

Frequently Asked Questions about the El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Food Bank

What is El Pasoans Fighting Hunger?

The El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Food Bank (EPFH) is a non-profit organization which serves as a clearinghouse by receiving, storing and distributing both purchased and donated food as well as some non-food products.

EPFH provides food and grocery products in manageable quantities to our Partner Agencies who in turn distribute them to *ill, needy or children*. More than 120 Partner Agencies covering three West Texas counties work with El Pasoans Fighting Hunger.

Why is it needed?

Nearly one out of every three children and one out of every six adults are food insecure and has difficulty meeting basic nutritional needs. Meanwhile, enormous quantities of surplus food are available from the food industry and local grocers which may otherwise be destined for the city dump.

Why is food donated? Who donates it?

Donations from the food industry were previously abundant; however, subsequent to the Great Recession, the norm now is “sell, sell, sell first – donate if anything is left”. We are vigilant in securing everything possible. Some reasons for donation include packaging errors, changes in product formulas, damaged packaging, and the expiration of coupons or approaching sell-by-dates.

Food is donated by various manufacturers, businesses, organizations, wholesalers, retailers and food drives held by individuals. Items are also supplied by USDA programs and/or are purchased when funding is available.

How does EPFH confront hunger and food insecurity in our community?

We maintain a supportive relationship with our Partner Agencies by providing and maintaining a warehouse for food storage and distribution not only throughout our community, but also for our entire three county service area. We make every effort to keep the cost down as is evidenced in our annual audit which reflects 96.7% of every donated dollar going to the mission – or a 3.3% overhead.

Should people who are hungry go to the Food Bank?

We are a distribution center which stores and distributes food throughout our network of Partner Agencies. Persons who come directly to the Food Bank will be provided a one-

time emergency box of food and will be referred to the Partner Agency which is closest to their home.

How is EPFH funded?

EPFH is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization which must generate its operating funds from the local community, foundations, corporations and grants. The Food Bank receives no federal dollars.

Food donations come from farmers, food producers and manufacturers, wholesale and retail grocers, individuals as well as the Feeding America National Network, Feeding Texas and USDA through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP).

How is the money used?

Funds are used to acquire and distribute purchased and donated food, including the operation of our warehouse; utilities to run our large freezers and coolers; fuel and maintenance for our refrigerated trucks; and long distance freight charges, as well as the general overhead for 20 employees.

How does my organization become a Partner Agency of EPFH?

Non-profit organizations are an essential link between El Pasoans Fighting Hunger and hungry people. The agencies which receive product from EPFH vary considerably in their range of services; the highest percentage of them provide either food boxes to be taken home by their clients or on-site meals for the needy at congregate facilities. To a lesser degree, the EPFH also serves agencies that provide meals to the needy in conjunction with other programs, i.e. Salvation Army, Rescue Mission, etc. Other examples of this kind of agency might be a non-profit daycare center for low-income families or a charity group home serving individuals who are ill and suffering economic need.

Interested non-profit organizations which have 501(c)3 or church qualifier letters in good standing must first be interviewed by EPFH and meet the guidelines to become a Partner Agency. An onsite visit is required prior to approval and a Memorandum of Agreement is signed, if approved.

What geographic area does EPFH serve?

EPFH is the sole provider to three counties: El Paso, Culberson and Hudspeth. No food provided by the Food Bank leaves the state of Texas or the United States.

Are there requirements regarding the number of persons served by our agency?

Partner Agencies can be of any size, serving a few people or thousands.

How does my agency start receiving food?

Upon completion of the approval process, you will be able to start placing orders on our website.

Does EPFH charge for the food?

We do ask our Partner Agencies to help us with a portion of our storage and transportation costs in the form of a “Share Maintenance Fee”, which is a handling fee assessed per the pound of food received. This handling fee, according to our agreement with Feeding America, can be as high as 19 cents per pound, but we make every effort to keep it at 15 cents or below. The exception is bakery or dairy products and fresh produce which are distributed with no fee.

Does EPFH deliver?

Yes, if the order exceeds 1,000 lbs. There is no delivery fee charged for these orders. Orders under 1,000 lbs. will be picked up by the Partner Agency at the Food Bank.

What kind of food is available?

EPFH receives a wide variety of food much like you find in a retail grocery store, including perishable and non-perishable items. A weekly inventory of available food is available on the website used for placing orders. As much of the product is donated, the type of food available varies from day to day. EPFH makes every effort to learn which products are in high demand and when funding is available, specific products will be purchased.

What are the benefits of becoming a Partner Agency?

Releasing your time, energy and resources to provide services to low-income people rather than looking for food donations is one of the most profound gifts we can give to our agencies. Leveraging your funds and gifts with our resources means greater efficiency for all of our organizations. Additionally, our experience with a broad array of anti-hunger projects allows us to provide assistance to any agency regarding everything from program models to safe food handling and storage to public policy advocacy.

How do I learn more about the work of El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Food Bank?

For more information contact **Ruben Hidalgo**, Agency Relations Manager at
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