

Food Bank Cultural Relevance Assessment

I. Physical assessment of the food bank or pantry

A. Observation

- 1.) Is signage translated into languages other than English?
 Yes No
- 2.) Are website information/documents/handouts available in any language other than English?
 Yes No
- 3.) Are their outreach efforts culturally appropriate and effective at reaching certain communities/all groups of people (e.g., inclusivity and diversity of people is emphasized on their handouts/documents/website)?
 Yes No
- 4.) Does their website look culturally inviting and provide information in other languages?
 Yes No
- 5.) Does the exterior of the building look inviting? Free from bars on windows, barbed wire on fencing, etc.
 Yes No
- 6.) Is the inside of the food pantry clean, well lit, and organized?
 Yes No
- 7.) Are clients greeted before they are assisted?
 Yes No
- 8.) Is there fresh produce available (the number one requested food category)?
 Yes No

B. Questions to Ask

- 1.) Is census data and client usage being compared and taken into consideration? For example, census data may indicate that African Americans make up only 10% of the population within the overall community, but 30% of food bank clients are African American.
 Yes No
- 2.) Is there physical space designated for cultural foods? If not, are there cultural food options available?
 Yes No
- 3.) How do clients get their food? Check all that apply.
 Self-select shopping model Pre-packed food boxes Online order
 Other _____
- 4.) Are there unseasoned meats that allow clients to customize the flavor of their meals to fit their cultural preferences?
 Yes No
- 5.) Are cultural holidays taken into consideration (e.g., Ramadan, Chinese New Year, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah)?
 Yes No

II. Staff/Volunteer On-Site Assessment

A. Observation

- 1.) Are staff and volunteers kind and welcoming to everyone?
 Yes No
- 2.) Do staff and volunteers make an effort to engage with clients of different races/ethnicities?
 Yes No
- 3.) Are staff and volunteers able to answer questions about what (if any) culturally relevant foods are available in their pantry?
 Yes No
- 4.) Is there diversity among staff and volunteers that creates an inviting feeling for all potential clients?
 Yes No
- 5.) Is accessibility highlighted? (ie. do staff help clients who are in wheelchairs or crutches and need help to carry their food and bring it into their designated vehicles without being asked to?)
 Yes No

B. Questions to Ask

- 1.) Do the staff or volunteers hold client focus groups? If so, are they offered in multiple languages?
 Yes No
- 2.) How do staff and volunteers obtain client feedback?

- 3.) Have clients expressed interest in volunteering at this location?
 Yes No

III. Client interviews (in-person, over the phone, or via a paper or electronic survey). Responses will remain anonymous in order to provide the most comfort and accuracy from clients.

- 1.) How would you describe your cultural background? / What is your ethnicity?

- 2.) Do you feel welcome at the food pantry?
 Yes No Sometimes
- 3.) What makes you feel welcome at the food pantry? What are they doing well?

- 4.) Do the staff create a welcoming environment? If not, how can they improve?

- 5.) Do you have access to a translator when visiting the food pantry? This can be a friend or family member, staff, volunteer, or licensed translator.
 Yes No Sometimes
- 6.) Do staff and volunteers attempt to communicate with you and provide guidance?
 Yes No Sometimes
- 7.) Are staff easy to find and communicate with?
 Yes No Sometimes

8.) Do you feel heard and understood when you ask questions or do they make you feel uncomfortable? If so, how can they improve?

9.) Do others in your community avoid using the food pantry because it doesn't feel inclusive?

Yes No Unsure

10.) Do you know anyone who could benefit from the pantry, but is afraid to because it does not feel inclusive (ie. language barrier, food barrier, etc.)?

Yes No Unsure

11.) If you know someone that could benefit from using the food pantry, but currently does not, can you tell me about the barriers? Is it language, transportation, specific food needs, day or hours of operation, fear, shame, etc?

12.) How can we make the food pantry more inviting?

13.) Do you limit visits or use of the food pantry resources for any reason? If so, what are those reasons?

14.) Do the hours of operation at the food pantry meet your needs? If not, what days or times would you like the food pantry to be open for access?

15.) Would a delivery option be more beneficial/accessible for you?

Yes No Unsure

16.) Are you comfortable entering the food pantry and picking up food in front of staff, volunteers, and other clients? If not, would having an option for anonymous pick up be preferable?

17.) Are there currently any foods that you are able to get at the pantry that are relevant to your culture and can be made to remind you of home?

18.) What cultural foods, herbs, or spices would you like to see offered at the food pantry in the future?

19.) Does the food pantry offer culturally relevant foods during some of your most important holidays?

Yes No Unsure

At the end of your visit, make any notes on observations, comments made that were not captured by these questions. What blind spots do you notice that maybe the staff/volunteers aren't picking up on?
