

SLO Food Bank Agency Direct Rescue Policy & Procedures Handbook



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1. History

The Food Rescue Team at SLO Food Bank coordinates food rescue efforts for Agency Partners participating in the Agency Direct Rescue (ADR) Program, from grocery stores and other businesses and government entities with excess food to donate. Historically, Agency Partners rescued food from local stores without support from the food bank, and some of the organizations that pioneered food rescue efforts are still rescuing today. SLO Food Bank

Partner Services began to document Agency Partner rescue efforts in 2018 for a “big picture” perspective on rescue in SLO County. The objective was to draw from collective experience to create a formal system for food rescue in the interest of increasing participation, documenting progress to garner support, and ensure safe handling of rescued food.

In 2020, the Food Rescue Manager position was created in response to a California law (State Bill 1383) mandating the donation of edible food by grocery stores and other excess edible food generators. This mandate increased food rescue opportunities for SLO Food Bank and Agency Partners and ordered organized documentation and reporting on collections (more about this law in [the SB 1383 section of this document](#)). The objective of the Food Rescue Team, with respect to SB 1383, is to maximize community impact of these growing opportunities by connecting interested Agency Partners to donors of edible food, ensure compliance with reporting requirements, and offer support in fostering productive and lasting donor relationships.

2. Food Rescue Program Overview

The following is a list of the general steps of the ADR Program.

1. **Agency/Donor Partnerships:** Participating Agency Partners are paired with local edible food donors with a set schedule for weekly rescue.
2. **Weekly Pickups:** A pickup schedule is determined based on the availability of donations, agency partner capacity for storage/distribution, and availability of agency staff or volunteers to perform pickup.
3. **Sorting & Weighing:** Once donations are collected, they are transported back to the organization, sorted, weighed, and stored or immediately distributed. Weights are documented for reporting purposes.
4. **Distribution:** Donated food is distributed through Agency Partner pantries and meal programs.
5. **Reporting:** Weights of donated food are documented and submitted to SLO Food Bank on a weekly basis through Primarius (also known as P2, or PWW).
6. **Annual Site Visits:** The Food Rescue Team will conduct annual monitoring site visits at the food distribution location of Agency Partner.

Agency/Donor Partnerships

Agency Partners are paired with local donors according to geographic location, schedule, and as much as possible, aligning typically donated products with the needs of the Agency Partners and their participants.

When a rescue opportunity becomes available, eligible* Agency Partners in the area will be notified with a description of the donor profile, schedule, and typical donation types/weight range. These notifications are often offered on a first-come first-served basis, giving priority to the first interested agency whose needs and availability align with the donation offered.

* Eligibility for additional rescue opportunities, including new partnerships and one-time offers, is based on an Agency's reporting history, capacity to store/distribute donated products, and adherence to food safety guidelines. Agencies with chronic reporting issues

will not be eligible for additional rescue until they establish a reliable reporting record. For more details on reporting requirements, please refer to the [Reporting section of this document](#).

Food Rescue Pickups

It is expected that Agency Partners participating in the Food Rescue Program adhere to the scheduled days and times as documented and agreed upon with each donor. If an Agency Partner knows, or has reason to expect, that a deviation may occur they are required to notify a member of the Food Rescue Team as far in advance as possible. If an Agency Partner is unable to perform a regularly scheduled pickup, the Food Rescue Team will work to find a substitution in the interest of maintaining a reliable collection schedule for the donor.

Each Donor is asked to designate a point of contact for collecting Agency Partners to connect with upon arrival for a pickup. This is often a person in the receiving department. The point of contact is often responsible for training the collecting Agency Partner on the process for collecting, which is unique for every donor.

Agencies are required to follow safe food handling practices, as outlined below, from the time the donation is received until it is distributed at their organization. Additionally, those performing rescue are encouraged to do a general scan of the donated product during the loading process and decline any product which is inedible, or beyond their capacity to store/distribute. Once loaded, donations are transported to the Agency Partner location on the most direct route possible using passive cooling techniques (thermal blankets/coolers) for perishable items. It is recommended that donations are sorted and weighed immediately, then stored in temperature appropriate facilities.

Sorting and Weighing Process

Upon arrival at the Agency Partner location, donated product must be sorted and weighed for reporting. Donations are to be sorted into eight designated categories with a weight documented for each applicable category. Any items deemed unfit for distribution during the sorting process should be documented separately in the “Waste” category, making certain

the weight is not also counted in the category under which it was originally sorted. For a template to aid in documenting rescue weights by category please refer to the [Agency Direct Rescue Reporting Sheet](#). More information on waste documentation can be found in the [Declining Donations & Documenting Waste](#) document. These and more supporting documents can be found in the [Food Rescue Toolbox](#) on the SLO Food Bank website. Agency Partners may refer to the [Primarius Guide For Agency Partners](#) for instructions on ADR reporting in Primarius.

How to Begin Food Rescue

Eligibility

Agency Direct Rescue is a program offered through the SLO Food Bank to active Agency Partners in good standing. To be in good standing an Agency Partner must be up to date with reporting requirements, agency payments and account receivables, and in compliance with food program operations including but not limited to food safety certifications and Agency Partner site visits to be eligible for participation in the program.

If an Agency Partner participating in ADR has their account suspended, their pickups may be temporarily reassigned until they return to good standing. Additionally, if Agency Partnership is terminated for any reason, the Agency will no longer be eligible to participate in the ADR program. If an Agency reapplies for partnership after termination, they must be in good standing with all requirements, as stated above, for a period of three months before eligible to re-enroll in the ADR program and be considered for new donor partnerships.

Beginning Participation for Eligible Agencies

An Agency Partner interested in participating in the Food Rescue Program can contact the Food Rescue Team (foodrescue@slofoodbank.org) to determine if food rescue is a good fit for their organization.

Determination is based on eligibility, as well as resources available to the agency; capacity for collecting, storing, and reporting rescued food; and opportunities available for donor

partnerships.

Eligible agencies can schedule a **Rescue Capacity Site Visit** for a member of the Food Rescue Team to come and assess capacity for food rescue including space for dry storage, refrigeration and freezer space, equipment needs, and ability to perform rescue.

When an Agency is equipped and ready to begin rescue, they must read and sign an [Agency Direct Rescue Agreement](#) which outlines requirements to participate in the program.

Additionally, as part of this agreement, each Agency Partner will need to designate agency representatives to oversee food rescue scheduling and food rescue reporting.

ADR Participation Policy

Any Agency Partner participating in food rescue from a donor considered a 'generator,' or from a donor that is a partner under Feeding America, is required to participate in the ADR (Agency Direct Rescue) program. This policy ensures that all rescuing agencies are held to the same standards, and that reliable reporting and safe food handling are maintained for all donors working with SLO Food Bank and our Hunger Relief Network.

If it is discovered that an Agency Partner not enrolled in the ADR program is performing food rescue, the Food Rescue Team will take immediate steps to onboard and support the Agency Partner, provided they meet the eligibility requirements for participation.

All Agencies performing food rescue are required to report regularly, as outlined in the [Reporting section](#) of this handbook. Agencies that fail to meet reporting requirements may be subject to penalties for a 'major violation,' as detailed in the Agency Partner Policy and Procedures Handbook.

Site Visits

The SLO Food Bank's Food Rescue Team will conduct annual monitoring site visits at Agency Partner's food pantry or meal site. These visits allow the team to assess compliance with the requirements outlined in this handbook and to provide support to the rescuing agency. Additional visits from the Food Rescue team are available if requested by the Agency for further support. An Agency Partner may be subjected to more frequent and/or

unannounced site visits if an agency is out of compliance or serious operational or food safety concerns have been identified, suspected, or reported.

Food Safety Training

All volunteers of Agency Partners involved in food rescue activities are required to complete food safety training. This includes Agency Partner volunteers that pick up, transport, or deliver food rescued food. This training must be provided by, or recommended by, the SLO Food Bank. The training may be offered in-person or through virtual sessions.

Additionally, at least one person from each participating agency must obtain a California Food Handler's certificate. This certified individual will be responsible for ensuring that all volunteers involved in food rescue activities follow safe food handling practices. This includes monitoring compliance with food safety guidelines during the collection, transportation, and distribution of rescued food.

This monitoring includes but is not limited to:

- Maintaining temperature-sensitive foods at 41°F (5°C) or lower and ensuring that frozen foods remain completely frozen
- Ensuring that all vehicles used during rescue are clean and free of pets, hazardous chemicals and pests
- Evaluating the condition of food for food safety
- Avoiding cross-contamination during transportation and storage of food
- Documenting sample temperature at rescue location and at destination
- Understanding food dates on packaging
- Washing hands before handling food and wearing gloves when handling raw produce

Temperature Taking

All Agencies performing rescue are required to take sample temperatures of perishable foods at the site of the donation as well as back at the food pantry or meal site. The agency

is required to maintain records of these sample temperatures. The Food Rescue Team will ask to see these records during annual site visits. A [Temperature Log Recording Sheet](#) may be found in the Food Rescue Tool Box on the SLO Food Bank website.

Inter-Agency Sharing (Sharing Excess Food)

Agency Partners involved in food rescue may occasionally find that they have rescued more food than they can distribute through their pantry or meal site before it spoils. In such cases, Agencies are allowed to share excess rescued food (formerly known as subdistribute) to other Agency Partners within the SLO Food Bank network. For contact information and distribution schedules, please refer to the [Agency Partner Directory](#).

Important: Sharing outside the SLO Food Bank network is prohibited. We cannot monitor food handling and distribution processes of organizations that are not under the SLO Food Bank's oversight. By keeping rescued food within our network, we ensure that food is handled safely, distributed equitably to those in need, and reported as required by contract and law.

Reporting Shared Excess Food Rescue

The responsibility for reporting rescued products lies with the Agency Partner that performs the initial collection. This includes both:

- Products dropped off at a different Agency before returning from a rescue
- Products that are received by the collecting Agency and are later sent out for subdistribution

Agency Partners receiving the excess product are *not* responsible for reporting.

Agencies engaged in sharing excess rescued products must document the name and contact information of all organizations receiving excess product. This documentation is essential for communication in the event of a product recall.

3. Food Recovery Contracts

Agency Partners

Each Agency Partner participating in the food rescue program is required to sign an [Agency Direct Rescue Agreement](#) which outlines the requirements for participation in the program. Among other things, this contract includes reporting, safe food handling, and communication requirements. This contract must be in place before an Agency Partner begins rescue.

Equitable Distribution

Staff and volunteers participating in the ADR program are required to distribute rescued food in a fair and equitable manner to all participants who access the resource. Agency Partners' volunteers who express a need for food are welcome to receive food through Agency Partner food distributions or other SLO Food Bank food distribution programs, however, they may not have priority access to any SLO Food Bank-sourced food, including ADR food, before/during distributions.

Donors

SB 1383 requires Food Donors to establish a contract with Food Recovery Organizations with which they partner for collection of edible food donations. Agencies may be requested to sign food rescue contracts by donors to fulfill this requirement. Corporate food rescue contracts can contain requirements for insurance, or additional reporting requirements, which may prompt negotiations before an agreement can be reached. SLO Food Bank strongly recommends any food rescue contracts be forwarded to the Food Rescue Team for review and signature (if appropriate).

The SLO Food Bank has created a [Food Rescue Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) to establish with Food Donors with whom we partner for rescue. This MOU outlines the roles for each respective party (Food Donor, SLO Food Bank, and Agency Partner), and contains parameters for a functional partnership. This MOU can fulfill the contract requirement for SB 1383 regulations if needed. Whether a corporate contract is established, or an MOU is

used to fulfill contract requirements, the Food Rescue Team will review the MOU with management at every Food Donor with whom we partner for educational purposes.

A note on donation offerings: The SLO Food Bank MOU does **not** contain language dictating the amount or type of donations a donor must offer as part of the agreement. Agency Partners do not have control over what is offered up for donation, but they do have the right to decline any product they are unable to distribute.

4. Reporting

All Agency Partners participating in the Agency Direct Rescue (ADR) program must agree to adhere to policies as outlined in SLO Food Bank's Agency Direct Rescue Agreement and are required to report all food rescued through the ADR program on a weekly basis through Primarius.

For instructions on reporting Agency-Direct Rescues please see the [Primarius Guide for Agency Partners](#) which is available on the [Food Rescue Toolbox](#) section of our website.

The SLO Food Bank is required to submit reporting of food rescue activities as an Affiliate Food Bank under Feeding America, and to the State of California under the Edible Food Recovery requirements for SB 1383. This means we are required to report collections from stores which have a partnership with Feeding America, and stores or businesses which are designated as "Generators" under SB 1383. Collections from smaller stores, and restaurants, which do not fall under at least one of these categories, do not require reporting to SLO Food Bank, however, Agency Partners are encouraged to keep records of these donations for internal documentation purposes.

Reporting to Feeding America

As an Affiliate Food Bank under Feeding America, the SLO Food Bank submits monthly reporting to the Santa Barbara Food Bank, which oversees the SLO Food Bank for Feeding America compliance. Weights submitted to the Santa Barbara Food Bank are then submitted to Feeding America which in turn reports back to the corporate entities of the

stores from which food was rescued for tax purposes and internal documentation. For this reason, it is important that rescued food is reported promptly and accurately to maintain productive rescue relationships with donors.

Reporting Requirements Under SB 1383

Although not required to *collect* edible food donations, Agency Partners who do collect are required to *report* weights of those collections. SLO Food Bank, as the coordinating entity, is responsible for collecting reporting from Agency Partners, and submitting data to the Integrated Waste Management Authority (IWMA), which in turn reports to CalRecycle on a biennial basis. These reports are used to monitor progress towards the organic diversion goals of SB 1383.

Reporting Reminders

Agency Partners are responsible for submitting ADR reporting on a weekly basis. We recognize that many Agency Partner staff are volunteers and have responsibilities in addition to reporting ADR. For this reason, we send periodic reminders to maintain accurate and timely reporting. The following reminders will be sent via email to the ADR Data Entry contact for Agency Partners performing rescue.

End of month reminder: SLO Food Bank is responsible for submitting a report to Feeding America by the 4th of each month for the previous month's rescue. To ensure reporting is as accurate as possible, your Food Rescue Team will send a reminder at least two days prior to the deadline for data submission that month. The deadline will vary depending on the day of the week the report is due.

Mid-month reminder (as needed): To prevent data dumping at the end of the month, if an agency misses more than one week of reports mid-month, they may be contacted and asked to submit the missing reports as soon as possible.

Any ADR reporting submitted after the monthly reporting deadline (as specified above) is considered late and will not be included in that month's report to Feeding America.

***Example:** If the deadline for February submissions is March 3rd, any February reports submitted after March 3rd are considered late.*

Penalties for Late Reporting

Our partnership under Feeding America supports food rescue from corporate partners that we wouldn't otherwise have access to, and reporting is the cornerstone of these partnerships. As corporate donors rely on accurate reporting for tax purposes, we are contractually obligated to provide timely, accurate reporting and do our due diligence to address any issues of non-reporting.

To this end, if an Agency Partner is habitually late or absent in report submissions, resulting in inaccurate reporting of donations to Feeding America, SLO Food Bank will be obligated to notify the stores from which the Agency Partner is collecting, at which point they will be given the option to request pairing with an Agency Partner in good standing with reporting.

5. Edible Food Recovery Under Senate Bill 1383

Overview

SB 1383 (California Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Law) is legislation with the overarching goal to reduce methane emissions by establishing targets to reduce organic waste disposal in California landfills. Specific targets include a 50% reduction by 2020 and a 75% reduction by 2025, as well as an increase in edible food recovery by 20% by 2025. To achieve this goal, businesses that generate food (also known as commercial edible food generators, or CEFs) will be required to start donating the maximum amount of surplus edible food fit for human consumption by the date determined for their designated tier of implementation.

Tier 1 donors, mandated to begin donating in January 2022, typically have pre-packaged food donations and fresh produce and include Grocery Stores/Supermarkets as well as Food Distributors and Wholesale Food Vendors. Tier 2 donors, mandated to begin donating

in January 2024, typically have prepared foods to donate which often require careful handling to meet food safety requirements. Tier 2 donors include education facilities, restaurants that meet specific size requirements, hotels, and health facilities.

It's important to note that, while generators are required to donate surplus edible food under 1383, food recovery organizations (such as the SLO Food Bank and Agency Partners) are not required by law to recover donated food. The only requirement for food recovery organizations is to maintain records of partnerships and report collections. More information on SB 1383 can be found on the CalRecycle website. Please see direct links below for specific topics:

- [1383 General Information](#)
- [Edible Food Recovery under SB 1383](#)
- [Edible Food Recovery FAQ](#)
- [Tier 1 & 2 Generator Information](#)