



**WESTSIDE FOOD BANK NUTRITION POLICY**    Adopted by the Board of Directors, November  
24, 2014 (Data updated 7/26/21)

**Policy Rationale & Benefits**

Westside Food Bank's mission is to distribute as much nutritious food as possible to local food assistance charities and to reduce food waste on the Westside of Los Angeles County. Our aim in implementing a nutrition policy is to increase our distribution of nutritious foods, thus improving the quality of the food supplied to our member agencies. We recognize that as the main supplier of food to multiple member agency programs, the food bank's choices in food acquisition have a large impact on the choices available to our member agencies. With chronic conditions such as type-2 diabetes, heart disease, and obesity on the rise, we take seriously our role in providing the best nutrition possible. Therefore, our policy will promote foods that will help provide a healthy, balanced diet for the clients of our member agencies. Our policy can also serve as a model for other organizations in our community that seek to address challenges of hunger and health.

**Statement of Purpose**

This nutrition policy will guide decisions made at Westside Food Bank (WSFB) to focus on getting nutritious foods to our member agency's clients, while alleviating hunger and food insecurity. This policy will also communicate to all our stakeholders the foods we'd like to acquire and distribute.

**Food Procurement Sources Covered by this Policy**

Westside Food Bank intends to have our nutrition policy cover all food distributed directly from our warehouse. We divide this food into the following categories and sub-categories, listing here the percentage, by weight, of food that was in each grouping in WSFB's warehouse distribution. The "Foods to Encourage" section, below, will show how the food categories *italicized* in this section will be handled in WSFB's nutrition policy.

|                                           | <u>FY 15-16</u> | <u>FY 16-17</u> | <u>FY 17-18</u> | <u>FY 18-19</u> | <u>FY 19-20</u> | <u>FY 20-21</u> |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b><i>Government (TEFAP) Food ---</i></b> | 7%              | 7%              | 6%              | 6%              | 5%              | 5%              |
| <b><i>Donated Produce ---</i></b>         | 36%             | 33%             | 29%             | 28%             | 29%             | 30%             |
| <b><i>Food Drive Food ---</i></b>         | 11%             | 5%              | 3%              | 3%              | 4%              | 2%              |
| <b><i>Corporate Nonperishable ---</i></b> | 3%              | 4%              | 4%              | 3%              | 4%              | 4%              |
| <b><i>Purchased Produce ---</i></b>       | 15%             | 19%             | 22%             | 23%             | 22%             | 21%             |
| <b><i>Purchased Nonperishable ---</i></b> | 28%             | 32%             | 36%             | 37%             | 36%             | 38%             |

## **Foods We Intend to Encourage at Westside Food Bank**

Westside Food Bank will encourage foods that are in line with USDA dietary guidelines, while considering client preferences, especially with sensitivity to the diverse ethnic and cultural background of member agency clients.

Given that **Government Food** is pre-assessed by the USDA to optimize nutritional value, our primary selection criterion will relate to client preferences among the various products offered.

We will seek to maximize the amount of **Produce** we provide (whether purchased or donated), focusing on the most nutritious items available (favoring colorful varieties of fruits and vegetables over potatoes, for example). Overall, we will encourage as much donated produce as we can distribute to member agencies.

For **Food Drive Food**, which is donated to us by members of the public and organizations, we will encourage nutritious foods via any informational or promotional materials that we distribute to potential donors.

For **Corporate Food Donations**, which are likely to remain a very small portion of our total food supply, we will encourage nutritious foods, but the decision of whether or not to accept a donation will be made by the designated staff after reviewing all the pros and cons of accepting the donation. This may include non-nutrition related factors. We will reject potential donations of clearly non-nutritious items such as candy, sodas, and energy drinks, except in cases where those donations might be significantly linked with a donation of nutritious food.

For **Purchased Food**, a significant portion of our food supply, we will constantly strive to improve nutritional quality, keeping in mind the descriptions of the food types listed below. In making purchasing decisions we will seek the most nutritious alternatives possible, given that we must also consider cost, availability, level of client interest, and food handling practicability.

From all sources, *when appropriate and possible*, we will seek food with specific characteristics, including:

1. **Fruit and Vegetables**  
Westside Food Bank will encourage a wide variety of fresh produce whenever possible. We will also supplement our fresh produce offerings with canned fruits and vegetables. We strongly prefer canned vegetables with no salt added, or low sodium ( $\leq 230\text{mg}$  per serving), and canned fruit in water, 100% juice, or light syrup.
2. **Whole Grain and Whole Grain-Rich Foods**  
Whenever appropriate and possible, we will provide whole grain foods with whole grain listed as the first ingredient, including oats, brown rice, whole grain bread, pasta, and cereals.
3. **Lean Protein Foods**  
We will encourage the provision of meat, poultry, seafood, beans, eggs, nuts, and seeds. Whenever possible, these will be low in salt and fat.

## **Foods We Intend to Limit at Westside Food Bank**

Westside Food Bank seeks to severely and consistently limit its supply of non-nutritional food. Accordingly, we will not purchase nor will we encourage accepting donations of the following types of foods:

--- High fat snack foods

--- Dessert-type foods

--- Sugar sweetened beverages, such as sodas, energy drinks, and sports drinks

Implementation of this policy is intended to ensure that the total aggregate weight of the three categories listed above should never annually exceed 4%, by weight, of all the food and beverages distributed from WSFB's warehouse. This will be verified by an annual poundage review, to be reported to WSFB's Board of Directors. Should the total ever exceed 4% over a year's time, appropriate measures will be taken to prevent a recurrence. (In FY 15-16 'Foods to Limit' made up 1.6% of our distribution.)

(In FY 16-17 'Foods to Limit' made up 0.9% of our distribution.)

(In FY 17-18 'Foods to Limit' made up 1.0% of our distribution.)

(In FY 18-19 'Foods to Limit' made up 0.9% of our distribution.)

(In FY 19-20 'Foods to Limit' made up 0.8% of our distribution.)

(In FY 20-21 'Foods to Limit' made up 1.0% of our distribution.)

## **Definition of terms**

*When appropriate and possible* --- While every food procurement decision should be made in the context of enhancing nutritional quality, other considerations may intervene, such as cost considerations, food availability, a demonstrated lack of interest from clients, or a specific, documented demand by clients for a particular item.

## **Implementation Overview**

The Executive Director will be responsible for the implementation of this nutrition policy, and the following food procurement decisions will be made under the general oversight of the Executive Director:

### **Donated Produce:**

The Director of Operations, along with the Warehouse Manager, will make decisions about and monitor the regular produce donations from the Farm to Family program.

The Program Director will make decisions and monitor all other produce donations.

### **Food Drive Food:**

The Program Director, along with the Warehouse Manager, will make decisions and monitor foods donated via food drives.

### **Corporate Donations:**

The Program Director, along with the Warehouse Manager, will make decisions and monitor foods donated via corporate donations.

### **Purchased Food:**

The Director of Operations, along with the Warehouse Manager, will make decisions and monitor items purchased from vendors.

**Government (TEFAP) Food:**

The Director of Operations, along with the Warehouse Manager, will make decisions and monitor items ordered from TEFAP. They will also take agency preferences into account, as TEFAP food is only available to a limited number of member agencies.

**Department of Origin**

Through reviewing information and materials and through participation in three structured face-to-face meetings, the following team developed this nutrition policy: Jennifer Piatek, Yvonne Leung, Allison Griffith, Milton Gonzalez, Frank Herring, Barbara Whittenburg, Fred Summers, Felipe Ramirez, and Prahashana Arulampalam.

**Approval Authority**

This nutrition policy will be approved by the Executive Director, and then formally adopted by Westside Food Bank's Board of Directors at a regular Board meeting. Upon adoption, the policy will immediately go into effect.

