



# Volunteer Handbook

The Food Depot  
1222 Siler Road  
Santa Fe, NM 87507  
505-471-1633  
[www.thefooddepot.org](http://www.thefooddepot.org)

## Welcome to The Food Depot!

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at The Food Depot. By volunteering just a few hours, you can help feed people who are hungry in Northern New Mexico. Whether you provide administrative support or sort food in our warehouse, your help is needed and always appreciated.

Volunteer participation at The Food Depot is a strong and growing tradition. The programs and activities supported through The Food Depot could not continue without the contributions and dedication of our volunteers.

Please read through the enclosed material and fill out and sign the Volunteer Application at the end of the handbook. You can send the application back by one of the ways mentioned on the document or you can bring it with you the first time you volunteer.

This Volunteer Handbook is designed to provide you an introduction to The Food Depot and the volunteer opportunities we provide. If you have questions or need additional information about volunteering, please call Viola Lujan, Program Manager, at 471-1633 Ext. 11.

Please know that your willingness to help makes a tremendous difference in the lives of many families who are hungry. We look forward to your continued support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sherry F. Hooper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sherry F. Hooper  
Executive Director

## *What is The Food Depot mission?*

The Food Depot strives to end hunger in Northern New Mexico.

### *How does The Food Depot serve the community?*

- Each month, The Food Depot, Northern New Mexico's food bank distributes an average of 300,000 pounds of food and household products, providing more than 400,000 meals through its partner agencies.
- The Food Depot hunger network is composed of nearly 120 partner agencies including emergency food pantries, hot meal programs, homeless shelters, youth programs, group homes, senior centers, children's homes, day care centers, and shelters for battered families.
- The Food Depot service area includes nine counties – Santa Fe, San Miguel, Rio Arriba, Taos, Mora, Colfax, Union, Harding, and Los Alamos – in Northern New Mexico. The food bank regularly delivers to distribution centers in Taos, Abiquiu, El Rito, Ojo Caliente, Espanola, Los Alamos, Las Vegas, Springer, Maxwell, Clayton, Raton, Wagon Mound, Mosquero, Sedan, Amistad, Pecos, Sapello, and Mora, to better serve partner agencies and occasionally in other rural and remote areas.
- In 2010, The Food Depot launched the Mobile Food Pantry in an effort to reduce barriers to food distribution in smaller remote areas. The Mobile Food Pantry is a food distribution program in which food is delivered by The Food Depot to a designated location for immediate distribution to hungry people with no need for long term storage. There are 16 delivery sites each month for the Mobile Food Pantry program.
- Local and national product donors support The Food Depot's efforts to battle hunger. These donors include food manufacturers and distributors, grocery stores, restaurants, hotels, hospitals, produce vendors, community farms, and other food service establishments.
- Food banks prevent food waste by salvaging slightly damaged goods, products produced in excess, and items nearing their sell date.
- The Food Depot provides relief to victims of natural disasters through local disaster relief agencies. In 2000, the food bank joined local efforts to aid the victims of the Cerro Grande fires by providing 1,361,467 pounds of food.
- The Food Depot is a partner distribution organization of Feeding America, a nationwide network of food banks throughout the nation, serving all fifty states. The food bank is also a member of the New Mexico Association of Food Banks.

## ***Who's hungry in our community?***

Hunger remains a constant in the lives of many New Mexicans. Every day, tens of thousands of people struggle with having enough food to eat. *Faces of Hunger in New Mexico 2010* is a snapshot of those individuals seeking emergency food. *Faces of Hunger* was compiled in 2009 by the members of the New Mexico Association of Food Banks including The Food Depot.

Highlights of the report are:

### **Number of People Served**

- An estimated 40,000 New Mexicans seek emergency food each week.

### **Population Served**

- The majority of the clients served remain the most vulnerable of our community – children, seniors, the working poor, single parent households, and those in ill health.

### ***Children***

- 40 percent of the population served are children under 18 years old.
- 7 percent of those are children under the age of five.

### ***Seniors***

- 13 percent of the population served are sixty-five or older.

### ***Working Poor***

- 32 percent of the households served had one or more individuals working.
- The average household annual income was \$900 per month.
- The 2009 Federal Poverty Level annual income for a family of three is \$18,310 and \$22,050 for a family of four.

### ***Single Parent Households***

- 37 percent of the households with children under eighteen are households with single parents.

### ***Ill Health***

- 41 percent of the households report having at least one individual in poor health.

### ***Difficult Choices***

- 54 percent of the clients had to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities.
- 38 percent of clients had to choose between paying for food and paying for rent or mortgage.
- 45 percent of clients had to choose between food and paying for medicine or medical care.

### ***Food Pantries***

- 70 % of food pantry programs in New Mexico rely entirely on volunteers.
- 75% of the food pantries surveyed reported an increase in the number of people needing assistance.
- 20% of current food pantries in New Mexico were not in existence two years ago.
- 83% of the food distributed by food pantries in New Mexico is provided by food banks.

***Everyday someone makes a choice between food and some other necessity of life.***

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## Volunteer Team Descriptions

### Warehouse

The heart of the food bank is its warehouse where all the donated food arrives, is sorted, stored, and then distributed to 120 agencies in Northern New Mexico. Volunteer tasks are numerous and are instrumental in helping The Food Depot achieve its mission.

- **Bread Team**  
The Food Depot receives bread donations from many bakeries and grocery stores each day. In an effort to keep the bread as fresh as possible while awaiting distribution, volunteers help us to sort and wrap the bread into plastic bags.
- **Produce Team**  
The Food Depot receives large produce donations from local stores each day. The produce needs to be sorted and packaged in ways that are easy for agencies to provide to their clients.
- **General Warehouse Team**  
The Food Depot frequently receives donations of assorted foods and related products. Volunteers help us to sort, inspect, and box the items in preparation for distribution to partner agencies.

In addition, we receive large bulk food donations of precious commodities like dried pinto beans, pasta, rice, etc. Volunteers help us to repackage the large bags into family size units for distribution.

There are other activities like packaging food bags for distribution and the necessary cleaning of the warehouse that assist in providing service to the agencies and help us to carry out the mission of The Food Depot. This team is in operation all the time assisting in the warehouse as needed.

### Office

There are other frequent volunteer opportunities at a food bank besides working in the warehouse.

- **Office Team**  
Volunteers assist with daily office duties as needed. Filing, stuffing envelopes, answering phones, data entry are areas where help is required during peak times of the year. The Christmas season (November – December) especially calls for extra help. Some opportunities require basic computer skills. Regular volunteer hours are 9 am to noon and 1 pm to 4 pm, Monday through Friday.
- **Site Visits**  
Volunteers go out to agency locations to assess the program, make sure they are following the partner agency rules, check storage for required temps, record keeping and storage requirements. Also provide information on The Food Depot and feedback as needed. Members of this team will receive training on the requirements and work closely with the program manager. This position requires transportation and possible travel to Northern New Mexico communities.

- **Mailing Team**  
Occasionally The Food Depot sends out mailings to its supporters and friends such as newsletters and other materials. This volunteer team would operate occasionally and would require a couple hours of your time.

#### Food Rescue Team

- You can help organize events and ongoing food rescue activity, by, collecting food, starting a food drive, or working within an existing food drive.
- **Speakers Bureau Team**  
This team consists of people dedicated to spreading the word about The Food Depot and hunger in our community. Their goal is to be members of a team that will go to businesses, schools or civic groups and speak about The Food Depot and hunger in Northern New Mexico. In addition to speaking, from time to time The Food Depot is invited to provide information at various clubs, church functions, fairs, and more. During those times we need outgoing, friendly volunteers who are willing to set up and staff a table, distribute literature, and answer any questions from those who might be interested in helping out. This is a great opportunity to meet new people while spreading the word about the food bank and those in need of our services. Members of this team will work closely with The Food Depot staff and will receive intense training on the issues as well as be provided sample speeches and answers to frequently asked questions.

### **Special Projects**

In addition to helping at the warehouse and in the office, we have opportunities that arise at certain times of the year and at other locations.

- **Special Skills**  
The Food Depot needs people with specialized skills who can help with marketing and advertising, nutrition, fundraising or technology either regularly or occasionally as needed.
- **Special Events Team**  
The Food Depot holds fun events throughout the year that raise food and funds for our organization. Volunteers help us to deliver posters, set up and decorate venues, sell tickets, collect food, and send out invitations. We need your help to make them successful. These events are a lot of fun and you get to work with a team of great people.
- **Farmers Market Team**  
During the summer, volunteers help at the Santa Fe Farmers Market collecting produce from the farmers. You will pack and load the food onto The Food Depot vehicles that would bring it back to the warehouse for distribution to the agencies. This is a very rewarding activity because you are saving the food and providing locally grown, nutritious food to those in need. Farmers Market runs on Saturdays, July through September. Volunteers are asked to be there from 11:30 to 1 to collect the food donated. The Food Depot truck will be there to carry off the food.

## **Volunteer Policies**

The purpose of these volunteer policies is to provide overall guidance and direction to staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer involvement and management efforts. The policy is intended for internal management guidance only and does not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. The Food Depot reserves the right to change any aspect of the policy at any time and to expect adherence to the changed policy.

### Equal Volunteering Opportunity

It is the policy of The Food Depot not to discriminate against any volunteer or volunteer applicant because of age, race, color, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or nationality.

### Absenteeism and Substitution

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties on a regularly scheduled basis. We know there will be times that you will be ill, on vacation or unable to volunteer for one reason or another. When a volunteer expects to be absent from a scheduled day, the volunteer should inform the Program Manager as far in advance as possible so alternate arrangements can be made. Continual absenteeism will result in a review of the volunteer's work assignment. If you will be late or absent, please call Viola Lujan, the Program Manager at 471-1633 Ext. 11.

### Age Requirement

No one under the age of 12 is permitted to volunteer in The Food Depot warehouse. Volunteers must be at least 16 years of age in order to offer their individual services without adult supervision. At least one adult supervisor is required for every ten volunteers under 16 years of age. Special needs volunteers require one adult supervisor with decision making skills for two volunteers. Supervisors must work alongside their fellow volunteers. Other volunteer opportunities for younger volunteers can include helping at special events, working on mailing projects, conducting a food drive or other activities.

### Record Keeping

It is very important for volunteers to be responsible for recording their own volunteer time. A Volunteer Notebook is located on the desk outside the clean room in the warehouse and also in the hallway outside the administrative offices. When you are done with your duties for the day, simply record how long you worked. Sign-in time sheets are necessary for The Food Depot to keep an accurate record of your contribution not only for our organization needs but also, in some cases, for your individual needs.

Every volunteer or group is entered into The Food Depot's database. Each activity the volunteer is involved with and the number of hours provided are recorded in their file. Please notify the Program Manager with change of address, phone, and e-mail as needed.

## Review and Evaluation of Volunteer Service

Volunteers are encouraged to review and evaluate each activity that they are involved in at The Food Depot. The staff and board of The Food Depot believe in constructive evaluation of projects and welcome new ideas from volunteers.

Each volunteer activity involves The Food Depot staff in some capacity. The staff evaluates the project or activity and use of volunteers on a continuing basis. The Food Depot strives to utilize volunteers efficiently and in a way that creates the most positive outcome for both the volunteer and The Food Depot.

Volunteers are encouraged to bring to the attention of the Program Manager any issues concerning volunteer matters. Volunteers have an opportunity to present their concerns and complaints through an open communication procedure.

If you have a problem or complaint, you should feel free to submit a complaint, preferably in writing, to the Program Manager. You are encouraged to bring your concerns up for discussion. If your concerns cannot be settled at this level, you have the option of filing a complaint in writing to the Executive Director. The Food Depot takes complaints very seriously. Action will be taken within five working days after the submission.

## Confidential Information

The Food Depot has an obligation to its agencies, clients, and donors to maintain their confidentiality and respect their privacy. As you work with staff members of The Food Depot information of a confidential nature may be shared with you. You must not share this information with anyone who does not have a professional right or need to know. Such information is not to be shared with your family, friends or acquaintances. Release of confidential information could result in your dismissal or possibly legal proceedings.

## Safety

Please dress casually with safety in mind. Long pants or jeans are preferred. Close-toed shoes are required. Work and disposable gloves will be provided as needed. Please do not wear long dangly jewelry or any object that could get caught on something and present a safety issue.

Do not attempt to climb on or operate equipment, machinery, racks, pallet jacks, etc.

All volunteers working with food should wash their hands before starting work and after eating, using the bathroom or coming into contact with a toxic material such as bleach. Please wear gloves when instructed to prevent the spread of germs and diseases.

Absolutely no food or drink will be carried into or consumed in the warehouse.



## Volunteer Application

Thank you for your interest in volunteering your time to The Food Depot. Please fill out this form to begin the process of assisting us as we strive to end hunger in Northern New Mexico. When you have filled out the form, you may mail it to The Food Depot, 1222 Siler Road, Santa Fe, NM 87507, fax it to 505-471-2025 or e-mail it to info@thefooddepot.org.

### Contact Information

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Employer Information

*Note: (double click on boxes to check)*

Employer Name: \_\_\_\_\_ If retired, check here

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ May we contact you at work? Yes  No

### Emergency Information

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**When are you available to volunteer? Please check all that apply.**

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
AM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

***Note: Saturday and Sunday are special event days. The Food Depot is closed on those days.***

**Which volunteer activities interest you? Please check all that apply.**

**Warehouse**

- Bread Team
- Produce Team
- General Warehouse Team

**Office**

- Office Team
- Mailing Team
- Speakers Bureau Team

**Special Projects**

- Special Events Team
- Site Visit Team
- Farmers Market Team

**What special skills do you have that may benefit The Food Depot?**

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing      | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography/Video | <input type="checkbox"/> Board Experience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Event Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Skills   | <input type="checkbox"/> Office Support   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising    | <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic Design    | <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening        |

Languages other than English: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Skills: \_\_\_\_\_

**Is there anything else you want to share about your background or interests so we can provide you with a better volunteer experience at The Food Depot?**

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**Why are you interested in volunteering at The Food Depot?**

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I certify that the information contained in this application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that others depend on my participation as a volunteer and I agree to contact The Food Depot if I am unable to participate in an activity for which I have registered.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Please take a Volunteer Handbook and read it thoroughly. It is your guide to The Food Depot and the many ways in which you can help. If you ever have questions on the Handbook or volunteering, please feel free to contact Viola Lujan, Program Manager, at 471-1633 Ext. 11.*