To Potential Network Partners:

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Network Partner of the Vermont Foodbank. The following is a brief description of what we do, whom we serve, and how the application process works.

**About the Vermont Foodbank:** The Foodbank serves a variety of non-profit agencies throughout Vermont. Food shelves and community meal sites are among the obvious, but we also provide food to senior meal programs, domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, afterschool programs and more. The common denominator for all of these programs is that they have obtained **IRS 501(c) 3 non-profit status** and they all serve people in need of food. Money saved on food through the Vermont Foodbank is money available for other aspects of these vital programs.

The Vermont Foodbank acquires large quantities of donated food from retail stores, wholesale distributors, farms and food processors. The food is donated for a number of reasons: code date, production error, over-stock, test-market, cosmetic damage or discontinued lines. The food is perfectly usable, just not salable. Our Certified Affiliate status with Feeding America provides us with access to donated food from all parts of the country.

The Vermont Foodbank also distributes fresh produce that is acquired from about 80 farms here in Vermont and from other states through Feeding America.

The Foodbank has several distribution centers. Staff and volunteers sort through tractor-trailer loads of food for quality and divide the food into various categories. Inventory lists are created so that Network Partners can be informed of product availability. Network Partners place their orders online then come to the Foodbank to pick up their orders or have the food delivered.

Because the Foodbank has the capacity to handle large volumes of food we can offer a Cooperative Buying Program. By buying case lots of food at wholesale prices we can fill the nutritional gap that sometimes exists with donated products and pass the savings onto Network Partners. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foods are also available for distribution through certain food pantries at no additional charge.

At least one representative from each network partner agency of the Vermont Foodbank must receive some form of food safety training. If agencies utilize food provided by the Vermont Foodbank to make meals (on-site programs), their key food service program staff are required to meet local commercial food safety standards and be ServSafe certified. **Food shelf agencies must complete the ServSafe Food Handler Training for Food Banking before they can become network partners.**

**Costs and fee schedule:** There is usually an initial membership fee to become a network partner of the Vermont Foodbank and there after a tiered annual membership fee is assessed based on the
amount (in pounds) of donated products accessed in the previous year between June 1st and May 31st. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Vermont Foodbank has waived the membership fee for fiscal year 2021 for network partners.

**Delivery Fees:** There is a delivery fee of eight ($.08) cents per pound for all items except USDA Foods. Network Partners are invoiced monthly and payment is expected within 30 days of invoice date. Methods of payment include agency check, cash, money order, bank check or agency credit card. We cannot accept personal checks. A minimum order of 150 pounds is required for delivery. **Delivery fees have been waived until at least March of 2021 due to COVID-19.**

**The Application Process:**

- Please complete and send us the membership application and Basic Agreement. It is essential that you complete all appropriate sections.

- **Include a copy of your federal IRS 501(c) 3 Tax Determination Letter; please note that this is not your state tax-exempt certificate.**

- Shortly after we review your application, a time will be set up for a member of the Vermont Foodbank staff to visit your program site.

- A member of your agency is required to attend a Foodbank orientation now held via Zoom. The orientation will cover Foodbank procedures, placing food orders and information on our various programs so that your agency can take full advantage of all the Foodbank has to offer.

- Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions. We are here to support your efforts to help those in need. I am available Monday through Friday 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM at (802) 477-4106. To learn more about other programs of the Vermont Foodbank visit our website at [www.vtfoodbank.org](http://www.vtfoodbank.org)

Sincerely,

Joe Dauscher
Network Relations Manager
802-477-4106

[ardauser@vtfoodbank.org](mailto:jdauscher@vtfoodbank.org)