and nutrients such as:
  - Fruits and vegetables
  - Low-fat or no fat dairy and milk products
  - A variety of protein foods
  - Foods low in sodium
- Limit the distribution of foods with refined grains, solid fats, trans fats, added sugars, and sodium
- Seek to provide basic staples to support meal planning and preparation such as cooking oils, flour, sugar, etc.

Pierce County Food Pantry limit distribution and discourage donation of:

- Sugar sweetened beverages (soda, fruit drinks, energy drinks, etc.)
- Candy

### 2. Donated Products

Pierce County Food Pantry will:

- Encourage donation in line with USDA's *MyPlate* recommendations by regularly communicating with donors
- Actively seek fresh produce donations from community partners
- Consider the nutritional value of bulk donated products and refuse any donation that fall under food categories of products that Pierce County Food Pantry will not distribute

### 3. Non-donated Products

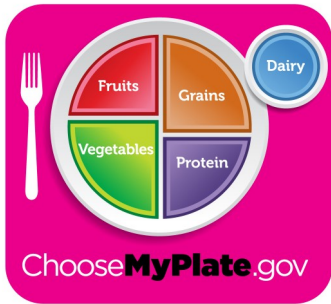
Pierce County Food Pantry will:

- Secure whole-grain cereals, breads, rice, crackers, pastas, and other grains ("whole" grain listed as the first ingredient on product package)
- Secure a variety of fresh, canned, and frozen fruits and vegetables
- Secure canned fruits packed in 100% fruit juice
- Seek to purchase a variety of lean protein food items such as meat, fish, poultry, beans, and nuts
- Secure low-fat and non-fat dairy products
- Secure low-sodium or no-salt-added canned and processed products
- Prioritize the inclusion of basic staples in product purchases
- Take into consideration the cultural preferences and special dietary needs of clients

## 4. Product Placement and Selection

Pierce County Food Pantry will:

- Communicate client choice/selection practices to all new pantry clients
- Provide flexibility with choice selections to accommodate special dietary needs and cultural food practices
- Prominently place food products meeting USDA's *MyPlate* recommendations making them more visible to pantry clients
- Highlight USDA's *MyPlate* recommended foods to increase with a symbol indicating a smart choice
- Incentivize the selection of fruits and vegetables
- Distribute all fresh fruits and vegetables as a "free choice"



## **Food Safety Policy**

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### 1. Donated Products

Pierce County Food Pantry will accept the following foods:

- Foods in their original, sealed package with an ingredient label and code date.
- Manufactured food that is clearly within the 'Use By' or 'Sell By' date
- Perishable foods in sealed packages with donor information and product dating
- Perishable foods where temperature control has been strictly maintained
- Fresh produce grown using good agricultural practices, that is free of decay and reasonably clean

Pierce County Food Pantry will not accept the following foods:

- Home canned or home preserved foods
- Home prepared meals or desserts
- Foods with evidence of spoilage
- Rotten fruits and vegetables
- Opened packages of food
- Foods in crushed, dented, rusted or broken/open containers
- Foods where there is evidence of product leakage
- Foods where there is evidence of insect damage or infestation
- Foods past their 'Best By' or 'Use By' date
- Packages of food that are excessively dirty or soiled
- Foods not from a retail business

### 2. Guiding Principles

Pierce County Food Pantry will:

- Maintain a clean, well-kept facility
- Transport, handle, and store food in a food-safe manner
- Handle, store and distribute produce safely
- Keep up-to-date records of food inventory
- Keep appropriate temperature records
- Update policy documents as needed, keep signed health policy documents on hand
- Store non-food items and chemicals away from food
- Repackage food only where allowed and following a food-safe policy
- Discard food that is potentially unsafe for distribution (not place it on the "free" shelf for pantry clients)

## **General Safety Guidelines**

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Employees and volunteers of the Pierce County Food Pantry shall adhere to the general safety guidelines governing our operations. General guidelines are reviewed at the time of employment or volunteer entry into our program.

1. Floors must be kept free of debris or substances that might constitute a tripping or slipping hazard. Employees or volunteers responsible for a spill shall clean it up immediately.
2. Running horseplay or practical jokes are prohibited due to potential slipping, tripping and collision hazards.
3. Use of personal audio equipment with or without headphones is not permitted while working during service hours.
4. Cell phone use is not permitted in work areas and should only be used in designated employee/volunteer areas.
5. Employees and volunteers representing the Pierce County Food Pantry will wear clothing appropriate to their work assignments. Clothing should be in reasonably good condition and clean.
6. Employees and volunteers are expected to wear shoes while working. Closed toe shoes are required in the storage and distribution areas.
7. Employees and volunteers must not attempt to fix or modify a piece of equipment without the approval of the pantry manager.
8. Electrical power to any piece of equipment should be turned off and the power disconnected prior to attempting to fix the equipment.

## Driving Policy

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### Policy:

Pierce County Food Pantry has need for volunteer and paid staff drivers for our company vehicle. Individuals who apply or are selected for driving responsibilities must meet the following criteria and agree to a verification of their driving record. Individuals who do not meet the criteria or refuse to have the verification performed may not drive Hunger Prevention Council vehicles at any time.

### Guidelines:

1. Individuals being considered for driving responsibilities must submit to a verification of the driving record. The *Consent of Motor Vehicle Record Check* form must be completed and submitted to the pantry manager.
2. The completed form is provided to the manager and the verification is performed online.
3. Individuals being considered for driving positions must not have a record of a DUI citation or more than two traffic violations in the last two years. Additionally, drivers with permits, who must have a licensed driver in the vehicle with them when they drive, are excluded from driving privileges for Hunger Prevention Council of Pierce County.

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## **Organization Information**

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Hunger Prevention Council of Pierce County, Inc.

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