



CORA FOOD PANTRY
Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
August 2025

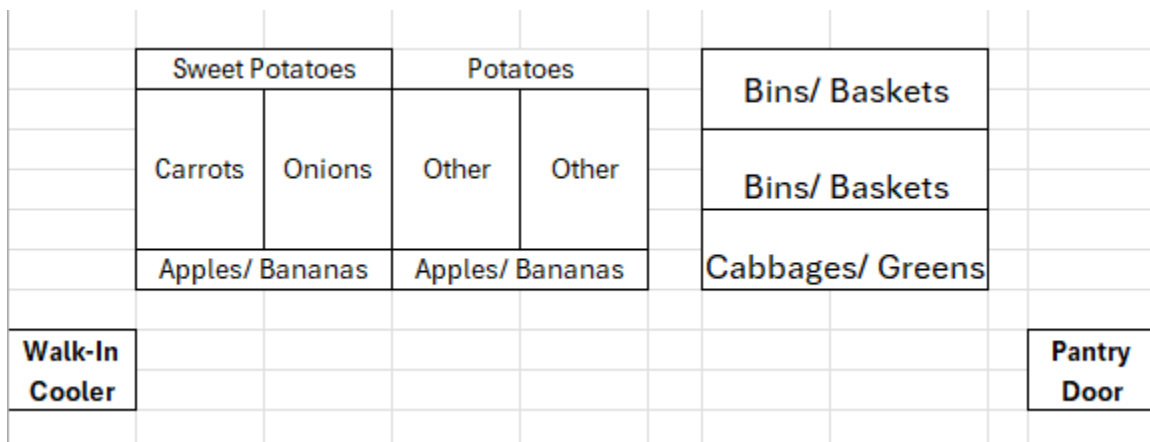
MORNING SET UP

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

- If you ever come to the pantry and there has been a power outage, call a staff member immediately. Phone numbers are:
 - Melissa Beard 919-210-1307
 - Terrance Ross 919-579-7275
 - Mackie Hunter 336-314-9779
- Uncover produce that was left on tables and check over in case any needs to be thrown out.
- Assess what produce is available from the previous day if the pantry assistant or pantry manager has not yet done this.
- Make a pig box with any rotten produce. Set up the pig box under the produce table closer to the walk-in cooler. It will stay there until it is full as produce may be added to it as the day progresses (e.g., when produce is restocked, etc.). Once it's full, take it outdoors to a shopping cart. Place the pig box in one of the shopping carts **outside**.
- It is IMPORTANT to look in the outdoor coolers. In many cases, the produce in the outdoor coolers is the oldest and needs to be served ASAP. *Keys to the outdoor coolers are on a plastic spiral key ring in the top drawer of the mini-file cabinet in the Pantry Assistant's office.
- Bag any lettuce that needs to be bagged. Please wear gloves when bagging food, and please make sure the area in which you are bagging is clean.
- Serve the oldest produce first. For example, if there are carrots left over from the prior day but the display needs to be replenished, use the newer, fresher carrots to create the base layer and then top off the display with the older produce that needs to move first. The fresher produce will sometimes still be in bags while the older produce will often be loose, or may still be on the display.
- If there are questions about what should be served first, or produce that should be held back for future distributions, please contact a staff member.
- If there is no staff person to direct what needs to be prioritized on the tables, then I generally model what was put out the previous day (also see image below for how it generally goes). If there are lettuces that need to be bagged, I would probably start with what is needed for set up right then and return to bagging once everything else is out.
- Produce displays can be set up according to the diagram below.
- Miscellaneous produce can be put on the displays closest to the shelving units.
- General miscellaneous items should be placed on the tables or shelves closest to the outside wall / freezers.
- Check the bread for mold, discarding what is past use.
- Set out /organize new bread or frozen bread, if there is any.
- If necessary, re-stock the meat refrigerators with available product.
- Consult, as needed, on the daily menu.
- Ask any questions shopping assistants may have.

- Assist with packaging eggs, if needed.
- Receive miscellaneous produce items from the cullers to put on the produce tables.
NOTE: Retail Recovery should always be refrigerated.
- Items in the retail recovery refrigerators may be set up as follows:
 - Lettuce across the top in baskets.
 - Fruit on the right hand side with the cups being together.
 - Vegetables on the left-hand side.
 - Larger trays of fruits and vegetables placed along the bottom shelves.
 - Use trays under fruits and vegetables.
- Assist with moving TEFAP produce, if needed.
- **Bananas should NOT be refrigerated!** Bananas turn brown when they are refrigerated whether they are overripe or not. Bananas should be left on displays and covered at the end of each day.
- If there are both ripe and green bananas, place both out so people can choose. Try to move the ripe bananas first.
- All fruits and vegetables should be refrigerated. While many fruits and vegetables do not actually require refrigeration, most have come to us already refrigerated, thus requiring ongoing refrigeration in order to avoid spoilage.
- Do your best to assess ALL the produce that is in the pantry, the indoor, and the outdoor coolers. Food can easily be “hidden” behind other boxes or pallets. It’s important not to waste food, if at all possible.
- Make it look nice! CORA always strives to provide a dignified shopping experience.
- Before the morning huddle, break cardboard boxes down and take them to the cardboard dumpster.
- Sweep!
- Mop up any water around refrigerators and alert staff.
- If there is time, clean the “inside” shopping carts.

Produce Station Diagram



IMPORTANT POINTS TO NOTE:

- Regular Deliveries:
 - Screech regularly delivers lettuce and other produce on Tuesday mornings. He occasionally delivers on other days, too.
 - Lil Rooster often delivers lettuce on Fridays
 - It is important to deliver any remaining Lil Rooster lettuce first before the new Screech product is set out on tables on Tuesdays.
 - Deliveries from Bibi's Produce arrive on Monday mornings.
 - When we are working with Farmer FoodShare, those deliveries arrive on Tuesday mornings.
 - Deliveries from InterFaith Food Shuttle are sporadic.
 - Deliveries from the Food Bank sporadically, but TEFAP is delivered **3rd Wednesday** of each month. CSFP boxes are delivered on the **1st Monday** of each month.
 - Retail recovery deliveries come in from grocery stores every day.
- Dating boxes:
 - Date produce boxes when they arrive, just as we do with retail recovery so that we know which produce to use first. First in first out!

INVENTORY

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

End of Year inventory:

- All inventory will be counted on June 30th. If this is not possible, inventory may be counted on an earlier date and nothing will be moved between the date of the inventory count and the end of the day on June 30th.
- All purchased items will be counted, the number of cases and number of individual items will be recorded, as well as the brand name, description of item, and number of items per case.
- All donated items will be weighed and the item description and weight will be recorded.

Regular inventory through the year:

- Program inventory will be conducted once a month by the program manager.
- Pantry inventory will be conducted at each pantry on a weekly basis at the direction of the pantry managers.
 - Only purchased items and items donated in quantities greater than 20 cases will be counted.
- Inventory counts will be given to the Systems Director within 3 days.
- Systems Director will maintain a shared spreadsheet with ongoing inventory totals.
- This spreadsheet will show product name; purchase date; original quantity; running counts; and best by date.

Inventory movement:

- As needed, transportation and warehouse staff will be responsible for pulling orders from backstock in the warehouse and delivering to pantries, partners, etc.

FOOD DONATIONS

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

GOALS:

- Provide a dignified and respectful experience of donating food to and receiving food from CORA
- Limit food waste
- Distribute not only safe food but quality food items
- Inform clients about extension dates and increase awareness about food safety / quality

TO THIS END:

- All donors will be greeted when they walk in and thanked for their donation.
- Food Safety is top priority, and all frozen and refrigerated items will be moved into cold storage as quickly as possible.
- Pantry Managers will monitor recalls by subscribing to FDA recall notice emails. Any recalls applicable to items CORA may have received will be communicated to volunteers through printed signs in the sorting area or relevant food storage area. Any food items received that are subject to recall will be discarded and not distributed.
- We will not accept or distribute any item whose packaging is opened.
- We will not accept or distribute any baby formula or adult nutrition supplement past the date on the package.
- We will not accept donations with dates past the extension dates provided by the USDA
 - Food items past the extension date will be discarded and not distributed
- Items less than 3 months past the best-by or use-by date, or within 3 months of their best-by or use-by date will be sorted directly onto the shelves in the Pantry
- Items more than 3 months past date and within extension dates from the USDA will have a bright-colored sticker with the date written visibly on it placed on the front of the package/can and sorted to a designated area to be distributed on the miscellaneous shelf during service.

SORT AND STOCK

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

General Description

Volunteer tasks include accepting and recording donations, sorting items, stocking shelves, and maintaining cleanliness. Volunteers must be able to comfortably lift at least 25 pounds repeatedly throughout their shift. Volunteers must stay for their full shift (especially as donations are accepted from 9 AM to 3 PM). If things are slow, clean the pantry, wipe shelves, organize items, or seek direction from staff.

Shift Communication

- Pantry Managers will hold a “huddle” for all volunteers at the beginning of every shift to share all important information specific to the day.

Food Safety Procedures

- Prioritize getting all refrigerated and frozen products into cold storage as quickly as possible.
- When processing refrigerated items like eggs or produce, make sure items are out of the coolers for as short a time as possible and put back in the fridge before you walk away.
- When culling retail recovery produce, remove one box at a time from the fridge. Return items for distribution to refrigeration as quickly as possible.
- Check the date on all retail recovery items. Items that are past date or visibly inedible should be discarded. *Items with the nearest expiration dates should be placed in the front of refrigerators, items whose expiration dates are slightly further out should be in the back. Please note items in the back of each refrigerator may get too cold and become inedible if they are not rotated.
- Check all cans for dents or damage to the seals at the top and bottom. Discard any cans with damaged seals, rust, or extensive dents.
- Check that all packaging is sealed. Discard any opened items. If outer packaging is damaged but items are individually packaged, items can be distributed as long as individual packaging is intact.

Donation Intake Procedures

Always prioritize helping donors. At least one volunteer should be stationed near the donation door during operating hours to greet incoming donors.

When donors arrive: greet them, thank them for their donation, ask if they would like a receipt or if they would like to leave a name for their donation.

1. Weigh All Donations:

- This includes food, empty bags, egg cartons, and non-food items.
- Round to the nearest pound:
 - .4 lbs or less → round *down*.
 - .5 lbs or more → round *up*.

2. Log the Donation:

- Use the Community Donations sheet - write clearly.
- Record: date, donor name (or “Anonymous”), and pounds donated (no decimals or “lbs” abbreviation), and your initials.
- If a receipt is requested:
 - Fill out the receipt form.
 - Make sure both copies are clear and can be easily read.
 - Donor gets the white copy, the yellow copy goes in the file bin.
 - Log the donation on the Community Donations sheet. Make sure information on the receipt matches information on the Community Donations sheet.

3. Cash or Check Donations:

- Place all cash or check donations in the white lock box.
- Do NOT open envelopes with cash or checks inside them.
- Do NOT tally cash or checks for any group, including PORCH neighborhood or community group. Staff will follow up with them.
- Do NOT log on the intake form.
- Do NOT give cash or check donations to another volunteer or to staff. They must go in the white lock box.
- Use provided envelopes if needed.

4. Retail Recovery Donations:

- Do NOT log on the Community Donations sheet.
- Use the Retail Recovery Form.
- Weigh all donations by category and record total pounds of each category donated in the boxes on the Retail Recovery Form.
- Include any non-refrigerated drinks with dry goods.
- Put all refrigerated donations into fridges immediately.

5. Accuracy:

- Avoid abbreviations; write full names of donors and organizations.
- Only record the rounded number of donated pounds.
- Make sure all information on the Community Donation sheet matches the information on the donation receipt.

Sorting Process

1. Check all items for damaged or opened packaging.

- Discard any item that is partially used or not in sealed packaging.
- Discard any cans with dents to the top or bottom, or rust anywhere.

2. Check Expiration Dates

- If an item is within 3 months of the best-by or use-by date, move to the shelves in the pantry.
- If an item is more than 3 months past date:
 - Circle the date with a Sharpie.
 - Place in the “Past Date” the bottom sorting shelf.
- If you cannot find a date on an item, place it in the “No Date” box on the bottom sorting shelf.
- During downtime, use the Food Bank Extended Date list in the binder in the wall file organizer in the sorting area to verify extension dates for items in the “Past Date” box:
 - If the item is within the extended date, put a colored dot sticker on the front label. Do not cover the original date with the sticker. Write the extended date on the sticker.
 - Place stickered items in the designated shelf in the sorting area or directly in the “Past Date” section in the Pantry.
 - If an item is past the extension date, place it in the “Trash” box and empty the box into the outside garbage dumpster before the end of your shift. **Do not throw expired food directly in the garbage can in the pantry as it will be too heavy to empty.** .

3. Sort in-date items by Category and Size

Group items first by category, then by type and can size. Stack flats neatly, do not put cans of different height on the same flat. Do not stack flats more than two high.

Categories:

- **Protein:** Tuna, chicken, salmon, SPAM, Vienna sausages, etc. on separate flats.
- **Vegetables:** Same vegetable per flat. Different random vegetables can be grouped.
- **Starch:** Separate flats for mac & cheese, spaghetti, ramen, potatoes, rice, hamburger helper.
- **Pasta Sauce:** All tomato products go in this section. Tomato sauce, tomato paste, and diced tomatoes should be in separate flats.

- **Soup:** Includes soup, chili, canned ravioli, broth and dry soup mixes.
- **Fruit:** Separate trays for each type of fruit. This may include dry, canned, and jarred fruit. Pie filling and flavored pancake syrup should go on miscellaneous shelves.
- **Breakfast:** Cereal, oatmeal, pancake mix, grits , etc.
- **Beans:** Black, pinto, kidney, refried, etc., each on their own flat unless very limited.
- **Baking and Grains:** Cornmeal, jiffy mix, flour (all types) together.
- **Peanut butter and Jelly:** Stored near each other, on separate shelves. If there is a lot of jelly, it can go on the miscellaneous shelves.
- **Milk** (should be stored separately and not over other foods)
- **Miscellaneous Items:** Condiments, syrup, snacks, protein shakes, juice, cake/brownie mixes, oil, spices, etc.
- **Extended Date Items:** Stored in the designated area of the pantry.
- **Toiletries and Toilet Paper:**
 - Toilet paper: 2 rolls per small brown bag, stored above canned goods.
 - Hygiene items have a designated shelf in the pantry.
- **Baby Food and Diapers:**
 - Baby items have a designated spot in the pantry.

Stocking Process

- Regularly check and restock pantry shelves from sorted flats using utility carts.
- Stock shelves neatly, do not overfill. Do not stack more than 2 flats high on pantry shelves. Cans stacked too high may be unstable and can fall, causing injury.
- Return empty flats to the sorting area, stacked neatly in banana boxes on the top of the sorting shelf.
- When the pantry shelves and sorting shelves are full, cases can be moved to the bagging area..
- Shelves in the bagging area are labeled. Keep items on the shelves in the correct spots to make bagging go smoothly. All flats should be unwrapped before being placed on the bagging area shelves. This way the area is ready for volunteers who come to make bags.
- Regularly check and restock fresh produce, deli, bakery items, and meat as needed.
- Make sure the items that will expire first are distributed first and items with later expiration dates are distributed last.

Cooler Organization

- Place items in designated places in the pantry or storage areas.
- **Produce Cooler (Refrigerator):** Veggies (left & placed on trays), fruit (right & placed on trays), salads (top shelf placed in basket).
- **Pastry Cooler (Refrigerator):** Large items (bottom), small items (top).
- No meat should be stored above other items, Ex. pizzas, frozen TEFAP fruit or prepackaged entrees.

Special Programs

- **CORApacks**
 - Set aside items on the current CORApacks food list (check it each time) on designated shelves.
 - Store CORApacks items in labeled boxes by category.
 - Fruit cups and applesauce cups are stored separately.
 - Fruit pouches are baby items, not CORApacks.
- **Prohibited Items**
 - Do NOT distribute: Medicine, energy drinks, or items containing alcohol (e.g., mouthwash or cooking wine).
 - Place these in the Pantry Manager's office for redistribution to other organizations.

Clean-Up & End of Shift

- 15 minutes before end of shift:
 - Clear and clean the intake table.
 - Wipe down utility carts.
 - Wipe off shopping cart handles.
 - Move unsorted donations to the nearby pallet.
 - Dispose of full trash and recycling bags in the bins outside.
 - Break down cardboard boxes (unless banana boxes—store those).
 - Recycle clean cardboard; waxed boxes go in the trash.
- After all shoppers have left the pantry in the afternoon
 - Return all perishable items to refrigerators.
 - Check quality and freshness of items in deli, bakery, and produce fridges

Pantry Presentation

- Treat the pantry like a grocery store for our neighbors: keep it neat, orderly, and easy to shop.

RETAIL RECOVERY

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

This SOP provides detailed instructions for volunteers involved in food recovery from local partner stores. It covers communication, logistics, safety, sorting, and storage procedures to ensure consistency, safety, and efficiency in all food rescue efforts.

Store-Specific Interaction Summaries

- **Volunteers must receive and review store-specific summaries before pickups.**
- These summaries include:
 - Who to contact at the store
 - How to contact them
 - What to expect and do upon arrival
- All summaries will be compiled and shared with volunteers before their first shift.
- All new volunteers must shadow at least **1 -2** shifts, or until they feel comfortable making pickups on their own.

Volunteer Preparedness

- Volunteers should have the following on hand:
 - Freezer bags or blankets
 - Thermometers for temperature tracking
 - A notebook and pen to record temperatures at the store
 - Banana boxes or bins for transporting food from certain stores

Note: Volunteers must be trained on taking and logging temperatures at both the store and CORA.

Shadowing and Training

- New volunteers will be provided with the written store-specific summary for the store they would like to train at.
- New volunteers are required to shadow experienced volunteers at each of the stores from which they plan to pick up food.

Timing and Arrival

- Be on time. Arriving too early or too late may result in missing available donations.
- If a volunteer cannot make their pickup they should contact the pantry manager as early as possible to let them know that they will not be able to complete the pickup so that another plan can be made to pick up from that store on that day.

At the Store

- Follow pickup procedures set out in the store summary for the relevant store.
- Take the temperature of one frozen and one refrigerated item and record the temperature.
- If you have any issues with pickup (for example there is no food to pick up, or the food is not at safe temperature) notify the Pantry Manager.

Temperature Tracking

- Before you leave the store, check and record the temperature of one frozen and one refrigerated item.
- When you arrive at CORA, check and record the temperature of the same frozen and refrigerated items.
- Use provided freezer blankets to keep cold items within a safe temperature range during transportation.

If You Can't Take Everything

- If your vehicle can't hold all donations:
 - Prioritize by perishability and value (e.g., meat and produce over bread).
 - Leave behind items with the longest shelf life or least urgency.
 - Document what was left and why.

Sorting

- Sorting may happen at the store or at CORA. If not done at the store, do it at CORA immediately upon arrival.
- Sort all donations by category
 - Produce
 - Bakery
 - Deli
 - Meat
 - Dry-goods / drinks
 - Non-food (flowers, plants, seasonal items)

- After items are sorted they should:
 - Be weighed by category and have weights recorded on the Retail Recovery form
 - Stay in boxes
 - Be labeled with a date
 - Placed in the appropriate storage area.

Weighing and Reporting

- Weigh food by category (e.g., deli, bakery, produce).
- Fill out the Retail Recovery Sheet with the weight of each category.
- Record the temperatures of the items you chose to track from the time of pickup and when they arrived at CORA.
- Place the completed sheet in the wall folder.

Storage at CORA

- Once boxes have been weighed, move them immediately into the designated storage spaces
 - Meat should always be frozen
 - Produce, deli, and pastries should be refrigerated
 - Bread can be frozen or kept at room temperature. Ask the Pantry Manager or Pantry Assistant if you are unsure where to store bread.
- If space is not available for boxes in the designated storage area, label the boxes with the date and contents and put them in any available cooler or freezer.

Store Specific Summaries

Siler City Walmart: 919-663-6000

- What is the time for pickup?
 - **9:00 am**
- Where do you go when you get to the store?
 - **To the back of the building, ring the bell or knock on the back door.**
- Who do you speak with at the store?
 - **To whoever opens the door, just mention you are there to pick up for CORA.**
- Is the food you pick up usually in boxes? If yes, is it sorted appropriately by category?
 - **Yes, it's usually not sorted by category. Once at the pantry, volunteers sort it, weigh it, and then cull it.**
- Anything else important to know about pickup from this store?
 - **Must take a truck or a big vehicle to be able to fit 7 to 10 boxes.**

Siler City Food Lion: 919-742-9966

- What is the time for pickup?
 - **10:30 am**
- Where do you go when you get to the store?
 - **To the back of the building, ring the bell or knock on the back door.**
- Who do you speak with at the store?
 - **To whoever opens the door, just mention you are there to pick up for CORA.**
- Is the food you pick up usually in boxes? If yes, is it sorted appropriately by category?
 - **Yes, it's usually not sorted by category. Once at the pantry, volunteers sort it, weigh it, and then cull it.**
- Anything else important to know about pickup from this store?
 - **Must take a truck or a big vehicle to be able to fit 7 to 10 boxes.**

Siler City Piggly Wiggly: 919-742-9888

- What is the time for pickup?
 - **10:00 am**
- Where do you go when you get to the store?
 - **Through the front entrance and then go all the way to the back towards the bakery section.**
- Who do you speak with at the store?
 - **To whoever is at the bakery section. Just mention you are there to pick up for CORA.**
- Is the food you pick up usually in boxes? If yes, is it sorted appropriately by category?
 - **No, we have to take our own boxes; they just donate bakery and pastry. Usually, they'll have it in a grocery cart.**
- Anything else important to know about pickup from this store?
 - **Remember to take boxes**

Chatham Downs Harris Teeter: 919-960-0275

- What is the time for pickup?
 - **9:00 am**
- Where do you go when you get to the store?
 - **Go through the front door and to the right to the Produce and Bakery departments.**
- Who do you speak with at the store?
 - **Anyone in the Produce and Bakery Departments. Identify yourself as there to pick up for CORA.**
- Is the food you pick up usually in boxes? If yes, is it sorted appropriately by category?
 - **No, the food will not be in boxes. Produce and Bakery items will be in separate carts in the departments, transfer to boxes at your car and keep separate.**
- Anything else important to know about pickup from this store?
 - **Make sure to take several boxes with you. The amount of food to pick up can vary pretty significantly.**

Governors Club Food Lion: 919-942-1467

- What is the time for pickup?
 - **Saturdays and Sundays at 10am - 12pm (but you can go earlier)**
- Where do you go when you get to the store?
 - **Food is kept in shopping carts. It is best to go in the front door and ask anyone working in the deli, meat, or produce area where the retail recovery food is being kept for CORA.**
- Who do you speak with at the store?
 - **Anyone working in the deli, meat, or produce area.**
- Is the food you pick up usually in boxes? If yes, is it sorted appropriately by category?
 - **Food is not usually in boxes. Plan to bring approximately 10 banana boxes from CORA. Otherwise, boxes can sometimes be found in the receiving area of the store or the produce area of the store. (But don't take their banana boxes! There's an elderly lady who will bite your head off.)**
- Anything else important to know about pickup from this store?
 - **Return the shopping carts to the front of the store. Individual fruits and veggies are often rotten and should be culled at the store.**

Briar Chapel Food Lion: 919-929-9501

- What is the time for pickup?
 - **Saturdays and Sundays 10am - 12pm**
- Where do you go when you get to the store?
 - **Go through the front door then go to the produce section, deli, bakery, and meat departments.**
- Who do you speak with at the store?
 -
- Is the food you pick up usually in boxes? If yes, is it sorted appropriately by category?
 - **The food is usually in boxes.**
- Anything else important to know about pickup from this store?
 - **Be wary of loose veggies and fruit**

Pittsboro Food Lion: 919-542-0861

- What is the time for pickup?
 - **Tuesdays and Thursdays at Noon**
- Where do you go when you get to the store?
 - **Go to the back of the store where there is a ramp that goes to the back door near the loading deck.**
- Who do you speak with at the store?
 - **There is an intercom box to the left of the back door. Push the button, and somebody usually answers (not always). Tell them “CORA Food Pantry at the back door, please”...**

The person on the phone/intercom speaks on a loud-speaker that can be heard through the door, and most of the time somebody opens the door within 4-5 minutes.

If nobody opens the door, knock on it, and if nobody opens the door after that, go through the front door and walk to the back left (near the restrooms) and go to the door and open it from the inside.

- **Tanya is the main person to speak to, and if the items (baked goods, produce, deli) are not already on a cart, she will call that dept. and ask if they have anything for CORA. If she is not around, go to the produce area in the back room (down a hall on the left where the beer is stored). You may also go out on the floor to the deli to see if they have anything from baked goods or deli.**

This doesn't happen very often...usually the donations are already scanned and on a cart.

- Is the food you pick up usually in boxes? If yes, is it sorted appropriately by category?
 - **Most of the time the donations are in boxes by category, but sometimes they are mixed together. Please consolidate them by category so it is easier to weigh them at the pantry.**

Sometimes the food donations are not in boxes. If that happens, you may find empty boxes to put the food into. It is best to separate the food items by category before returning to CORA.

- Anything else important to know about pickup from this store?
 - **When possible, please cull the produce while at the store. When arriving at CORA, unload, weigh the items by category and enter the info on the retail recovery donation form, date the boxes, and stock the food in the appropriate freezers and refrigerators, unless you are asked by CORA staff or volunteers to leave it out so it can be distributed immediately.**

Car Loading

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

Purpose

The purpose of car loading is to safely and efficiently load groceries into Neighbors' vehicles while maintaining clear communication, dignity, and care.

1. Setup for Loading

- Set up a tent if needed (recruit additional volunteers as needed, requires 4 people).
- Place cones to designate the loading area and guide traffic.
- Put the sign out to direct neighbors toward the loading area.
- Place the shopping slip collection bag on a cone out of the way.

2. Preparing to Load Carts

Before bringing carts out:

- Check the ticket on each cart:
 - If “**S**” is circled: indicates a Senior Box and Senior cheese needs to be added to the cart.
 - If multiple Senior Boxes are listed: consider using an additional cart.
 - If the shopping slip indicates that the family is one of multiple families in the same car, wait until all the carts for the car are ready before moving the carts outside.
- Secure fragile items:
 - Do not place anything except boxes on the bottom rack of the shopping cart.
 - Ensure eggs, cakes, and any other fragile items are safely secured in the child seat area or the top of a paper bag.

3. Bringing Carts to Loading Area

- Position carts securely to prevent rolling.
- Keep a clear path open from the load-out door to the loading area.
- Direct vehicles to pull up far enough to access the area where groceries will be loaded.
- Greet Neighbors and:
 - Ask for the shopping slip for each family (Spanish: “¿Tiene el/los papelito/s?”).
 - Ask where in the vehicle they would like their groceries to be placed (Spanish: “¿Dónde quieres la comida?”).

4. Loading Groceries

- **It is very important that carts are not allowed to roll into the car being loaded or other cars in the parking lot!**
- Before loading groceries into a vehicle, ensure that the number on the shopping slip from the neighbor matches the number on the shopping slip on the cart and confirm the name of the person on the slip is correct.
 - Once this information is confirmed, place the slip from the neighbor and the slip from the cart into the designated bag in case there are any questions that come up later.
 - This should be done for each cart being loaded into the vehicle— paying particular attention if we’re loading multiple carts into the same vehicle.
- Load one cart at a time if there is more than one family in the vehicle.
- If two people are car loading, one should stabilize the cart while the other places items in the vehicle.
- If one person is car loading, use a sturdy object to keep the cart from moving.
- Once all groceries have been loaded into the vehicle and the cart is empty, remove the shopping slip taped on the cart handle and bring the empty cart back into the pantry for the next shopper to use.

5. Clean-Up After Service

- Take down the tent (if used), and return it to the storage area.
- Return cones and signs to their storage locations.
- Dispose of tickets and stubs in the trash.
- Return ticket bag to designated location.

Special Situations: Neighbor Requests

Can someone give me a ride home?

No – For liability and safety reasons, **volunteers should not transport Neighbors.**

Can I walk a Neighbor home with their groceries?

No – Do not leave the premises with Neighbors.

Can a Neighbor borrow a cart to take groceries home?

Yes, but:

- Do **not allow use of red shopping carts** used for pantry operations.
- Instead, **transfer groceries** to one of the carts **near the garage door** designated for this purpose.

A NOTE ABOUT SAFETY:

- You **MUST** wear **close-toed shoes**.
- Do **NOT** place drinks on either of the electrical panels.
- Do **NOT** place food directly on the floor (unless it's for the pigs).
- Do **NOT** leave sharp objects, knives, box cutters, scissors in the pantry. Those must remain on the warehouse side of the building.

SHOPPING ASSISTANT

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

Before the Pantry Opens

1. Arrive Early
 - Volunteers arrive 15 minutes before their shift.
 - Get a name tag and introduce yourself to other volunteers.
2. Produce Table menu
 - One or two volunteers use the daily menu to put numbers/ number cards designating the limits for each item on the produce tables and TEFAP shelves. For example: how many pieces of fruit, veggies, retail recovery items, baked goods, etc. does each person or family receive.
3. Prep the Pantry Space
 - Ensure a few carts are stocked with paper and plastic bags.
 - Clean and organize the pantry space.
4. Shopper Number Sheet
 - Wipe and reset the Shopper Number Sheet.
5. Ask for Additional Tasks
 - Check in with the Pantry Assistant for any additional prep tasks or stocking needs.
6. Morning Huddle
 - Attend the morning team huddle for updates and role assignments.
7. Final Walkthrough
 - Do a final walkthrough of the Pantry to ensure readiness as doors open.

During Pantry Hours

1. Intake Process
 - Intake volunteers mark a star next to each number as Neighbors are ready to shop.
 - Intake volunteers circle numbers together if one person is shopping for more than one family (eg, someone is shopping for themselves and also for a family member).

2. Calling Neighbors

- Volunteer shoppers take turns calling Neighbors by number (e.g., “Neighbor #1”).
- Make sure you’re calling the right number– make sure to check lower numbers to make sure there isn’t one that may have been skipped earlier (e.g. due to a delay to update intake information or intaking a new family).
- Volunteers should shop with one family at a time.

3. Greeting and Orientation

- Greet the Neighbor warmly.
- Ask if they’ve been to CORA before.
- If new, explain the shopping process.
- Use both English and Spanish as needed. Offer reassurance and support.

4. Shopping Cart Setup

- Strike through the number on the Tally Sheet.
- Tape the shopping slip to the shopping cart.
- If one person will be shopping for multiple families, Intake circles their numbers on the Tally sheet.
- Volunteers may shop with them collectively or one-on-one, using multiple carts if needed.
- If a neighbor has only the bottom part of the shopping slip for one or more family that they’re shopping for, that is a special situation (like an emergency bag for a 3rd visit) and you will not create a cart for that number. The “missing” top of the shopping slip will be on a cart receiving special handling, and that cart should be waiting ready for car loading when you finish shopping with the other neighbor.

5. Shopping with the Neighbor

- Guide Neighbors through each section of the Pantry.
- Explain quantity limits based on family size (large items count as two).
- Focus on what *is available*, not what’s missing.
- Keep conversation friendly and respectful—dignity and equity are priorities.
- Help manage traffic flow and re-route as needed.

6. Bagging Groceries

- Assist with bagging items, tying plastic bags securely.
- Encourage free choice, without judgment about food selections.

7. Follow Quantity Guidelines

- Follow designated item limits exactly—no substitutions.
- Explain that quantities may vary based on inventory.

8. Wrap-Up and Car Pickup

- Tear off the bottom half of the shopping slip and hand it to the Neighbor.
- Leave the top half taped to the cart for Car Loader Volunteers.
- Thank the Neighbor and direct them to drive around to the loading area and show the shopping/claim slip to the car loaders to have their groceries loaded into their vehicle.

9. Cart Transfer to Car Loaders

- Bring the cart to the door for Car Loaders.
- If multiple Neighbors are in one car, keep carts together and notify the loader.

11. Maintain Supplies and Cart Organization

- Keep carts lined up and organized.
- Restock paper and plastic bags as needed.

12. Shift Transition

- Morning Volunteers should ensure that Afternoon Volunteers have arrived before leaving.
- Morning volunteers should share any updates for shopping that day with Afternoon volunteers before leaving.

13. End of Shift

- Return your name tag to the designated box.

14. NOTES

- When the pantry is slow or there is extended down time, please ask if there are other things you can do to help in the pantry. You can always help with cleaning, straightening shelves, restocking bags, etc.

Afternoon Shift & Pantry Closing

1. Update from Morning Shift

- Arrive on time for a quick huddle before the start of your shift.
- The Pantry Manager or Pantry Assistant will update all afternoon volunteers on important information for the day.

2. Follow Same Shopping Process

- Afternoon volunteers follow the same procedures used during the morning shift.

3. Closing Duties

- When Pantry closes:
 - Work with the Pantry Assistant to store fruits/vegetables in the cooler.
 - Check items in the deli, bakery, and produce coolers for quality and freshness. Remove items that are no longer good quality for distribution.
 - Clean display and storage areas.
 - Help ready the Pantry for the next day.

General Guidelines

- Support and Communication:
If volunteers have any questions or concerns during their shift, they should contact the Pantry Manager or Assistant Pantry Manager.

FRIDAY DRIVE-THRU

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

This SOP provides detailed instructions for volunteers involved in drive-through service in Pittsboro.

During pantry clean-up on the previous day: put together produce bags from items on the produce tables.

Volunteers make CORA grocery bags ahead of time. These volunteers can also assemble TEFAP bags when needed, and make cartons of eggs.

Set-up the morning of service:

- Make mixed produce bags, deli bags, bread bags
- The number of bags depends on anticipated number of families to be served
- Quantities of items in the bags depends on inventory on hand
 - Make sure items closest to spoilage are distributed first
- Move CSFP boxes near garage door, move CSFP cheese to fridge near door.
- Decide who is responsible for getting each item onto the carts
- Intake volunteer gathers computer, CORA cards, post-its, info forms, fliers

During service:

- Intake volunteers will check in families, tell other volunteers how many people are in the household or if the neighbor will be receiving an emergency bag, and if a senior box(es) is needed.
- Intake volunteers keep safety in mind, be aware of all cars locations and movement when out in the parking lot.
- Volunteers serve families in one car at a time, to avoid confusion related to which food should be loaded in which car.
- Volunteers load items for one family onto a cart
 - CORA bags - one bag for every 2 people in the household (always rounding up if there's an odd number of people in the household. (e.g. a family of 3 will get 2 bags).
 - Produce bag
 - Bread bag
 - Deli bag
 - Meat
 - Dessert item(s)
 - Eggs
 - Milk (if we have it)
 - TEFAP (if we have it) - frozen, cheese, dry goods
 - Any bonus items
- If shopper has dietary needs, tailor items on cart to their needs
- Before the cart goes out, double check that all items have been provided

When loading cars, ask the driver where they would like the food to go. Offer to hand eggs and/or cakes to the driver to keep them safe during transport. Car loaders also act as quality control, to make sure items have not been missed for each family.

Volunteers ensure that all refrigerators needed for weekend retail recovery items are cleared.

Intake guidelines:

- If someone is at CORA for the first time, have them fill out the info form.
 - When you get the completed form, make sure information is complete and readable. Confirm spelling and dates if needed. If someone has filled out the Spanish side of the form, ask for clarification of which is the month/day for the birthday of *each family member*. Unfortunately, it's common for neighbors to not be consistent, even on the same form.
- Don't ask the neighbor about CSFP, check Link2Feed.
- Check Link2Feed for number of visits in the month
 - Provide emergency bags for folks who have received their 2 visits and remind them of the monthly limit. NOTE: there is no 2 visit limit for TEFAP. So if we're distributing TEFAP, neighbors will be provided this food, even if they've already received two full pantry visits for that month.

Depending on the number of families who come for food, additional bags may need to be made. Sort and stock volunteers can be asked to help, if needed. Volunteer roles during drive-through service can be more flexible than on market shopping days.

After service:

- Put away all food into coolers and freezers
- Wipe down all carts
- Put folding tables back in storage area
- Take out trash and cardboard to dumpsters
- Sweep
- Get rid of any food that will spoil before the next service day
 - Items that are still good can be put in Feedwell fridge
 - Items that are too close to spoiled should be given to farmers

If any after-hours bags are given out, note the number on a post-it and give the post-it to the Administrative Assistant.

NEIGHBOR INTAKE / CHECK-IN

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

This SOP provides detailed instructions for volunteers involved in checking in shoppers for daily pantry service.

Link2Feed makes undoing things challenging. If you are ever unsure or have questions, please stop and ask a staff member. It is important to ensure accuracy in our records. We do not need to rush through check-in so that shoppers can sit and wait to shop.

Setup before service starts

- Get computers from file cabinet for intake and for tech bar
- Check intake computers for needed updates
- Open Chrome browser on computers, log into Link2Feed
- Straighten up lobby - magazines, kids area
- Check and restock water bottles in fridge
- Set up clipboard for community connector with check-in sheet, if it hasn't already been done by the intake volunteer the previous day
- Number and cut shopping slips, if it hasn't already been done by the intake volunteer the previous day.
- Check that clipboards are ready for new shoppers with info forms

When the doors open

- Community connector greets shoppers, gets their CORA card
- Community connector writes the shopper's name on the log sheet and a shopping slip
- If the neighbor is at CORA for the first time, the community connector gives them a clipboard with an info sheet and asks them to fill out the information
- Community connector notes on the shopping slip if families are in the same car (by listing the assigned numbers that the car loaders should load into that car)
- Community connector gives the numbered shopping slip to shopper and lets them know (if there is a line) that we will call their number when we're ready to check them in

If there is no volunteer in the community connector role at the beginning of the shift

- Intake volunteers greet shoppers, give numbered shopping slips to neighbors
- Invite folks to have a seat until their number is called

Checking in shoppers

- **Take your time! accuracy is far more important than speed**
- If folks are waiting, call the next number
- Mark the number you are checking in on the number sheet
- Get shopper's CORA card, name and date of birth, or new neighbor shopper intake form
- Find the person's page in Link2Feed
- If L2F has a message about needing a profile review, provide the neighbor with a new intake form and ask them to fill it out so we can update their information. After they complete it, follow the procedure

under “Reminders for assisting someone shopping for the first time” to check for duplicates before updating information or adding family members.

- Check for prior food pantry or mobile visits in the month.
- Record relevant visits
- Use “regular pantry visit” if available.
- Use “limited emergency pantry visit” if they are ineligible for a regular pantry visit.
- Complete shopping slip
 - Number of people in household
 - Complete shopping slip
 - Number of people in household
 - TEFAP or CSFP visits (circle the T and/or S on the shopping slip, as applicable. If more than one family member is receiving their senior box, indicate that by putting the number of senior boxes being distributed in front of the S, and circle the number and the S together.)
 - Note special circumstances like no TEFAP, only getting TEFAP, or emergency bag
 - If a neighbor leaves, is only getting TEFAP, or is only picking up a Senior box (or some combination of these), make a note of this by their name on the community connector log (e.g. “No T/TEFAP”, “Sr only”, “left”)
 - If the neighbor will be shopping, give the completed shopping slip to shopper and invite them to make themselves comfortable until their number is called at the pantry door. If the neighbor is receiving an emergency bag or TEFAP only, then tear off the bottom of the shopping slip and give it to them. Suggest they wait about 5 minutes and then pull around to pick up their groceries.
- If the neighbor is from a county other than Chatham County, serve them as usual and provide them with a resource list for their county.

If the wifi is out and/or Link2Feed is unavailable

- There is a paper log sheet available in the folder with the Community Connector Logs. Use this log sheet to collect the requested info from the neighbors instead of logging the visits into L2F.
- Once access to L2F is restored, use the information from the paper log to enter the visits into L2F. Check them off as you enter them.
- If L2F access is not restored before the end of the shift, give the paper log sheet to the administrative assistant or put it in the folder used for completed new intake forms.

Once shoppers are checked in and ready to shop

- Mark the shopper’s number on the list inside the pantry by placing an x or asterisk to the left of the number.
- Circle two numbers if one person is shopping for multiple two households, circle the numbers that correspond with those on their shopping slips
- If someone is not shopping (emergency bag, TEFAP only, needed to leave, etc) put an X through the number on the sheet in the pantry and give the top half of the shopping slip to the pantry assistant so they can prepare the “special” cart.

Reminders for assisting someone shopping for the first time

- Check info form to make sure it is complete and readable
 - If anything is unclear please ask for clarification to ensure accurate data
- When entering a new person into the system, first search for their name and birth date in the system

- If there are several people in the household, search for each all family members (by name and birthdate) to determine if they already exist in L2F before starting a new record in Link2Feed
- Complete duplicate check and enter form while shopper is in the building so that if any questions come up the person can be asked for clarification
- After you've entered the new neighbor's info from the intake sheet into L2F, put the date and your initials at the top and put the completed form in the folder for completed new intake forms.

At the end of service

- If there's time during the afternoon shift:
 - Prepare shopping slips for the next service day by numbering and making sure the bottom part is pre-cut. Prepare enough to get us through the "rush" at the beginning of the day (typically around 30)
- Move computers into the file cabinet in the intake office
- Organize intake desk
- Put the current day's community connector log in the designated spot and prepare the clipboard with a new community connector log for the next day
- Vacuum the lobby
- Wipe down all surfaces in the lobby, desk, doors, chairs, etc.

COMMUNITY FOOD DONATIONS:

- Organize yellow donation receipts and community donations log by date.
- Compare receipts to log. All yellow receipts should also be listed on the log. If there are receipts that are not reflected on the log, enter them on the log. Include the donation date, donor, and the weight of the donation. In the initial column, enter “added.” (Recommend putting a check mark on the receipt so it is evident that the donation has been verified on the log.)
- Open “FY26 Food Donations” in Google Sheets. (You should see lines for Pittsboro on the top half of the sheet and lines for Siler City on the bottom half of the sheet.)
- At the bottom of the sheet, click on the month for which donations are being entered.
- Note that donations are entered according to the week they are received, as indicated on the top line of the sheet.

For Pittsboro Pantry:

- Donations should be entered on the appropriate line for the specific donor.
- All donations listed as “anon” on the receipt/log should be entered on the “anonymous” line.
- All donations under 30 pounds in weight should be entered as anonymous unless they align with a specific donor/organization reflected on the sheet.
- All donations of 30 or more pounds in weight, and with a specific donor listed, should be entered with that donor’s/organization’s name. If the name is not already on the Google sheet, add the donor’s name under “miscellaneous.”
- Do not add any lines to the spreadsheet except under “miscellaneous”.

For Siler City:

- All donations are either anonymous or miscellaneous. As community donors begin donating on a regular basis, they can be added to the top of the list. (Confirm with Mackie.)
- After all donations have been entered on the Google Sheet, the logs should be added to the “Community Donations” notebook. The logs should remain organized by date in the notebook.
- Recommendation: Mark each line as the donation is entered on the Google Sheet or added to the “anonymous” line. It helps to confirm that nothing was missed.

WAREHOUSE USE

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

- Anything expired by more than 12 months gets thrown out and Mackie is informed
- Anything with bugs is immediately thrown out and Mackie is informed
- When one truckload of empty pallets piles up, they are to be disposed of
- Warehouse should be kept clean at all times, all trash and debris should be removed
- Fans should be turned off when nobody is at the warehouse
- Anything that is short-dated (within 2 months of printed date) should be brought to CORA PBO or CORA SC (other short date items may be for programs)
- Each item on every pallet should be marked clearly with program/ pantry use and best by / use by dates
- Pallets for different programs should be kept separate, in the designated areas of the warehouse
- Pallets should not be stacked more than two high
- Only pallets of canned items should have a pallet stacked on top.
- When there is not much food left on a pallet, it should be combined with another pallet to conserve space
- Any bins with more than one item (such as Lowes Foods donations) should be brought immediately to one pantry or the other and NOT taken to the warehouse
- Never stack bins on top of one another
- Do not stack heavy food on top of light food
- If Lowes Foods donates CORApacks items in bins, check with Daisey.
- All food should be used by date - first to expire is first out the door
- Food should be checked for dates, bugs, exposure to rodents, etc weekly. If it cannot be used, it should be thrown out and Mackie should be notified
- Daisey should prepare a list of items to be set aside for CORApacks
- Rodent and moth traps should be kept in place at all times
- Pantry volunteers should be made aware of items that are close dated that need to be at the pantry (things that would otherwise be used in programs but need to stay in the pantry because of the date)
- Date mobile boxes 1) with date packed and 2) with the date of the shortest date item in the box
- Any short date food designated from programs that comes within 2 months of use by date should come to the pantry and an item should be taken from the pantry stock and substituted into the program food supply

Grocery Cart Use/ Check Out by Neighbors

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

- Older shopping carts (the ones stored outside) should be numbered.
- Neighbor in need of a shopping cart should let the shopping assistant and car loader know they need to borrow a shopping cart.
- Car loader and neighbor should choose a shopping cart and make note of the cart number on the shopping slip. That number and portion of the shopping slip should be taken to the intake desk.
- Car loader should then transfer groceries to one of the older shopping carts kept at the front of the building while the neighbor is providing the intake assistant with their shopping slip and other information.
- Neighbor should take their portion of their shopping slip back to the intake desk.
- Intake assistant should create a laminated log sheet (including cart number, name, L2F number, phone number, and date borrowed) of who has shopping carts and the number of their shopping cart.
- When the shopping cart is returned, it should be crossed off the list.
- The Pantry Assistant will keep a list of grocery carts and note when they are returned. Neighbor may also tell intake assistants when a cart has been returned.
- Intake assistants should check the Pantry Assistant once each week on Fridays afternoons to see whether or not carts have been returned.
- Staff should be alerted when carts have not been returned. Neighbors should be called on Fridays and asked to return the carts.

AFTERNOON CLOSING

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

- Make sure all red grocery carts are returned to the pantry and stacked. If there is time, prepare them with bags/boxes for the next day.
- Using four volunteers, collapse the tent. Take it back inside. Put it in the warehouse side of the pantry.
- Put the directional signs inside the pantry or underneath the awning.
- Put the traffic cones inside the pantry or underneath the awning.
- Take the bag of shopper “receipts/shopping slips” inside, throw away the receipts, and attach the small bag to the tent.
- Using banana boxes and a grey cart, remove all display fruits and veggies and refrigerate those that should be (based on season/preference).
- Cover the fruits/ veggies on display with black plastic veggies/fruits that stay out of the refrigerator with black plastic.
- It is necessary to refrigerate all produce items, if possible, because most produce comes to CORA already refrigerated. Bananas should NEVER be refrigerated, as they turn brown immediately after refrigeration.
- Check the dates on the food in the deli and produce retail recovery refrigerators. Remove anything that is out of date or looks past its prime. Move items at the back of the refrigerators to the front, otherwise they will freeze and go bad. NOTE: An overstocked refrigerator can freeze and/or leak. Please do not over stock and please keep things away from the very back of the refrigerator when possible.
- Clean all surfaces and displays including produce tables, counters, tables, utility carts, etc.
- Take the banana box(es) of pig food out to outdoor grocery carts. If you notice that pig food is not being picked up, please notify staff. There is now a pick-up schedule in place.
- Sweep the floor and mop if needed. If the floor is especially dirty, please notify staff.
- Take all trash to the dumpster (check bathroom, and all cans in the pantry). Place new trash bags in trash cans.
- Break down cardboard boxes. Take all cardboard to the cardboard dumpster.
- Make sure the marked off aisle/area in the warehouse is clear. Remove food, carts, etc.
- If you are the last person left, turn off ALL the pantry lights and make sure ALL pantry doors are locked.
- If there is time :
 - Restock retail recovery and/or bakery (bakery items should be placed small on top, large on bottom)
 - Restock non perishable items
 - Check bread for mold
 - Restock bags (plastic and paper). Notify staff if supplies are low.

