Client Intake Best Practices

Second Harvest advocates for all our Partner Agencies throughout Idaho and Washington to be as low-barrier as possible, which includes giving food to anyone who visits any of our Partner Agencies. We believe that requiring documented proof of being in need can inadvertently discriminate against a client and cause barriers to seeking food assistance. Low- or no-barrier food access creates a more dignified and comfortable environment for clients. If our Partner Agencies continue giving food assistance to every client who walks through their doors, regardless of the information provided, it will help us continue "fighting hunger and feeding hope" across the Inland Northwest.

Does Second Harvest have any client intake requirements?

- Yes. Second Harvest requires the following information, which must be self-declared by clients. We ask that Partner Agencies do not seek proof of verification.
    - Food pantry partners should track the number of distribution days, total pounds of food distributed, total number of households, total clients, increase or decrease in the number of clients seeking food assistance, and feedback on the amount of food pantries are getting from Second Harvest.
        - In addition to the data points listed above, Spokane County outlets also need to track client age ranges, unduplicated (new) and duplicated (returning) clients that have visited the food pantry for the first time since the start of the fiscal year on July 1st. Our fiscal year is from July 1st to June 30th of each year.
    - Meal site partners should track meal types, numbers of meals served, the number of days meals were served, increase, or decrease in the number of clients seeking food assistance, and feedback on the amount of food meal sites are getting from Second Harvest.

Does Second Harvest require Partner Agencies to verify names, addresses and household sizes?

- No. Second Harvests asks all our Agency Partners to follow the WSDA client intake guidelines regardless of if the Partner Agency is a TEFAP subcontractor or not. As stated in the guidelines, all client information is self-declared and does not require proof or verification of any information. The only exception to this guideline is for CSFP clients, which can be referenced in the WSDA guidelines.

Does this also include Idaho Agencies?

- Yes. We encourage all our Partner Agencies across the Inland Northwest to serve anyone that comes to their pantry or meal site.

Can a Partner Agency ask for or require client information if the agency is not a TEFAP subcontractor?

- A Partner Agency can ask for information, however documentation (proof/verification) of clients' answers is NOT required. If at any time a client states they are unable or unwilling to provide information or documentation, all Partner Agencies should still provide clients with a normal amount of food. Second Harvest's best practices are in accordance with the WSDA guidelines. Proof of identification, home address or any other documentation is NOT required to receive a normal amount of food. We ask that information obtained from a client is self-declared.

What does self-declared mean?

- This means that any information a client gives to a Partner Agency during their first visit or subsequent visits does NOT need to be verified with an identification, piece of mail, utility bill, school records, medical records, or bank statement. Rather, the information verbally stated by the client should be accepted.
- Under no circumstance should a pantry or meal site require a client's social security number, proof of citizenship, proof of income, proof of address, or proof of household size.

Are Partner Agencies required to only serve clients who live within their zip code or city limits?

- No. It is one of Second Harvest's core values that our Partner Agencies serve anyone who comes to their food pantry or meal site, regardless of what zip code or city a client resides in.
- As stated in the WSDA client intake guidelines, the requirement for clients to reside in the organization's service County, in order to receive TEFAP, has been removed. **This is also the case for non-TEFAP food.** The only geographic requirement to receive Washington State TEFAP food is that a client reside in the state of Washington. Again, Partner Agencies should NOT require documented proof of residency, rather, the information verbally stated by the client should be accepted.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Agency Relations representative.

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