

Client Choice Implementation Guide

Client Choice Implementation Support



How to Use This Guide:

This guide is designed to support partners in developing a tailored action plan to increase choice within their food distributions. It is intended to lead a collaborative conversation between site staff and Second Harvest's Capacity Building Specialist during a site visit. The questions included are meant to be completed together. They help Second Harvest understand the partner's current distribution model and inform an approach that reflects the site's unique goals, needs, and capacity. This guide is most effective when a partner has already expressed interest in offering more choice or creating a more dignified experience for their clients.

This guide walks through five action planning steps:

1. Review your current distribution model
2. Review the current level of choice provided
3. Review your capacity
4. Identify resources and support
5. Take action



Step 1: Review your current distribution model

Describe your distribution set up. (e.g. Drive-thru, market-style, pre-bag/box..etc)

How many distributions occur each week/month (what days/times)?

How frequently can clients receive food from the pantry?

What are your strengths? What are your most reliable resources? (E.g. number of volunteers, time to prepare and complete a distribution)

Do you participate in TEFAP? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Other _____

What kind of experience do you want your clients to have during distribution? How do you foster that experience?

What feedback do you hear from clients about your services or their experience? Do you ask for client feedback? Listening to and responding to client feedback is a great way to enhance dignity at pantries. If you're not currently asking for feedback, what are some questions you would like to ask, and how could you use their responses to make improvements? (e.g., sourcing requested foods, adjusting days and hours).



"Client choice has been a wonderful model for our community. It transforms the distribution atmosphere into something engaging, empowering, and even joyful for everyone who walks through our doors."

Ella F.

Boys and Girls Club of
Capistrano Valley – Aliso
Viejo

Step 2. Review the current level of choice provided

Based on the *Spectrum of Choice* one pager, which level best describes your current distribution model?

Can you share your goals around offering more choice? Why is providing choice important to you and your team? (e.g. increase dignity, reducing food waste)

What opportunities do you see to offer more choice within your current distribution model?

- ☐ Increase shopping area
- ☐ Lack of equipment such as shelves or fridges
- ☐ Have neighbors place orders
- ☐ Train volunteers on the importance of choice
- ☐ Train volunteers on customer service
- ☐ Increase hours of distribution
- ☐ Rearrange the space
- ☐ Other: _____

Step 3: Review your Capacity

What barriers make it difficult to offer more choice? Select your top 3.

- ☐ Limited space
- ☐ Not enough time
- ☐ Not enough volunteers/staff
- ☐ Do not desire change
- ☐ Efficiency of pre-packed bags
- ☐ Neighbors prefer pre-packed bags
- ☐ Concerns about clients taking too much food
- ☐ We want to give clients the same items for a fair/equal distribution
- ☐ Needing more volunteers/staff buy-in
- ☐ Other _____

How many staff members work at your pantry? Are they full-time or part-time, and what are their specific roles?

How many volunteers are currently needed to run your food distribution, and what are their primary roles?

Where do you typically recruit most of your volunteers?

Draw your current food storage and distribution setup. (e.g. shelving, refrigeration, check-in area)



Step 4: Identify Resources & Support

Considering the barriers you just identified, can you share what resources you will need to be successful? Let's go through each barrier. *Think about the layout of your space; you may need to move shelves or buy equipment such as glass-front refrigerators.*

Barrier	How this impacts choice implementation	Resources that would help

Step 5: Take Action

What is within your control? What kinds of decisions do you have the power to make or change within your role?

To increase Choice, we can take the following actions:

1.

2.

3.

Timeframe: By when would you want to implement these actions?

1.

2.

3.

Milestones: How will you recognize progress on these actions? What would success look like for you?

1.

2.

3.

Client Choice Implementation Guide: Additional Notes

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Client Choice Implementation Guide: Layout Design

Use this page to sketch or modify your pantry layout. Consider the flow for neighbors and volunteers and organize the space to maximize efficiency while fully utilizing the available area to offer choice.