

# Moving Along the Choice Continuum: An Action Planning Tool

This document can be used to guide conversations between agency staff and food bank representatives to guide planning for the pantry or site to offer more choice. The questions provided are suggestions for guiding the conversation but should be adapted to the needs of your site and objectives. This tool is most effective when the agency has already expressed interest in increasing choice or creating a more dignified experience.

## **Why Choice?**

Offering neighbors the opportunity to select their own foods improves the experience of seeking food at food assistance programs by increasing dignity and better meeting food needs and preferences. By building in more choice opportunities in your distributions, neighbors can choose the foods that meet their dietary needs, preferences and living situations. We encourage you to consider how a model incorporating more choice might support your operations to help you meet the goals of your agencies or sites.

# Action Planning Tool

## Step 1: Review your current distribution model.

Describe your distribution. (Examples: Drive-thru, market-style, pre-bag/box, etc.)

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What do you do best? What are your strongest resources? (E.g. number of volunteers, time to prepare and complete a distribution)

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What kind of experience do you hope your neighbors have during your distribution? How do you encourage that experience?

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What do hear from neighbors about your services or their experience? Do you ask for neighbor feedback? Listening and making changes based on neighbor feedback can be one method to increase dignity at pantries. If you don't currently ask for feedback, what are some questions you would be interested in asking and how could you act on their feedback? (e.g. source foods that are requested, adjust days and hours).

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# Action Planning Tool

## Step 2: Review the current level of Choice provided.



Based on the graphic above, which level best describes your distribution model?

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Can you share about your goals around offering more choice? Why is offering choice important to you and your team? (e.g. increase dignity, less food waste)

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Looking at your current distribution model, what opportunities do you see to offer more choice?

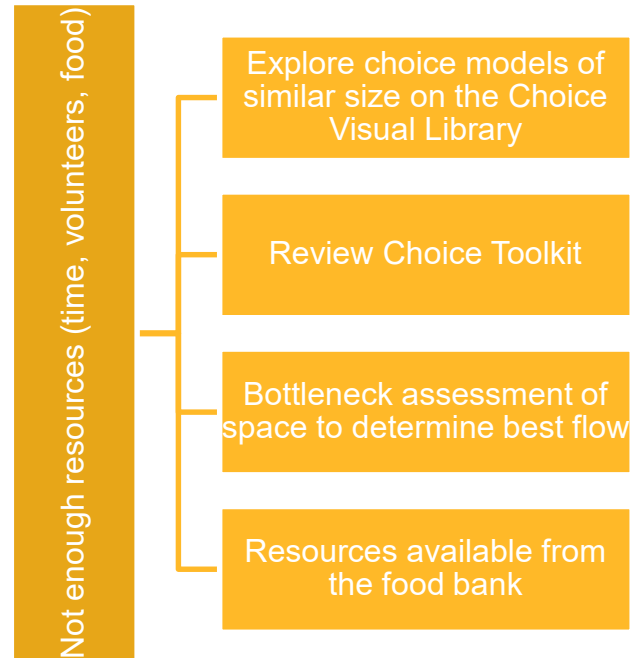
- Rearrange the space
- Increase shopping area
- Train volunteers on importance of choice
- Increase hours of distribution
- Have neighbors place orders
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# Action Planning Tool

## Step 3: Review your capacity.

What makes it hard to offer more choice? Select your top 3.

- Not enough space
- Not enough time
- Too few volunteers/staff
- Do not desire change
- Efficiency of pre-packed bags
- Neighbors prefer pre-packed bags
- Neighbors may take too much food
- We want to give neighbors the same items for a fair/equal distribution
- Structure of school day/school-based distribution
- Lack of equipment such as shelves or fridges
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



*Example of barrier breakdown to evaluate first steps and resources needed.*

## Step 4: Resources & Support

Considering the barriers you just identified, can you share what resources you will need to be successful? Let's start with one barrier. Think about the layout of your space; you may need to move shelves or buy equipment such as glass-front refrigerators.

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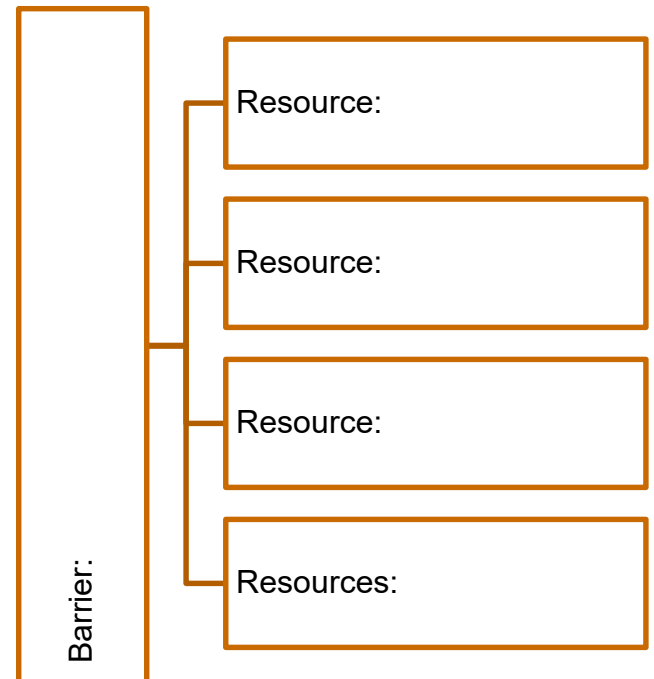
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How might your food bank be a source of support?

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*Consider filling out a breakdown with your own barrier and resources available, like above*

# Action Planning Tool

## Step 5: Take action.

What is within the realm of your control? What kinds of decisions do you have the power to make or change within your role?

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To increase Choice, we can take these actions:

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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Timelines: When do you want to incorporate these actions by?

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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Milestones: How will you measure your progress on these actions? What would success look like?

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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