



## **RHINELANDER AREA FOOD PANTRY**

### **Policies and Procedures Manual**

Revised September, 2014

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Rhinelander Area Food Pantry, Inc. (RAFP) is to obtain and distribute food to eligible individuals/families in need in the Rhinelander area. The goals of the pantry are:

- To help provide a sufficient food supplement from donated and purchased food and USDA commodities so that each family member may eat a nutritionally balanced breakfast and dinner every day.
- To involve as many members of the community as possible in the collection of money and the distribution of food.

## **PANTRY HISTORY**

In response to the alarming growth of food insecure families in northeastern Wisconsin, a hunger coalition called Hope for the Hungry was formed in 2003 under the facilitation of the University of Wisconsin-Extension. This hunger coalition, which consisted of representatives from Oneida, Vilas, Forest, Florence, and Langlade Counties, was soon made aware that a number of hungry families in the Rhinelander area were unable to obtain the food they needed to sustain themselves and their families. This determination was based on data presented from these sources: area food pantries, concerned individuals, a school survey, focus groups, and interviews with pantry coordinators and volunteers.

Food pantries in the surrounding communities documented that at least 250 Rhinelander area families traveled between pantries to help meet their food needs. The additional pressure on our neighboring pantries strained their resources, and families were turned away. When the existing area pantries could no longer handle

the ever-increasing number of people who needed food, it was determined that another food pantry, a mass-distribution site, should provide food to these families. In addition, because of a loss of many higher-paying manufacturing jobs in the area, new demands would continue to be placed on all of the area pantries.

The Rhinelander Area Food Pantry was established to provide food to families of the Rhinelander area of Oneida County, Wisconsin, by serving as a regular mass-distribution food pantry. The only other food pantry in Rhinelander was the Northwood's Emergency Food Pantry which was located in and operated by the First Congregational United Church of Christ. Unlike the RAFP, the Emergency Food Pantry was referral-based. It was established as an emergency food pantry only, and although it had increased the maximum allowable visits from two/year to six/year, it could not meet the needs of the growing number of hungry people in our community.

After many failed attempts to find housing for the new food pantry, Father John Gerritts approved free housing in the Nativity of Our Lord Thrift Store.

The RAFP kickoff for fund raising was February 14, 2005. The food pantry opened for its first day of distribution on April 6, 2005. Forty-five families, seventy-six adults and forty-two children, were served on that day.

The Rhinelander Area Food Pantry Restricted Fund was established in January, 2005, with St. Mary's Hospital Foundation serving as the financial agent. St. Mary's Foundation generously served as the depository, distributor, and reporter of financial contributions from private, non-profit, and corporate sources until February, 2007; at that point RAFP had received its own 501©(3) designation and no longer needed an outside fiscal agent. To maintain generally accepted accounting procedures, Associated Bank of Rhinelander then agreed to be the receiver of RAFP donations.

In February, 2006, the Rhinelander Area Community Garden was formed to grow produce for distribution at the pantry. Two gardens were planted the first year, one behind Phoenix Villa at 1011 Mason Street and one on Highway P, the Bud Robinson Memorial Garden. The Rhinelander City Council and Catholic Charities allowed the garden, complete with a fence and a sign, to be placed on the Phoenix Villa site; Sue Robinson generously donated the use of her husband's former garden plot for the Highway P garden. With the help of the UW Extension, area Master Gardeners, and a few local residents, the garden produced over 6000 pounds of produce in the first year.

In 2013, the garden was consolidated to one location on Mason Street.

In 2011, the Rhinelander Area Food Pantry partnered with the School District of Rhinelander and Oneida County UW-Extension partnered to offer the "Weekend Food for Kids Program." This program helps insure that children in the Rhinelander area do not go without food over the week-end when school breakfasts and lunches are not available to them.

Families, who have confidentially requested help and whose children are eligible for free or reduced price lunch, receive a backpack of food for each child on Friday. Students bring back the empty backpacks on the following Monday and the cycle continues.

Several players combine to make this program a success. First, the Rhinelander Area Food Pantry receives all donations of food and money and handles the ordering of weekly food. Healthy food choices are selected by the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Coordinator for Oneida County UW-Extension. Program coordinators then work with a team of volunteers each week to sort and organize food, pack the backpacks and deliver them to the schools and back again. Once the full backpacks are gathered at the schools, school counselors at each of the schools deliver each numbered backpack to the correlating students on Fridays.

These backpacks are provided to children in Pelican, Crescent, Central and NCES elementary schools. Backpacks may also contain food for younger or older children in the household. This program has served children ages six months to 18 years.

## **RHINELANDER AREA FOOD PANTRY GOVERNANCE**

### Community Board

The Rhinelander Area Food Pantry Community Board is composed of a minimum of twelve and a maximum of seventeen members. New members are nominated by an existing board member and are approved by a majority vote of the board.

A quorum consisting of seven members is needed to conduct business.

The board meets quarterly. The treasurer and secretary are members of the Steering Committee and the Community Board and perform the same functions for both groups. The executive director is a board member, serves at the pleasure of the board, and chairs the steering committee.

The Community Board is responsible for strategic planning; policy development; the approval of the budget, financial reports, fund raising and annual financial review; and the selection of board members and the executive director. The board meetings, quarterly treasurer's report, and annual financial review are open to the public.

The executive committee of the Community Board is composed of the executive director, secretary, treasurer, and one member of the board who is elected at the annual meeting.

The first meeting of each calendar year shall be designated as the annual meeting. At that meeting the board members select the director, secretary, treasurer, and member at large.

### Steering Committee

The Steering Committee consists of a maximum of sixteen members from the community. Members volunteer to serve and are approved by the other committee members.

Members serve an indeterminate length of time. If a member wishes to leave the committee, he/she will recommend a replacement who is willing to serve. The replacement member must be approved by a majority of the committee. The Steering Committee meets monthly at a time and place to be determined by the Steering Committee.

The first meeting of each calendar year shall be designated as the annual meeting. At that meeting the committee members shall confirm the financial secretary and other member responsibilities. The Steering Committee may establish additional positions by a majority decision.

The executive committee of the Steering Committee is composed of the executive director, treasurer, and pantry manager.

Any member not appropriately representing the pantry may be removed from the steering committee by a 2/3 vote of the committee. Reasons for removal may include:

1. Failure to regularly attend meetings without reason or prior notice.
2. Failure to act in the best interest of RAFF.
3. Misrepresentation of the mission of RAFF.

## Overview of Officer Responsibilities

**Director:** Conducts and presides over all meetings, creates agendas for meetings, represents RAFP in the community.

**Secretary:** Records the minutes of all meetings and distributes the minutes to the Steering Committee members, keeps the organization's permanent records, writes necessary correspondence.

**Treasurer:** Prepares the budget and reports on the financial status of the food pantry at each meeting, works with financial institutions and the Financial Secretary on financial matters, maintains financial records for all donations (cash, checks, ACH, credit cards, Paypal, & matching funds), pays bills keeping copies of all bills, oversees the sending of thank you/tax receipt letters and miscellaneous correspondence.

## Overview of Steering Committee Member Responsibilities

**Pantry Manager:** Organizes donated food, orders all food and determines the quantity of food distributed to each client according to the guidelines determined by the Steering Committee, logs and estimates the value of in-kind donations, works with the government to obtain food for the pantry, keeps records of purchased and donated food, prepares the Feeding America food order and coordinates Feeding America deliveries, makes sure there are proper amounts of food on hand.

**Financial Secretary:** Keeps records of donations, provides thank-you letters, as needed, for donations which are not monetary.

**Bookkeeper:** Writes checks as requested and monitors checking account.

**Volunteer Coordinator:** Works with individuals and religious and community organizations; schedules the organizations and individuals

involved in food distribution and gets assistance if there are insufficient volunteers for distribution.

**Publicity:** Communicates with the media to publicize events, community support, pantry information, and fund raising; makes the community aware of distribution days.

**Grants Chairperson:** Applies for grant money. Seeks out possible grant sources, writes and submits grant applications and tracks grants applied for and received.

**Weekend Food for Kids Co-Coordinator:** In consultation with the other co-coordinators, organizes and implements the Weekend Food for Kids program and reports progress and needs to the Steering Committee.

**Produce Manager:** Staffs a clean, healthy produce department.

**Stock Manager(s):** Checks dates of stock, moves stock from storeroom to distribution area, supervises volunteers who stock shelves and unload trucks, and sorts donations.

**Community Garden Co-Coordinators:** Serve on the RAFP Steering Committee, represent RACG in the community, and work with the RAFP treasurer to develop an annual budget for garden expenses.

Community Garden Oversight Group

**Coordinator(s):** Chairs RACG meetings, as needed, facilitates garden events, submits invoices/bills to RAFP treasurer, Coordinates efforts for improving and amending soil conditions; keeps records of soil additives and their components.

**Garden Leaders:** A garden leader will be present each work day (Mon, Wed, and Sat). Coordinate harvesting, packaging, labeling, and delivering of produce with pantry produce manager; supervise volunteers and activities in the garden at designated times; complete

weekly reports showing amounts of donated produce and volunteer work hours.

**Secretary:** Distributes meeting reminders, agendas, and minutes; takes minutes at meetings; maintains a member list of addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses; keeps minutes, agendas, and other documents; writes and sends thank-you letters.

**Volunteer Coordinator:** Maintains a list of volunteers' information, recruits volunteers, and organizes and informs volunteers of projects.

**Site Management:** Coordinates efforts for improving and amending soil conditions; keeps records of soil additives and their components.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

No board members, steering committee members, or their immediate families may benefit monetarily from their relationship to the pantry nor receive any compensation, gain, or benefit, excluding the salary paid to the Pantry Manager.

## **FINANCIAL STRUCTURE**

- BMO Harris, P.O. Box 280, Rhinelander, WI 54501 is the receiving agent for all donations to the Rhinelander Area Food Pantry. The business contact number is 715-361-3180.
- Automatic Withdrawals (**ACH**) are handled by the treasurer and deposited into the checking account.
- All checks and cash mailed to BMO Harris are deposited into the checking account by a bank representative.
- All donations are recorded by the treasurer on a deposit slip and on a counters report sheet.
- Two copies are made of all checks, cash donations, credit card donations, Paypal donations, and ACH donations. The treasurer

sends one copy of all donations to the Financial Secretary, who records them and keeps them on file.

- The second set is sent to the person sending thank-you/tax receipt letters. All donations are acknowledged in writing unless noted otherwise. This set is then returned to the treasurer and kept as a back-up resource.
- BMO Harris mails monthly statements to the RAFP treasurer to be reconciled.
- RAFP maintains a minimum of \$10,000.00 in the money market account. The treasurer will transfer funds from the money market account to the checking account as needed. These transfers may be made on-line.
- All RAFP bills are paid from the checking account.
- The RAFP Steering Committee approves the monthly expenditures. Expenditures greater than \$100.00, excluding food purchases, must be approved by the RAFP Steering Committee or Executive Committee in advance.

## **FINANCIAL REPORTING**

The treasurer prepares a monthly and annual financial report. Copies of such reports are provided to and approved by the Steering Committee and the Community Board. The pantry manager prepares for the Steering Committee and the Community Board a monthly, quarterly, and yearly report of the number of families and individuals helped and the amount of food distributed.

## **BUDGET PROCESS**

The treasurer, working with the Steering Committee, projects estimated donations and expenses. In-kind donations are given a dollar value by the pantry manager. The pantry manager estimates the cost of food distributed per family and the number of families served. All other committees estimate their operating expenses. After collecting this data, the (chairperson) treasurer submits a budget to the Steering Committee in October. A budget must be in place by the end

of the calendar year; final Community Board approval is completed by the end of January of the next calendar year.

### **ANNUAL FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The audit or annual review, 990 tax form and other required annual documents will be prepared by a licensed accountant. The treasurer will assist with assembly of necessary data.

### **DISTRIBUTION DAYS**

The food pantry distributes food on a schedule as determined by the Steering Committee. Currently households may visit The Pantry every 14 days. In addition to certain staples, two nutritious meals/day for 5-6 days are provided to recipients.

### **MODIFICATION OF THIS DOCUMENT**

This document may be modified by a majority vote of the Steering Committee and approval of the Community Board.

### **DISBURSEMENT PROCESS**

All invoices must be submitted to the RAFP treasurer by authorized persons. Each invoice must include supporting documentation, verifying that the invoice is a valid food pantry expense. If the disbursement exceeds a usual and customary amount, the distribution must be approved by a majority of the Steering Committee and then sent to the treasurer for payment. The RAFP Steering Committee approves the expenditures monthly. Expenditures greater than \$100.00, excluding food purchases, must be approved by the RAFP Steering Committee or Executive Committee in advance.

## **VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FOOD DISTRIBUTION**

All Rhinelander Area Food Pantry volunteers will need to fill out application forms. Distribution volunteers are responsible for helping with the distribution of food to the recipients. Other groups will be responsible for stocking shelves before distribution and replenishing shelves after, as well as cleaning the area at the end of the day. If needed, some volunteers will carry food to recipients' vehicles.

The general canned and identified foods will be on the pantry shelves. Perishable items such as frozen meats will be in the freezers at the end of the table. Breads will be on a separate shelf. **ALL BAGS AND BOXES OF FOOD GIVEN TO RECIPIENTS MUST BE WEIGHED AND RECORDED.**

### **NEW APPLICANT PROCEDURE**

- The intake volunteer gives the applicant a **Recipient Registration Form** to fill out and return. The volunteer explains to the applicant that all members of the household, regardless of relationship and gross income, should be included in the total of all income.
- The applicant signs a **Waiver of Liability** statement.
- The intake volunteer checks the forms for completeness and sees that the income falls below the guidelines stated on the form. This is on the honor system; the applicant is not required to show proof of income, but they will be asked for proof of residence by providing a current utility bill.
- Each family will be given an identification card with a number. This will ensure individual attention and privacy.

- The intake volunteer dates and initials the form and adds the form to the alphabetical **Current** file. If this occurs on distribution day, the applicant takes his/her place in line to receive food.

## **DISTRIBUTION DAYS**

- No food shall be distributed to any person who is not registered.
- The registered client completes the sign-in sheet, obtains the forms from the intake volunteer, and carries the form as s/he goes through the food line.
- The client reviews the form and makes any necessary changes to the information.
- The client signs and dates the form each time s/he picks up food. When the last space to sign is filled, the client receives a new form to complete.
- Clients must register and pick up their own groceries unless they are housebound due to ill health or working during hours of food distribution.
- Eligible clients who are housebound can have food delivered. Eligibility for home deliveries is determined by the pantry manager.
- If a proxy form is on file at the pantry, food can be picked up by the designated person. Proxy information is available at the pantry.
- To minimize confusion and expedite food distribution, clients may pick up only one order at a time. If they are serving as proxies for someone else, they must return to the line for each order that they are picking up.
- At the end of the food line, all signed forms will be returned to the person who is weighing the food. At the end of the day, all files will be returned to the manager's desk.
- At the end of each disbursement period, volunteers will report to the pantry manager the number of families served and the amount of food disbursed.

## **FOOD DISBURSEMENT TIMES**

Monday 3:00 to 6:00 pm  
Wednesday 4:00 to 7:00 pm  
Saturday 10:30 am to 1:00 pm

Clients whose income is 200% or less of the Federal Poverty Level will meet the Rhinelander Area Food Pantry guidelines for eligibility. Clients whose income is 185% or less of the Federal Poverty line will also be eligible for USDA commodity foods.

If the RAFFP has sound reasons to suspect someone is deliberately misrepresenting income or otherwise providing false information to take advantage of the program, the pantry may refuse to disburse food to that person. However, income eligibility is intended to be self-declared, and requiring proof must be reserved only for instances when there are solid grounds—not just suspicions—for doubting a client's truthfulness.

The RAFFP manager has the authority to waive the income guidelines based on emergency circumstances.

Respect for participants' privacy and confidentiality must be observed at all times. All records must also be treated as confidential documents.

### **RAFFP Non-discrimination Policy**

The RAFFP does not discriminate in any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information or political beliefs.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Volunteers should call 911 if there is a medical or safety emergency during operating hours. If there is a food emergency when the Rhinelander Area Food Pantry is not open, call 715-628-

0664. The Pantry Manager will provide an emergency food supply by opening the pantry and providing a pre-made emergency food bag of non-perishable foods and some fresh bread. If the call is after the Pantry Manager has left Rhineland, but before 9 p.m. and receives a request for food, the person(s) in need will be referred to the Rhineland Fire Department to receive an emergency food bag that has been supplied by the RAFP. The Pantry Manager will alert the Rhineland Fire Department that client(s) will be coming in for food.