



10 Actionable Tips: Enhancing Choice in Pantries

Offering choice at pantries can take time to build buy in. Regardless of where you are on the continuum from no choice to full choice, there are opportunities to layer better practices on top of the food distribution model.

- ❑ **Incorporate Strength-Based Language:** Focus on the strengths of your program, neighbors and community. *Example: rather than focusing on challenges or lack, consider it as an opportunity for a new approach.*
- ❑ **Use nudges to promote nutritious foods:** Nudges are small changes in the environment that help make the healthy choice the easy choice and are explained in depth in the [Feeding America Toolkit](#). *Example: display produce in full baskets.*
- ❑ **Review the Choice Visual Library for ideas:** Ask your food bank to use the Choice Visual Library on the Learning Hub to explore other food distribution models.
- ❑ **Develop a nutrition policy:** Express your commitment to providing healthy foods to neighbors through a written policy. *Example: [Fallbrook Food Pantry](#)*
- ❑ **Reduce barriers to food access:** Registration processes at food pantries and food distribution sites can be invasive. Consider what information you need to track and reduce invasive questions or steep requirements such as ID cards for every member of the household.
- ❑ **Conduct a neighbor survey about food preferences:** Creating a dignified environment includes respecting
- ❑ **Create a preferred donations list to source healthy and neighbor-preferred foods:** Food drives are often unpredictable sources of foods. Yet donors often respond positively to a suggested list of preferred donation items that will also let your neighbors know you are actively sourcing the foods they are looking for.
- ❑ **Make information about services easily accessible:** Ensuring information on websites or social media is up to date and clearly and simply describes what neighbors can expect during a visit to the pantry will reduce barriers.
- ❑ **Offer samples of recipes using pantry items:** Often when offering choice, pantries worry about moving unpopular items. Serving samples is a great way to highlight healthy items that might be less familiar to neighbors.
- ❑ **Trauma informed care training**