

What is a Choice Food Pantry (CFP)?

Imagine a food pantry that is organized like a grocery store. Clients walk through the pantry and choose the food items that they want and need. The grocery store-like CFP atmosphere is a more dignified way for people to get food.



What is the need?

The demand at food pantries has increased 30% as more people have fewer resources to buy food¹. Individuals and families who have been contributors to pantries are now becoming consumers.

What are the advantages of CFPs?

- Families choose food based on need and preference; food is less likely to be wasted.²
- CFP can better accommodate dietary restrictions compared to prepackaged food bags.
- The CFP empowers clients to make their own shopping decisions and promotes self-efficacy to increase preference for fruit and vegetables.³
- CFPs generate an environment open to nutrition education interventions. For example, some CFP models allow clients to choose food items using a point system based on the client's family size and My Pyramid.
- Client feedback influences purchasing and stocking decisions that pantry staff make regularly.
- Other services can co-locate with the pantry to provide a one-stop for needed services, such as SNAP outreach and clothing banks or thrift shops.

What are some examples of CFPs in action?

In Ohio, many CFPs are using a system that integrates nutrition education where CFPs are organized according to MyPyramid, and clients are allowed a number of choices per food group.⁴ Take a video visit to an Ohio pantry:

Part 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZ5H5S269q4>

Part 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sZZ85ZOqgk&feature=related>

New York's Campaign Against Hunger has several locations for "client choice" pantries:

<http://www.gothamgazette.com/article/socialservices/20080411/15/2487>

What can SNE members do?

- Become informed about the CFP Model and share with your local pantry or food bank.
- Learn about the process of transitioning from a traditional food pantry to a choice food pantry. <http://www.austinfoodbank.org/partner/downloads/pantry-operations/Client-Choice-Models.pdf>
- Work with Feeding America (formerly America's Second Harvest) in your regions to identify opportunities for developing CFP in your areas <http://feedingamerica.org/> and offer resources to inform stakeholders in becoming a CFP
- Volunteer to provide nutrition education programs, food demonstrations, and materials to food pantries in your area.

Prepared by the SNE, Advisory Committee on Public Policy's Food Security & Hunger subcommittee.

How can I find out more?

1. http://money.cnn.com/2009/01/21/news/economy/food_banks/index.htm
2. Indiana Family and Social Services Administration. Client choice food pantries: Models for now and the future. (2004). At <http://www.state.in.us/fssa/families/pdf/tefap10.pdf>.
3. Russell J, Baranowski, T, Baranowski, JC, Cullen, KW, Thompson D. (2007) Distance to food stores & adolescent male fruit and vegetable consumption: mediation effects. *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act.*; 4: 35. Advanced online publication doi: 10.1186/1479-5868-4-35.
4. Remley DT, Gallagher T, McDowell J, Kershaw M, Lambea MC, Melgar-Quinonez H (2006) Extension's Role in Developing 'Choice' Food Pantries in Southwest Ohio. *Journal of Extension*; 44(6): 6IAW5. At: <http://joe.org/joe/2006december>

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