



Food and Nutrition Policy

Purpose and Guidelines

At Agape Service Project's Food Bank, we strive to serve the farmworker community of Whatcom County by providing food, clothing and community support and by building personal relationships. We believe that our connection to community and cultural competence are at the heart of our work to support families' nutritional needs and health. In addition to breaking down barriers to food access, we are committed to offering choices that enable positive health outcomes, help prevent diet-related chronic illnesses, and honor guests' cultural needs and dietary preferences.

Our Food and Nutrition Policy will demonstrate our commitment to the quality of food we offer guests and serve as our guiding principles. We will utilize the [Healthy Eating Research \(HER\) Nutrition Guidelines](#) as a tool to guide our nutritional priorities and the food we distribute. We will aim to provide fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and low-sodium options. We also focus on distributing items that meet the cultural and dietary needs of the community that we serve.

Food Purchases

When funding is available, we will purchase items that are aligned with our commitment to nutrition and meet the cultural needs of our community. We will prioritize fresh vegetables and fruit, culturally significant staples, and items on the "choose often" list of the [HER Guidelines](#). This includes seeking low-sodium and low-sugar canned products when possible. We choose not to purchase sugary beverages, candy, and will limit purchasing items on the "choose rarely" list.

Food Donations

Rather than turn away donations, we aim to guide donors to support our community's health needs. To that end, we will share needed items with donors that reflect our values and better meet the nutritional and cultural needs of the farmworker community. We will highlight popular items that are requested, prioritizing items that align with the "choose often" standards of HER, and aim to limit foods in the "choose rarely" category to support better health.

- 1) Schwartz M, Levi R, Lott M, Arm K, Seligman H. Healthy Eating Research Nutrition Guidelines for the Charitable Food System. Durham, NC: Healthy Eating Research; 2020. Available at <http://healthyeatingresearch.org>

Broader Commitments

As we expand our programs and/or build partnerships with other organizations, we acknowledge the barriers our community faces to preparing meals, including limited kitchen capacities, time restrictions and transportation challenges. As resources allow, we will work to address transportation barriers to provide healthy food to guests. We also will continue to collaborate with partners to address other health needs through education, connections to additional resources (such as WIC), and tools.

We will aim to incorporate nutrition education and culturally relevant recipes to provide an experience to guests that meets their needs. Providing access to these resources in Spanish is a priority. To understand our community's needs, we will survey guests periodically.

We also aim to create an environment that is welcoming and provides space for dignified food access so that those who harvest the food in our community can achieve their own nutrition security.

Administration and Implementation

This approved policy will take effect on 07/01/2023 at which time it will become part of the organizational policies and procedures. Our Director is responsible for an annual review of the policy in order to keep it up to date with community needs. All new staff and volunteers will be provided with an orientation to the policy by the Director.

- 1) Schwartz M, Levi R, Lott M, Arm K, Seligman H. Healthy Eating Research Nutrition Guidelines for the Charitable Food System. Durham, NC: Healthy Eating Research; 2020. Available at <http://healthyeatingresearch.org>