Program Guide

Backpack Program Site Requirements

Site Responsibilities

Client Identification

- Backpacks are intended to assist children who are missing meals over the weekend. Each bag provides enough food for a family of four and snacks for after-school during the week.
- You may use verbal or non-verbal symptoms of hunger to identify families in need (e.g. frequent illness, poor behavior, asking about or saving food, low attendance/academic performance, or unstable home environment). See the 'Criteria to Identify Backpack Participants' for more guidance.
- Various staff may refer families to participate, including but not limited to: social workers, parent coordinators, cafeteria staff, office staff, teachers, and the school nurse who have regular encounters with child.
- Backpacks are intended for the same recurring families

Staffing

- Partners must identify one individual to serve as a program lead and to remain in contact with your Child Nutrition Specialist.
- Additional staff or volunteers should be able to dedicate an average of two hours per week to receive, store, and distribute backpacks.
- Staff and volunteers who regularly assist with the program must have passed a national background check.

Receiving a Delivery

- Delivery frequency depends on partner location, order size, and transportation capacity.
- Backpacks arrive in stackable boxes (1' x 1.5' x 1') that hold three bags each and weigh 30 pounds.
- Backpacks may be unloaded using a pallet jack. Sites should have a ramp and 4 ft wide doorway that the pallet jack can pass through, or have volunteers ready to help unload.

Storage Space

- Backpacks must be stored in a secure area 6 inches off the ground away from chemicals and moisture.
- Storage should accommodate: A 4 ft x 4 ft pallet space for every 120 backpacks. If receiving large quantities or less frequent deliveries, there should be space for several pallets.
- Suggested storage areas include: an empty room/closet, or dry storage in the cafeteria.

About

St. Mary's Food Bank's Backpack Program works with community partners to identify children who are experiencing hunger at home and to provide them with a weekly bag of food (Backpacks) to help their families throughout the weekend.

Questions

Contact Child Nutrition Program Lead

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Food Safety

- Backpacks do not require refrigeration, but the boxes they arrive in should be stored on a pallet, crate, table or shelf.
- At least one person on site must have a Food Handler's Card or must complete SMFB training to satisfy this requirement.
- The storage area must be clean and pest free.

Backpack Distribution Area

- The distribution area should have space for children to wait (if needed) and for staff to move around safely and comfortably.
- Distribution should involve a consistent process, time, and place.
- Backpacks may be brought to classrooms or to the dismissal area. Parents or children can also pick up backpacks from a designated location.

Backpack Distribution Process

- Distribution may take about two hours/week, depending on the number of families served.
- Backpacks should be provided to each child identified on your list, every week.
- Groups such as Student Council or parent volunteers may assist with distribution. They may also use a cart to move bags if needed.
- A second day of distribution may be required on order to provide bags to children who were absent on the regular distribution day.
- When distribution is complete, boxes must be broken down and stored off the ground for SMFB to pick up on the next delivery day.

Reporting

- Use lists of pre-identified students to track distribution each week, or another process approved by your Child Nutrition Specialist.
- Submit weekly distribution records to your Child Nutrition Specialist by using electronic submissions format.

Managing Inventory

- Backpacks should be sorted and stored by menu number for proper distribution and inventory management.
- Partners should not have excessive backpacks remaining after distribution. Contact your Child Nutrition Specialist if this occurs for an order reduction.

Next Steps

Contact Child Nutrition Program Lead

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