

OPERATING POLICY FOUR

MEMBERSHIP

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a defined structure to the membership of the Ontario Association of Food Banks (OAFB);
- Outline requirements for OAFB membership;
- Provide clear rights, responsibilities and limitations for members;
- Formalize the fee structure for the OAFB and member food banks;
- Define the OAFB's relationship with the Canadian Association of Food Banks (CAFB);
- Describe the accreditation process for members and minimum operational standards that will promote access and more effective food distribution; and
- Provide a clear grievance protocol for any individual or organization with concerns regarding the policies or procedures of a member food bank.

2. STRUCTURE

2.1 General

- a. OAFB members are food banks, as outlined in By-Law No. 1, Section 8, operating in the province of Ontario, who meet the standards outlined in the organizations By-Laws, Standards of Operation, and Operating Policies.
- b. Geographic Division of Membership. All members will be assigned to one of four geographical Zones, based upon geographic location of the member food bank: SouthWestern Ontario, Central Ontario, Eastern Ontario, and Northern Ontario.
- c. Zone designation. Each Zone shall have one main warehouse that acts as the Distribution Centre for Hubs within that Zone. Each member will be assigned a Distribution Centre or hub from which it is to obtain product, as outlined in Operating Policy Two: Distribution Guidelines.

2.2 Boundaries

- a. **Definition.** Community boundaries shall be determined according to the municipal definitions outlined in the Ontario Municipal Act 2001 (See Appendix for full listing.) The act divides municipalities into three categories: upper-tier municipalities and lower-tier municipalities within a two-tier municipal system, and single-tier municipalities that are not part of a two-tier system.
- b. **Community Steward of Food.** All members must be the steward of food for the community they serve. Except in extraordinary circumstances as determined by the Board of Directors, there shall only be one member per community.
- c. **Regional Membership.** OAFB encourages regionalization in order to improve service delivery to food banks across the province. In the case of regional membership that includes multiple communities, the following applies:
 - i. The Board of Directors must approve regional membership.
 - ii. Food banks served by the regional member must abide by the standards and policies of the OAFB.
 - iii. Food banks served by the regional member are considered non-voting members of the OAFB.

- iv. As per the boundary definition above, there cannot be a geographical overlap in membership. The OAFB cannot accept members that operate within any of the communities served by the regional member.
 - v. Zones cannot be considered for regional membership.
 - vi. Agencies or members of the regional network or co-operative cannot become separate voting members of the OAFB.
 - vii. The regional member must have written permission, or approval in a meeting of all participating communities, from their associated members to act as the voting member of the OAFB.
- d. **Service Boundaries.** All members agree to only serve clients or other food banks who reside within their community boundaries.
 - e. **Fundraising Boundaries.** All members agree not to fundraise within another member's boundaries without their expressed written permission. Fundraising activities include direct mail, events, in-store promotions, and local corporate requests. This stipulation does exclude individuals or companies that have chosen, without active solicitation, to donate to a member outside of their boundaries.
 - f. **Foodraising.** All members agree not to foodraise within another member's boundaries without their expressed written permission. Foodraising activities include the organization of food drives or the direct and active solicitation of food companies via e-mail, lettermail or in-person. This stipulation does exclude any food drives or food companies that have chosen, without active solicitation, to donate directly to a member outside of their boundaries.

3. REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP & APPLICATION PROCESS

3.1. General

- a. All members must have the collection and distribution of food to persons in need as a primary pursuit.
- b. All members must sign off on the Standards of Operation and Client Policy on a yearly basis.
- c. All must pay an annual membership fee. See Section VII – Fees and Compensation.
- d. All members must be registered charities pursuant to the provisions of the Income Tax Act.
- e. All members must be incorporated and governed by a board of directors or, if not incorporated, have provided letters of support from community agencies that are acceptable to the OAFB Board of Directors.
- f. All members must fulfill all obligations for accreditation as outlined in this policy. See Section IX – Accreditation.
- g. All members shall adhere to the OAFB By-Laws, Standards of Operation, Policies and Procedures.
- h. Criteria for Member status is outlined in Operating Policy Two: Distribution Guidelines (Sections 3.2-3.3 'Definitions', 6.4-6.5 'Responsibilities').
- i. Members physical location must be located in zoned commercial or industrial space.
- j. Members must make every reasonable effort to ensure their food bank is barrier free for those with disabilities.
- k. Members must demonstrate the ability and willingness to communicate with the OAFB home office in a timely manner.
- l. Members must be able to coordinate meetings, engage in fundraising activities and actively support the strategic aims of the OAFB.

- m. Members must have an active email address or fax line.
- n. Members must be open to service clients for a minimum of 16 hours per month.

3.2. Application Process for New Members

- a. A food bank that wishes to become a member of the OAFB must submit an OAFB Application for Membership (see Appendix, Application for Membership) to the OAFB home office.
- b. Following the declaration of intent, the OAFB home office will consult with local hub to determine serviceability of the applicant.
- c. OAFB home office staff will conduct a site visit to review organizational policies, procedures and capacity. Where home office staff site visits are cost-prohibitive or geographically challenging, the Zone's Hub may conduct site visits and report on applicant status in lieu of OAFB staff.
- d. Upon completion of a site visit the OAFB staff person or authorized representative shall make any necessary recommendations for improvement to organizational policies or procedures. A completed application for membership and site visit do not guarantee membership in the OAFB.
- e. OAFB home office staff shall bring forth a recommendation to the OAFB Board of Directors who shall accept, decline, or offer conditional approval to the prospective member.
- f. New members shall immediately sign the Standards of Operation Commitment and Client Policy, and pay OAFB annual membership fees.
- g. Any applicant that is declined membership in the organization will receive notice in writing from the OAFB Board or Directors outlining the reasons membership was not conferred.
- h. Any applicant that is declined membership may apply to the OAFB for membership again after implementation of recommendations for improvement from the previous application.
- i. An applicant may apply only once per calendar year.

3.3. Membership Renewal

- a. Each Member of the OAFB shall submit a Membership Renewal Form (see Appendix G) each calendar year. The renewal form must be received by the OAFB home office along with all outstanding membership fees by May 1st of each year.
- b. Any Member that allows their membership in the OAFB to lapse shall be subject to the application process for new members (as outlined in Section 4.2).
- c. Any Member that has had their membership revoked for breach of OAFB policy or failure to comply with OAFB Standards of Operation shall be subject to the application process for new members (as outlined in Section 4.2).
- d. All Members shall have their service agencies sign off on OAFB Standards of Operation and Client Policy on a bi-annual basis.

4. MEMBERSHIP RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES & LIMITATIONS

4.1 Rights

- a. All OAFB members shall have equitable access to provincially donated food.
- b. All members shall be notified of the activities of the OAFB as well as OAFB events.
- c. All members shall have access to OAFB food donation records and financial records.

- d. All members shall have the opportunity to attend regional meetings and the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

4.2. Responsibilities

- a. All members must accept responsibility for all food received from the OAFB, including its proper storage and fair distribution based on need.
- b. All members must sign and abide by the Standards of Operation Commitment (SOC) and Client Policy each year at the time of membership renewal. Subsequently, all organizations with whom a member shares food must abide by the regulations set forth in the OAFB SOC and sign the SOC and Client Policy bi-annually. The OAFB member shall be responsible for ensuring the SOC is signed by said organizations.
- c. All members must post a signed copy of the Standards of Operation and Client Policy in a public area within their food bank. A copy of an OAFB approved grievance policy shall also be displayed prominently in all member food banks.
- d. Members shall be responsive to the needs of the clients they serve. Wherever possible members shall maintain flexible hours of operation and a location that ensures access.
- e. All members must meet minimum operational expectations. Members shall ensure adequate warehouse space and appropriate storage (i.e. refrigerated space for perishable product) as well as sufficient staff and equipment are available to receive allocated product. Members must be flexible and prepared when arranging drop-offs of donated product.
- f. All members are responsible for documenting and reporting the movement of food through their food bank. Such documentation can include confirmation of receipt, information on the condition of food arriving at the food bank and names of other agencies with whom the food was shared.
- g. All members must complete all OAFB administered surveys and supply data for OAFB indices on food bank usage and trends.
- h. All members must adhere to the guidelines for distribution and solicitation set out in OAFB Operating Policy Two: Distribution Guidelines.
- i. All members shall maintain demographic statistics on food bank usage and shall complete the annual HungerCount. Demographic data required to complete the HungerCount shall be considered the minimum demographic data collection standard for each member. Members must refrain from collecting inappropriate demographic data as outlined in Operating Policy Three: Food Bank Clients (Section 3: Privacy).
- j. All members must maintain an active fax line or email address.
- k. All members must acknowledge their membership in the OAFB and publicly recognize the OAFB's role in hunger relief across Ontario. The OAFB logo must be displayed on the members' website and on other promotional material wherever possible.

4.3. Limitations & Expectations

- a. Members shall not share information, provide resources to or use the services of any OAFB prohibited organization. Prohibited designation is conferred on organizations as a protective measure for the OAFB and its members. See Appendix F – List of Prohibited Organizations.
- b. Access to resources and best practices, professional development, research and advocacy will be provided to all Member food banks by the OAFB. Food

distribution shall be provided by the Hub assigned to each Member. See Appendix E – Expectations Grid.

- c. The OAFB shall not provide financial assistance to member food banks who are in crisis. Assistance shall be limited to emergency food relief.

5. FEES

5.1 OAFB Member Fees

- a. The OAFB shall administer and collect membership fees for all Member food banks on a yearly basis.
- b. Membership fee to be paid by each Member is to be determined by the previous year’s HungerCount number.
- c. The fee schedule shall be outlined in **Table One: OAFB Member Fee Schedule.**

TABLE ONE: OAFB MEMBER FEE SCHEDULE

NO. OF PERSONS SERVED PER MONTH	FEE
Up to 200	\$50
201 to 1,000	\$100
1,001 to 5,000	\$200
5,001 to 10,000	\$500
10,001 to 25,000	\$1,000
25,001 +	\$2,000

5.2. Fee Collection by OAFB Members

1. Base fee for membership. Members may collect annual membership fees up to \$100 from member agencies or other local food banks.

2. Shared maintenance fee. Beyond the base fee, members may also collect a shared maintenance fee (or nominal handling charge), as per the CAFB Code of Ethics if they meet the following criteria:

- a. Members may charge a shared maintenance fee to other food banks of up to five (5) cents per pound distributed. This fee should be based on the assessed cost of distribution by the member according to Operating Policy Two: Distribution Guidelines. This fee may be calculated and applied on a per delivery, monthly, or annual basis.
- b. Members charging a shared maintenance fee must have the agreement of a two-thirds majority of those receiving product to establish the fee or increase the fee level beyond the rate of inflation.
- c. Members that charge fees to other OAFB members must disclose the calculation of their fee levels to the OAFB Board of Directors as well as those members that they service.

6. NATIONAL REPRESENTATION

6.1 Membership

- a. The OAFB is the member of the Canadian Association of Food Banks (CAFB) for the province of Ontario.
- b. All members of the OAFB shall be able to avail themselves of the services of the CAFB via their membership in the OAFB.
- c. The CAFB shall be the national representative of OAFB member food banks.

- d. All mass communication to OAFB member food banks must be approved by the OAFB.

6.2 Governance

- a. The OAFB shall provide two voting delegates to the Member Council of the CAFB as appointed by the OAFB Board of Directors. One representative shall be the OAFB Executive Director or designate, and the other shall be a representative of an OAFB member food bank.

6.3 Expectations and Responsibilities

- a. All expectations and responsibilities within the relationship between the OAFB and CAFB shall be governed by the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU-CAFB) between the OAFB and the CAFB.

7. ACCREDITATION

- a. The OAFB home office shall be in regular contact with all Members. OAFB staff shall conduct site visits on at least a bi-annual basis to ensure Member adherence to the Standards of Operation, By-Laws and Policies, and to confer accredited status. Where individual site visits are cost-prohibitive or geographically challenging, Zone Hubs may conduct site visits and confer accredited status in lieu of OAFB staff.
- b. The OAFB shall be responsible for developing the accreditation process.
- c. All Members shall disclose the names of the agencies with whom they share food. All agencies that receive food or support through the Provincial Food Distribution Network shall be required to sign and adhere to the OAFB Standards of Operation and Client Policy.
- d. The OAFB Member Relations Coordinator or designate shall be responsible for the conferral of accredited status.
- e. Accredited status may be revoked or suspended should Members fail to participate in OAFB mandated self-reporting practices or violate OAFB policies and procedures.
- f. Suspension of accredited status will result in suspension of OAFB membership and all benefits associated therein. Accredited status may be restored upon implementation of required changes or submission of outstanding self-reporting materials.
- g. Loss of accredited status will result in loss of OAFB membership and all benefits associated therein. Any member that lost their accredited status and in so doing, their membership, must reapply to the OAFB for membership after implementation of required changes or submission of outstanding self-reporting materials. The application process shall follow the procedure outlined in Section 4.2 – Application Process for New Members.

8. GRIEVANCES & DISPUTES

- a. The OAFB will act as arbiter for all disputes between member food banks for all matters governed by OAFB policies and procedures.
- b. All grievances against a member or prospective member food bank will be resolved according to the following protocol:

8.1. Sequential process. If a client, volunteer, staff person, community member or a member food bank wishes to report a violation of this policy, they must go through the process outlined below. This process is sequential. Therefore, unless the issue involves extraordinary circumstances, the individual or organization lodging the grievance cannot pass over any of the steps below.

- a. **Verbal: Senior Staff.** The grievance should be communicated verbally to the most senior staff person at the member food bank.
- b. **Written: Member Organization Board of Directors.** All written grievances must be brought forward to the Board of Directors of the member food bank for discussion and resolution. The written grievance must include the date and description of the violation.
- c. **Verbal: OAFB Home Office.** The grievance must be reported to either the OAFB Member Relations Coordinator or the Executive Director.
- d. **Written: OAFB Board of Directors.** All written grievances must be brought forward to the Board of Directors of the member food bank for discussion and resolution. The member food bank must be given at least 10 business days notice that the matter is being brought forward for discussion. Member food banks under review shall have the opportunity to speak on their own behalf at the Membership Review meeting of the OAFB Board of Directors.

8.2. Grievances procedure. At each step in the process, it is the responsibility of the member food bank and/or the OAFB to:

- a. record the date that a grievance is received and the nature of the grievance;
- b. acknowledge receipt of the grievance;
- c. contact the individual or organization to clarify the nature of the grievance;
- d. notify the plaintiff(s) of the outcome of the investigation clearly and promptly; and
- e. modify policies and procedures based on the outcome of the grievance.

8.3. Awareness and point of contact. All food bank staff and volunteers must be made aware of policies and procedures for grievances, and to whom these grievances should be referred within the organization.

8.4. Resolution of grievances. Grievances will result in the following resolutions:

- a. **Notice of resolution of a grievance.** If the grievance is found not to be a violation of this policy or the OAFB's Standards of Operation, the member food bank will receive notice indicating that the matter has been resolved. Notice will be delivered by the method to which the grievance has escalated (i.e. notification of resolution of a verbal grievance can be delivered verbally, resolutions to written grievances will be delivered in writing etc.) Issuing of notice by the OAFB will not result in action or prejudice against the member in any aspect of its relationship with the OAFB. The individual or organization who has lodged the grievance will also receive notice of the decision.
- b. **Recommendation for Change.** After investigation, the OAFB may recommend changes in policy or procedure that must be implemented in order for the member food bank to retain membership in the organization. Such recommendations shall be reasonable and will be provided in writing to the member food bank. The OAFB may suspend provision of service until such time as the recommendations for change have been fully implemented.
- c. **Termination of membership in the Ontario Association of Food Banks (OAFB).** If the grievance is found to be an accurate account of a violation of this policy or the OAFB's Standards of Operation, the membership of food bank in question will be terminated. The member food bank must be provided the reason for their termination in writing, and the date of the decision. The individual or organization who lodged the grievance will also receive notice of the decision. The termination procedure will follow the process as per the OAFB's By-Laws.

9. REVIEW PERIOD

- a. This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Member Relations Coordinator who will make recommendations to the OAFB Board of Directors.

Approved in principle, OAFB Board Meeting, April 2008.

Approved, OAFB Board Meeting, June 2008.

APPENDIX

1. Regional Breakdown of Members
2. Glossary of Terms
3. Membership Application Form
4. Prohibited Organizations
5. Membership Renewal Form
6. List of All Ontario Municipalities (as provided by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, as found on <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page1591.aspx>.)