St. Mary's Food Bank®

Backpack New School Year

BackPack Program

A Program of FEEDING AMERICA

Backpack Overview

- St. Mary's Backpack Program partners with schools and community organizations to identify children facing hunger.
  - Each week, participating children receive a bag of nutritious food to help their families through the weekend—when school meals aren't available.
    - 1 backpack serves a household size of four.
    - Max of 2 backpacks per family, should they have more than one child at the school.
    - Program is designed for school age, 5-18.
- This program bridges the gap for families with limited access to food assistance, ensuring no child goes hungry when school is out.
- 100% donor funded, so full caseload participation is imperative.

St. Mary's Food Bank®

What is a Backpack?

Backpacks are filled with nutritious, non-perishable foods, purchased by St. Mary's Food Bank. Each durable, white plastic bag contains enough food to help supplement a family's meals over the weekend.

Our backpacks menu provides families with the opportunity to cook and enjoy meals together.

"*Weekly Backpack Menu 2025-2026*"

9 lbs

10 retail food items

2 Menus

Purchased food, NOT donated.

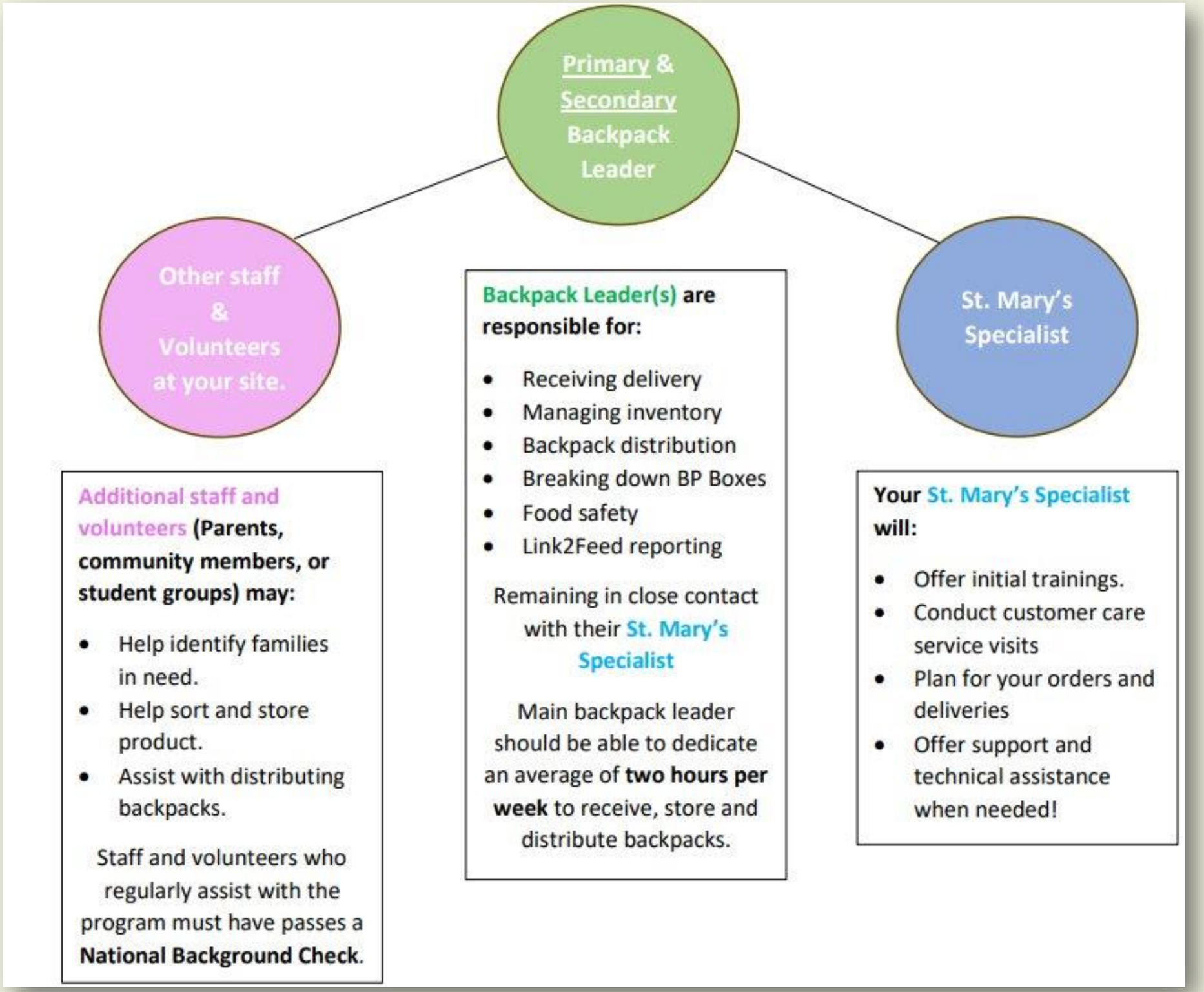
Feeds a family of 4

Value over $8 each

Partner Responsibilities

- ✓ Identifying secure space to store Backpacks.
- ✓ Identifying a staff/volunteer as Backpack site leader.
- ✓ Sending out notifications to staff of the program participation.
- ✓ Create and maintain the roster for participants.
- ✓ Notification to families of program participation.
- ✓ Request new year Backpack quantities.
- ✓ Receive deliveries, distribute packs, and maintain inventory.
- ✓ Complete weekly reporting via Link2Feed.
- ✓ Complete annual required:
  - ❑ Agreement
  - ❑ Training
  - ❑ Document submission:
    - Background check attestation
    - Training attendance attestation

Site Leader Responsibilities



Food Safety Guidelines

- Site leaders and staff involved in product handling must either:
  - Hold a current Food Handlers Card/Certification.
  - Complete our ***FREE*** Internal Food Safety Training (see your Advocate).
- Food safety best practices:
  - Inspect inventory regularly (at least monthly).
  - Immediately report food safety concerns to your Advocate:
    - Providing a photo of the condition.
    - Do not dispose of the item(s), SMFB *may* pick up for source investigation.
- Practice *First In First Out* (FIFO).
- ***When in doubt, don't hand out***

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Roster Requirements & Management

- Each site must **create** and **maintain** a roster which includes:
  - Childs name or initials.
  - # of individuals in their household.
  - Note: you may need to remove, add, or substitute participants throughout the year.

- Suggested formats:
  - Google Docs
  - Physical printed template
  - Excel spreadsheet
  - Utilize the SMFB ***Backpack Roster (Monthly)***

Identifying Distribution Process

- Each participant on your roster will receive a weekly backpack.
- Leaders must determine:
  - Distribution day(s), time(s), location(s), and make-up plan.
  - Process:
    - Who will receive the backpack and how?
- Be creative
  - Utilize PTO members, volunteers.
  - Assign a fun program name to minimize stigma – *Food Club, Family Food Program, etc.*

- Best Practices:
  - Distribute towards the end of the week for weekend nutrition.
  - Distribute in classrooms, at the bus stop, or at parent pickup.
  - Not encouraged to making announcements or having children distribute to their peers.

Ordering & Inventory Management

- Inventory is provided to carry you through your next delivery.
- If adjustments are needed, allow 1-2 weeks for updates to reflect.
  - Reminder: Orders are in multiples of three per case/box
- School breaks:
  - If your delivery falls during a school break or closure, it will either be canceled or doubled the week before.
- Summer break:
  - You may opt to participate if your site is operable during the summer.
- If inventory begins to stockpile, please contact your Advocate to adjust future deliveries.
  - We're unable to accept product returns.
  - To resolve this, feel free to assign to waitlisted children as well.
- Inventory rotation happens every other week, with two rotating Menus 1 & 2.

Participation Referral & Eligibility

- Backpacks are intended for reoccurring distribution to the same participants weekly.
- Participants are identified and referred by staff (social workers, teachers, parent liaisons, nurses, etc.)
  - Families may not self declare food insecurity to participate.
- Customize and send out a staff letter to notify of the program, intent, and their assistance.

Product Storage Space

- Backpacks arrive in cases/boxes.
  - 3 backpacks per case.
- Minimum storage requirements:
  - Maintained at room temperature in a clean, secure, and organized space.
  - Product maintained 6 inches off the floor and 4 inches from the wall at all times.
  - Sufficient space for storage and safe navigation.
- Suggested areas:
  - Shelving units in a closet or classroom.
  - Cafeteria
  - Pallets in a warehouse or multipurpose area.

Delivery of Product

- Before your delivery:
  - Confirm and communicate with your Advocate the storage location.
  - Share your delivery schedule and storage location with your front office.
- Deliveries will come in cased boxes.
  - If more than 120 bags, they will arrive on a pallet.
  - If your doorways are less than 4 ft wide, you will need to coordinate staff/volunteers to bring those indoors.
- Delivery will occur within a 2-hour window.
- Verify invoice details (case/quantity) match delivered products.
- Inspect all cases for any damages or issues.
  - If any are found, please notify your Advocate with a photo of the condition of the product.
- Minimum cases per delivery.
  - Metro Phoenix
    - 30 bags weekly
  - Outside of Metro Phoenix
    - Bi-weekly - 60 bags
    - Monthly – 120 bags

Box Pickup Process

- Delivery flow:
  - Initial delivery of product.
  - Subsequent delivery – the driver will collect flatten boxes placed on a pallet.
  - Final pick up – your SMFB rep will schedule your last pick up within 1-2 weeks after your final delivery.

Thank You

St. Mary's Food Bank®