



Nutrition Policy

The Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo states within its values statement that “every human being has the right to nutritious food...” The purpose of the Nutrition Policy is to define what nutritious foods are and to establish guidelines for distribution of those foods. This Policy was developed using data from the 2012 Hunger Free Communities Survey conducted in conjunction with Cal Poly STRIDE as well as other information disseminated by various Health and Nutrition Organizations.

As stated by the USDA in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, nutritious foods and beverages are those which “help achieve and maintain a healthy weight, promote health and prevent disease”. According to the American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association, and Centers for Disease Control this means reducing sodium, fats and added sugars as well as unhealthy natural by-products such as mercury.

The following recommendations for a healthy diet guide us as we serve our clients:

1. Avoid foods and beverages in which sugar is the primary ingredient (such as snack cakes, sodas and sugary cereals).
2. Consume whole grains for carbohydrate options in breads, cereals and snacks.
3. Choose low sodium and low fat foods when ordering processed food items.
4. Choose shelf stable protein options that are high in protein while low in saturated fat, including canned chicken and salmon, dried or canned beans and fresh eggs.

In placing inventory orders as well as in receiving food transfers (through Feeding America via Food Bank of Santa Barbara County, for example), the Food Bank will only accept and distribute food products that allow our clients to follow these above recommendations.

Furthermore, the Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County shall endeavor to accomplish the following 7 goals toward facilitating the improved health of our clients:

1. Insure that by 2014 and beyond a minimum of 50% of the food inventory is fresh produce. This growth will be achieved through increasing existing fresh produce programs, partnering with local farmers, and increasing produce acquired by GleanSLO.
2. Teach Food Bank food recipients the importance of balanced nutrition and the impact of developing healthy eating habits. This will be achieved through partnership with the Network for Healthy California, SLO County Department of Public Health, SLO County Department of Social Services, UC CalFresh Outreach and others who provide nutrition education at distribution sites. Additionally we will collaborate with our partners to provide healthy recipes and food demonstrations at our distribution sites.

Educate food recipients on overuse of popular inventory items including the danger of mercury in tuna for small children, and the potential risks of high fat/ high sugar peanut butter for all ages. Provide healthy recipes to accompany donated foods in which sodium



or fat content exceeds the recommended intake for a meal (approx. 500mg of sodium, less than 100mg of dietary cholesterol, and less than 10% of overall calories) thus reducing the unhealthy intake by additions of whole grains or fresh fruits and vegetables.

Continue to educate recipients to the availability of other food assistance programs, such as WIC and Cal Fresh, which will further insure that all eligible recipients will receive additional nutrient-dense foods.

3. Seek funding for a part-time staff person in nutrition by 2014 expanding to a full-time position by 2015.
4. Educate individuals and commercial institutions on the importance of nutritious and healthy food donations. Donation request lists and communications to the public and commercial institutions will be reviewed and updated as needed to include preferred healthy options, reducing (with a goal towards eliminating) unhealthy donations. Pursue cash donations in lieu of food donations, as well as single category food drives (protein drives, low-sodium canned goods drive, etc.).
5. Expand outreach into food desert areas, providing food deliveries, and collaborative efforts with WIC, Community Health Services and Cal Fresh. Seek funding for a Mobile Pantry for these areas by 2015.
6. Create a system to help staff and food bank clients identify healthy, moderately healthy, and unhealthy foods in the warehouse and food pantries. While the Food Bank is transitioning to a healthier operation, foods may still be donated that are less healthy. To assist the recipient in making the best possible decisions regarding those foods, the Food Bank shall maintain a system with easily recognized markers.
7. Explore alternative uses for donated food items that are not in keeping with this Nutrition Policy.