



## **REQUIRED EFAP BIENNIAL MEETING HANDOUT TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL SUBCONTRACTORS**

In order to be certain that all food pantries understand the application process for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP), the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has asked that each county's current lead contractor provide all potential subcontractors the information in this document that outlines the process. WSDA wants to be certain that all participating agencies across the state receive the same information.

EFAP is a locally driven program. The power to decide how to spend a county's allocation rests with the food pantries. The current lead contractor is required to call a meeting (it may take more than one meeting) to make several decisions for the next 2-year contract period beginning July 1, 2015.

**Attendance is required for all food pantries and food banks that receive funding and services supported with state funding.** Only in extreme cases may a lead contractor excuse a food pantry from attending the meeting and still receive EFAP funding.

There are several areas of discussion that must be covered during this meeting:

- 1) Is there a new food pantry who wants EFAP funding and food for the county?
  - a) If yes, they will present their case for providing food pantry services.
  - b) Will they be duplicating services already provided by the other funded food pantry(ies)?  
**Note:** This is the **only** reason for denying a food pantry funding if they otherwise meet the EFAP criteria.
- 2) Is there a new agency who wants to be the lead contractor for the county?
  - a) If yes, they will present their case for providing services to the food pantries.
  - b) How much EFAP funds are they requesting to provide those services?
  - c) How will they spend their share of the EFAP funds if they are selected?
- 3) Is there a new agency who wants to be a food bank distribution center? There can be more than 1.
  - a) If yes, they will present their case for providing services to the food pantries.
  - b) How much EFAP funds are they requesting to provide those services?
- 4) How do you want the funds to be spent in the county? **You may allocate funding for one to all of the following purposes in any combination and amounts:**
  - a) To food pantries for their own use to provide food to clients.
    - i) Determine the formula for allocating funds among the food pantries.
  - b) To food bank(s) for their use to provide food to the food pantries.
    - i) Determine how many food bank(s) will be supporting the food pantries.
    - ii) Determine the amount of funding to allocate to the food bank(s).

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and availability of our food system.*

- c) Items to benefit entire group that are funded before other allocations are decided:
  - i) Special dietary needs food for the entire group of food pantries that participate. \*
  - ii) Up to 1% of the grant amount for dues for the WA Food Coalition or any other anti-hunger agency for the entire group to be taken off the top before further allocating the funds. \*
  - iii) Shared equipment purchases. \*

**\* Note:** Once funds are allocated to any food pantry, that agency has the right to decide for itself how to spend its own funding within the EFAP guidelines, including up to 10% for administrative costs, operational costs, equipment purchases, special dietary needs food and dues. Lead contractor and food bank distribution centers have the right to take up to 10% for administrative costs if they deem that necessary.

**IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL DETAIL TO ASSIST YOU WITH THE MEETING PROCESS:**

**Decisions & Voting:**

All decisions are made with a 2/3+ vote of the eligible food pantries and contractor, except the selection of contractor where only the food pantries may vote. Note the 2/3 refers to all of the food pantries receiving EFAP funds and food for the next biennium, not 2/3 of those present at the meeting should one or more of the food pantries not be present at the meeting.

**New Food Pantries:**

There may be food pantries wishing to receive EFAP for the first time present at the meeting. The contractor should make every attempt to determine whether or not the food pantry meets the criteria for receiving EFAP funding prior to the meeting. If the food pantry meets those criteria, it may be denied EFAP funding **ONLY** if the existing group of EFAP food pantries and contractor can substantiate that the new food pantry provides services that are duplicative to already funded food pantries nearby. 2/3 of the current food pantries and contractor must vote to deny the new food pantry (only) on those criteria. This cannot be a random decision. New food pantries must be given time to make their case for receiving EFAP. Some factors to consider are: Is the food pantry a substantial distance from other food pantries? Consider transportation problems for customers. Is the new food pantry open different hours? Do they service a different population? Do they have access to special dietary food that the other food pantries do not have? This should be the first discussion and vote of the meeting so new food pantries can vote on other issues.

**Lead Contractor:**

All agencies wishing to be the contractor or food bank must be allowed to present to the group their plans for providing services to the food pantries, how much of the EFAP funds they are requesting to provide those services and how they plan on spending their share of the EFAP funds if they are selected. These presentations must take place prior to any votes on a contractor and food bank(s).

The second decision that must be made is the selection of the contractor. This is done with at least a 2/3 vote of the participating food pantries. Each county can have only one contractor with the exception of King County, which may have up to three. A contractor may be the contractor for more than one county, but each county must vote separately for the contractor. A contractor has the right to take 10% of the county's EFAP allocation to cover its costs of administering the EFAP grant.

Administering the EFAP grant can be a time-consuming and challenging responsibility.

**Funding Allocations:**

The newly elected contractor and food pantries must then decide with a 2/3+ vote how to use their county's EFAP funds. As mentioned above in #3, funding can be allocated to the food pantries themselves, to the food bank, for equipment that will benefit the entire contractor area, to pay dues to appropriate organizations for the county's food pantries and food bank(s) and to purchase special dietary needs for all food pantries.

The next choice that the food pantries and new contractor need to make is how to allocate the funding among the food pantries, if part of the EFAP money is chosen to go to the food pantries. This also must be at least a 2/3 vote, but consensus should be tried to be reached. This formula can change from biennium to biennium, depending on the needs of that county. EFAP policies state that the formula must be based on substantiated need indicated for each food pantry.

If funds are allocated for food bank services, the group must then decide who that food bank(s) will be. This will also be decided with a 2/3 vote of the contractor and food pantries. Once a food bank(s) has been selected, there should be an active discussion between the food bank(s) and the food pantries about what kinds of food are needed and can be provided, how the food will get from the food bank to the food pantries and what the allocation formula will be for dividing the food among the food pantries. WSDA strongly urges food pantries to consider supporting their local food bank with funding as a way to strengthen those local agencies and as a means to very reasonably-priced or free food.

The percentage of EFAP funds allocated to any of the budget categories mentioned above can be any percentage of the entire grant to the county(ies), from 1% to 100% (minus the contractor's 10% if it chooses to take it). The exception is the amount allocated for dues, which must not exceed 1% of the county's allocation.

**Multi-county service area:**

A multi-county area with the same contractor may make decisions on how the funding is allocated as a block vote instead of each county individually if 2/3 of the food pantries involved vote to do so. This involves pooling all of the counties' funding into one single allocation for the combined counties and considered as a single allocation in computing the combined area's percentages to the various budget categories. If any county's food pantry(ies) receives fewer funds by doing this, they have the right to remove their county's funds from the group decision process. The other counties may continue to vote as a block. WSDA encourages multi-county areas to consider doing this as a means to more evenly disperse funding and resources among all of the service area's food pantries and to ease the administrative burden on the contractors.

**Attendance Required:**

A food pantry must make every attempt to attend this meeting. If the director cannot be present, he/she should appoint another person such as a board member or the next highest ranking staff or volunteer to attend. Only if all possibilities of having someone attend has been exhausted should a contractor excuse the food pantry from attending and thereby still be eligible for EFAP funding or food. A food pantry that has been excused from being present may submit an absentee ballot with its vote on contractor, food bank, how the funds within the county should be allocated among the budget categories and how funding should be allocated to the food pantries if the absentee food pantry votes to allocate funds to the food pantries. The ballot must be signed and dated by the director or board chair. Clearly, a food pantry that misses the discussions and presentations will not have an informed vote and may want to consider abstaining from the vote.

**Examples of possible funding decisions among the budget categories:**

**Example #1**

10% Contractor admin  
1% for WA Food Coalition dues  
35% Food bank  
54% Food pantries

**Example #2**

10% Contractor admin  
75% Food bank  
15% Special dietary needs food purchases

**Example #3**

10% Contractor admin  
69% Food pantries  
20% Equipment for the purchase of a Refrigerated truck shared by all of the food pantries  
1% WA Food Coalition dues

**Example #4**

10% Contractor admin  
40% Food pantries  
20% Food bank #1  
20% Food bank #2  
10% Special dietary needs food purchases

If, after the meeting, someone feels that the above process was not properly carried out, steps were missing, or coercion was used, please contact the Food Assistance Program Manager, Kim Eads at 360-725-5651 or [keads@agr.wa.gov](mailto:keads@agr.wa.gov). The state asks that people please first try to work out any disagreements locally before contacting WSDA.