
1

STARTING A FOOD BANK

Understanding Food Banking

Learn how food banks help communities, some common operating models, and the role of The Global FoodBanking Network.



In this Toolkit Series

This is the first in a sequence of six toolkits that make up the **Starting a Food Bank** series. These toolkits were created as a resource for anyone seriously considering establishing a food bank in their community. They'll guide you through the steps for shaping a strong operating plan and financial foundation, setting you up for success in the fight against hunger.

For more information or to access the full series, visit:

www.foodbanking.org/new-food-bank-dev

TOOLKIT 1

Understanding Food Banking

Learn how food banks help communities, some common operating models, and the role of The Global FoodBanking Network.

TOOLKIT 3

Assessing Feasibility



Learn how to evaluate your community's needs, current services, and available resources to determine if a new food bank is a good fit.

TOOLKIT 5

Generating Support



Learn how to raise starting capital for your food bank and implement strategies for developing a reliable donor pipeline.

TOOLKIT 2

Laying the Groundwork



Learn the basic steps involved in the process of establishing a food bank and how to start framing your planning process.

TOOLKIT 4

Building a Business Plan



Learn how to create a roadmap for your food bank, and articulate your mission, planned services, required resources, and financial projections.

TOOLKIT 6

Launching & Beyond



Learn how to plan for a smooth public launch, evaluate your food bank's performance, and make needed adjustments in the first year.

With Thanks

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Understanding Food Banking

Food banks change lives and help uplift communities by reducing hunger and malnutrition. They are found in over 80 countries worldwide and can operate according to a variety of different models.

What is a food bank?

FOOD BANKS SEEK to battle food insecurity and malnutrition by unifying two missions in one entity: the reduction of food waste and the delivery of food resources to food insecure people.

These seemingly unrelated missions are, in fact, inherently linked in the context of waste within the agricultural sector and the food and grocery products industry. In every country, food is wasted at various points between the field and the plate. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that 30 percent of all food produced per year is lost or wasted.

The first food bank opened in 1967 in Phoenix, Arizona. Today food banks exist in over 80 countries worldwide.

THE GLOBAL FOODBANKING NETWORK

Simultaneously, government agencies and NGOs in almost every country struggle to identify and secure the necessary resources to feed those citizens who are unable to access the food they need to prevent chronic hunger and malnutrition. An additional benefit of the work of food banks

is that they prevent the disposal of millions of tons of food products in landfills. This prevents the creation of millions of tons of greenhouse gas production, thereby aiding in environmental sustainability.

FOOD LOSS & FOOD WASTE

Food loss refers to food or commodities lost post-harvest but before packaging or retail; for example, at harvest, in storage, or during transport. Food waste is food lost at the retail or consumer levels; for example, at grocery stores, restaurants, and in consumers' homes.

Food banks seek to provide a connection between the surplus and the need by creating and facilitating an infrastructure that allows for the collection and redistribution of food that is surplus and unsalable. This infrastructure is an extension of the food industry's downstream supply chain—essentially creating a charitable distribution chain using product that has, for many legitimate reasons, lost its commercial value but retains its wholesomeness and fitness for consumption. This charitable channel mirrors the commercial channel in that the food bank's infrastructure protects all relevant food safety, inventory management, and regulatory oversight appropriate to the shipping, storing, handling, and distribution of the food.

In many countries, the food bank also seeks to engage with the public sector, the private sector,



In Indonesia, Scholars of Sustenance Bali alleviates hunger while preventing waste by distributing rescued food to local families in need.

and civil society to advocate appropriate public policy initiatives to facilitate an environment conducive to the active participation of all sectors in the mitigation of hunger, malnutrition, and waste reduction.

HUNGER

Hunger is commonly used to refer to the condition of not having enough food, not having access to a nutritious range of foods, or having trouble accessing food regularly.

As such, a food bank is truly a community asset. The infrastructure and network of partnerships that the food bank establishes in a community are as essential to a healthy environment as the police department, the fire department, the education system, and the health care system, among others. Due to this network of stakeholders, the food bank is in a unique position to act as a convener of people and organizations that might not otherwise have reason, or inclination, to sit at the same table to discuss such matters. Food banks can truly enhance civil society.

In 2019, approximately 12 billion kg of greenhouse gas emissions were avoided by food banks preventing food from ending up in landfills.

ADVANCING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: ROADMAP TO 2030, THE GLOBAL FOODBANKING NETWORK

Since the establishment of the world's first food bank in Phoenix, Arizona in the United States in 1967, the concept has spread to some 80 countries. Hundreds of food banks have been created in communities around the world to replicate this important tool in their efforts to combat hunger, malnutrition, and food waste.

Characteristics of Food Banks

Based on the successful deployment of various food banking approaches around the world, GFN has defined five characteristics of food banks.

Numerous hunger relief organizations operate around the globe, each with varying degrees of similarity and difference, with similar aims of

reducing hunger, malnourishment, or food insecurity. Yet, each of these modalities to provide food assistance has strengths and drawbacks.

FOOD INSECURITY

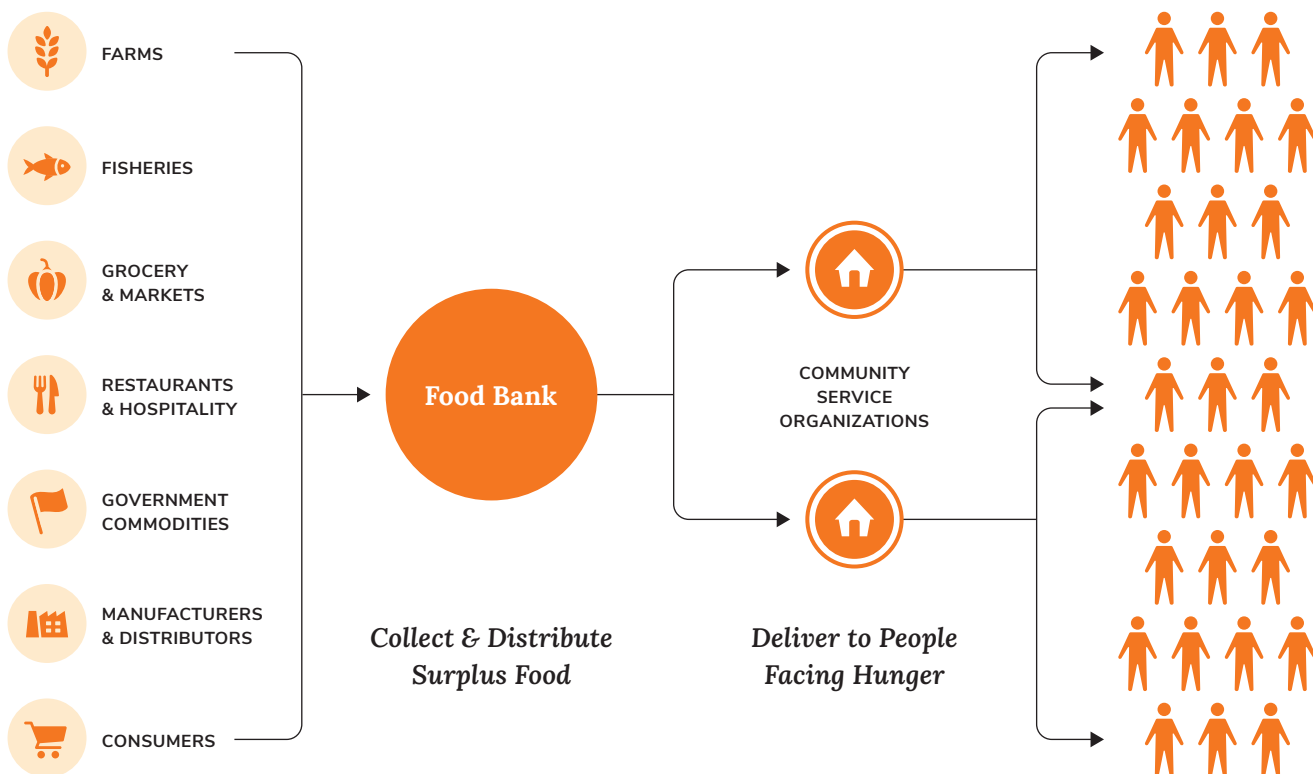
Food insecurity is the lack of regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life. This may be due to the unavailability of food and/or the lack of resources to obtain food.

GFN exists to advance the food bank model, to distinguish the food bank model from these other food assistance modalities, and to lead the food bank movement.

1. **Food banks exist for people facing hunger, without discrimination.** This may be defined as people who are low-income, economically disenfranchised, unemployed, under-employed, economically at risk, food insecure, malnourished or undernourished, or impoverished.
2. **Food banks distribute meals or meal equivalents to the hungry at scale.**

3. **Food banks receive a substantial portion of food donated for distribution from commercial food systems or government.** These may include government commodity or surplus removal programs.
4. **Food banks are ideally private sector-owned and operated.** (i.e., NGO)
5. **Food banks are generally born from and dependent upon alliances comprised of community and/or national stakeholders.**

How Food Banking Works



What do food banks do?

AT THEIR CORE, food banks are nonprofit, charitable food distribution organizations. Functionally, a food bank is essentially the same as a commercial food distributor:

- **Both acquire food and grocery products from various suppliers.** The commercial distributor buys them from manufacturers and producers; the food bank receives them by donation from various points throughout the supply chain, government, and the public. The food bank may also buy food and grocery products.
- **Both hold these products in secure, hygienic warehouses for distribution to their “customers.”** The commercial distributor sells to other distributors, retailers, and food service businesses; the food bank provides them to other NGOs and community organizations that use them in programs aimed at caring for vulnerable segments of the population.
- **Both are subject to, and must comply with, laws and regulations applicable to food distributors** to ensure that the food supply is safe and viable.
- **Both require a range of administrative and operational supports to make their operations effective and efficient.** They both need technology solutions, a stable base of capital and revenue generation, adequate staffing complements, marketing and public relations talent, business development talent, and adequate facilities and logistics infrastructure.

Therefore, it is important that those who are interested in starting a food bank approach the planning process with serious consideration of all relevant factors that may affect the launch and sustainability of the food bank.

Beyond their core function as a food collection and distribution entity, many food banks also place a concerted focus on social development. In such cases, food banks engage with a broad network of partners throughout civil society, the public sector, and the private sector to design and support programming aimed at improving the wellbeing of those within society facing hunger,

such as educational systems for children, skills training for adults, and health care initiatives.

While food banks in many countries are delivering such programming, GFN advises newly developing food banks to become established and attain a strong degree of sustainability before adding this type of programming due to its complexity and cost.

In 2020, approximately 40 million people around the globe accessed food through a GFN-supported food bank.

THE GLOBAL FOODBANKING NETWORK

Ultimately, a group of concerned people and organizations that convene to create a food bank—whether they consciously recognize it or not—are making a moral commitment to the community. It is critical that all involved understand the gravity of that commitment. A serious initiative to establish a food bank in this context requires comprehensive planning and a realistic analysis of the available resources base—food, funds, and volunteers—to ensure that the initiative will be impactful, stable, and sustainable. Launching a food bank program and finding that it is not sustainable six months or a year later is a failure to the community. Worse, it potentially jeopardizes future efforts to create a food bank. People remember failed efforts—and failure suggests that there is a flaw in the concept, not just in the previous execution of the concept.

Therefore, it is critical that the initiative is appropriately researched and informed, that the right people from throughout the public and private sectors and civil society are engaged in the planning process, and that the appropriate efforts are made to educate key stakeholders and then enlist those stakeholders in the launch and sustainability of the initiative. The next toolkit in this series, **Toolkit 2: Laying the Groundwork**, explores how to design this planning process.

How do food banks operate?

FOOD BANKS TEND to evolve through a maturity continuum that begins with basic limited programmatic focus and progresses through the adoption of additional programming to meet their communities' needs. Eventually, they may evolve toward the adoption of a more development-focused role in the community, attempting to advance the economic self-sustainability of people facing hunger.

The chart below defines what the phases in that continuum may look like. It also lists examples of programs that may be added at each stage of growth, from education and advocacy around nutrition in the mid-level phase, to job training and community development initiatives in the mature phase. Supporting this evolution continuum involves several typical program designs. The most common are detailed below.

Common Operating Models

The three most widely used food bank models are described in detail on the following page. These include the core **Warehouse Model**, in which large amounts of food are stored at a central facility; the **Prepared Food Recovery Model**, in which perishables are collected and distributed within the same day; and the **Virtual Model**, in which the food bank acts as a matchmaker between food donors and community service organizations. Each model involves distinct requirements and logistical and regulatory considerations.

“Our partnership with GFN allows us to build an efficient food bank model, promoting responsible consumption, social and environmental awareness, and a commitment of service to others throughout the country.”

FEDERICO RECALDE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BANCO DE ALIMENTOS
DIAKONÍA, ECUADOR

How Food Banks Grow

Over time, a food bank may expand its services from basic food distribution to more comprehensive programs.

1

START-UP PHASE Basic Services

Food banks in this phase adhere to the basic concept of collecting safe, edible food that would otherwise be wasted from the commercial food and agricultural sectors and distribute it to food insecure people through a network of community feeding organizations and/or through direct distribution.

2

MID-LEVEL PHASE Enhanced Programming

Food banks in this phase initiate expanded programming aimed at increasing the resources they can offer people in their communities by:

- Purchasing complimentary foods that are not typically donated
- Offering nutrition education
- Adding programs targeted to specific groups (e.g., Indigenous populations, children, senior citizens, women)
- Partnering with other NGOs and engaging with government on policy related to food insecurity

3

MATURE PHASE Agents of Development

Food banks in this phase adopt a commitment to direct engagement by designing and implementing programs and projects that aim to lift people out of poverty and into economic self-sufficiency. They may adopt a variety of approaches and programs, including:

- Job and life skills training
- Job placement services
- Agricultural development programs
- Community development programs

Common Food Bank Operating Models

Three of the most widely used food bank operating models are described here, along with key resource requirements, and logistics and other considerations.

CORE MODEL



Warehouse Model

How It Works

In this program model, the food bank acquires a warehouse where it stores food from any number of resources throughout the supply chain. In most cases, it functions as a wholesaler, distributing the food it collects to community service organizations (CSOs) and NGOs that operate feeding programs of one kind or another for the benefit of their clients.

Requirements

These food banks typically handle a wide range of products, requiring a variety of storage capabilities: dry (ambient), refrigerated, and frozen.

Logistics & Considerations

Most commonly, CSOs and NGOs will use their own transportation resources to go to the food bank to withdraw their allocated or ordered food supplies. In some cases, the food bank may deliver the food to partner CSOs and NGOs. In some cases, food banks in this model may also distribute directly to individuals and families.

ADDITIONAL COMMON MODELS



Prepared Food Recovery Model

How It Works

In this model, the food bank collects prepared and perishable foods (fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy, and bakery) from restaurants, caterers, institutional kitchens and commissaries, and grocery retailers. Utilizing a fleet of vehicles, the food bank transports the food to CSOs and NGOs that operate feeding programs and have the capacity to utilize it that day.

Requirements

This model requires an immediate delivery infrastructure and depends on a fleet of vehicles, rather than warehouses.

Logistics & Considerations

Food must be delivered directly to CSOs and NGOs that can use it that day. The food safety risks are increased with this model but are manageable. Consideration must be given to such issues as temperature control, lag time between pickup and delivery, and other relevant food safety concerns in order to ensure safe operations.



Virtual Food Banking

How It Works

In this model, the food bank serves as a “matchmaker,” connecting certain vetted product donors with certain vetted community service organizations. Many food banks develop virtual food banking programs to maximize impact while mitigating infrastructure and logistics costs.

Requirements

All paperwork and quality control is centralized through the food bank, but warehouses or vehicles are not required. In some cases, a technology platform is used to facilitate the matching process.

Logistics & Considerations

Community service organizations assume responsibility for collecting donated goods from the donors on a mutually agreed schedule. This approach provides faster turn of product at lower cost and yet protects all stakeholders due to centrally managed standards and reporting.



Grocery donations are warehoused at Mesa Brasil SESC for later distribution to organizations fighting hunger all over the state of São Paulo.

Additional Models & Programs

One of the core tenets of food banking is the flexibility of the concept, allowing communities to adapt the concept to the unique needs and circumstances of the environment in which the food bank will operate. Accordingly, as discussed above, as food banking systems become more mature and sustainable, they typically enhance their programming base by creating and implementing new programs aimed at meeting more needs of their communities. These include:

Fresh Produce Recovery

The food bank may add a programming component focused on significantly increasing the volume and variety of fresh produce moving through its system. It might approach this by working directly with farmers and packing houses, and/or by collecting produce from the retail industry—including grocery stores and municipal or private fresh produce and meat/fish markets (wet markets).

Food Purchasing

In many cases, a food bank is unable to secure sufficient quantities of core staple products for

community service organizations. Often the food bank will choose to aggregate the buying power of these organizations who have been forced to purchase such staples at retail, or maybe wholesale cost, and use that larger buying power to negotiate better pricing.

“With GFN’s support, we now have a warehouse facility that allows us to receive additional food donations.”

ASTRID PARAMITA
CEO AND CO-FOUNDER,
FOOD CYCLE INDONESIA

A side benefit is that the CSOs save time and funding through the ability to acquire most of their food needs from a single source, thereby allowing them to focus those saved resources on their core programming. (Caution is required in pursuing purchasing so as not to interfere with the normal donation stream. GFN can assist in the design of a purchasing policy.)

Nutrition Education Programming

Food banks often develop nutrition education programming for community service organizations and for the clients served by those organizations. Such programming might include recipe development and suggested uses for donated items that are less familiar to the community being served. This education can be instrumental in maximizing the value and impact of the products distributed by the food bank as well as contributing to the overall health and nutrition of people accessing these programs.

Over 90% of GFN-supported food banks are based on the warehouse model. 78% include child feeding programs as well.

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Direct Service Programming

Most food banks distribute their food and grocery products through other CSOs and NGOs, rather than directly to the individuals and families in need of the food. Nonetheless, it is not at all uncommon for some food banks to establish a variety of direct service programs whereby they distribute directly to the vulnerable population. In fact, there are a few countries where this is the primary method of distribution. The reasons a food bank may undertake this type of programming vary, but typically it is because of the significant scale of poverty in the community and/or the lack of charitable feeding program infrastructure.

Development Programming

As indicated above, more mature food banking systems may add job and life skills training and/or agricultural sector partnerships or community development programming to further assist community service organizations in serving their clients. Such programming can be complex and requires strong partners in the public and private sectors and civil society, but the benefits to the community can be significant.

Beyond food banking, some food banking systems choose to add related “banks” to their programming—such as clothing, furniture, or medicine banks—based on identified needs in the community. Given the synergy among the needs and resource bases, it can be a logical extension to add such programming.

Choosing an Operating Model

Any community may choose to implement any variation on the core models in response to the needs of that community. As the food banking system matures and achieves greater sustainability, it may choose to enhance its services by becoming as comprehensive as possible to address community needs.

Based on GFN’s experience, one model is not better than the other; the appropriate model depends on the particular situation. It is incumbent upon the planners of new food banks, and the governance and management of existing food banks, to review the alternatives, assess the available resource base, and then intentionally determine which model best suits their circumstances and those of their communities.



Beyond the core model, a culinary training program at Food For All Africa helps prepare women in Ghana for jobs in the food service and hospitality industry.

What are national food banking networks?

IN COUNTRIES WHERE there are multiple independent food banks, the food banks typically collaborate to establish a national network to assist in the coordination and collaboration among those independent food banks. The national network also typically develops programming aimed at promoting its member food banks' collective needs to a broad spectrum of stakeholders in the public and private sectors and throughout civil society. Ultimately, the national network allows for the independent food banks to achieve a common set of standards and enables them to speak with a unified voice to those who can invest in the expansion of capacity, capability, and impact of the individual food banks.

Another benefit of national networks relates to GFN member certification. Many global partners

look to certification (discussed in the following section) when determining whether to engage with a food bank in any country where they do business. In countries that have a national network, GFN certifies the national network, and the national network certifies its member food banks. The member food banks are considered affiliates of GFN by virtue of their certification by their national network.

National networks that seek GFN certification must adhere to several additional criteria beyond those required of independent food banks (See *Engagement Criteria* in Resources).

How does The Global FoodBanking Network help?

WE KNOW THAT food banks can uplift communities by reducing hunger and malnutrition, changing lives in the process. Since 2006, in pursuit of our mission “to nourish the world’s hungry through uniting and advancing food banks,” The Global FoodBanking Network has partnered with local leaders to support the launch of food banking systems in countries all over the world—increasing people’s access to food and empowering communities to provide support to those who suffer from hunger and malnutrition.

GFN also provides many forms of assistance to existing food banks. This includes helping build capacity, collaboration, and leadership, as well as assuring adherence to the highest global standards through our certification program.

Establishing New Food Banks

The Global FoodBanking Network looks forward to assisting interested parties in establishing a food bank. There is much work to be done, and with serious commitment, strong engagement from relevant stakeholders, and collective action, communities all over the world can advance food security, nutrition, and wellbeing through local food banks.

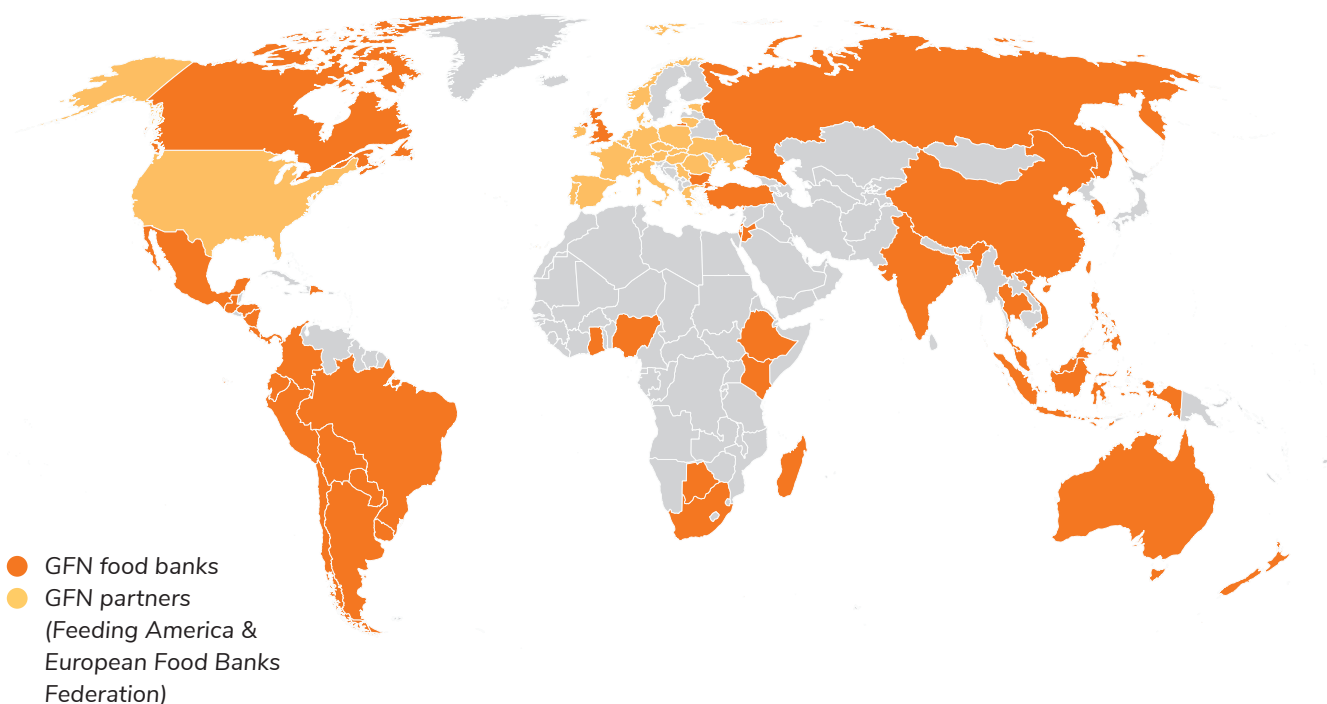
The Global FoodBanking Network supports food banks in over 40 countries worldwide.

THE GLOBAL FOODBANKING NETWORK

To help guide the food bank establishment process, we have developed the *Starting a Food Bank* series, a series of six toolkits designed to provide in-depth guidance on the phases of creating a food bank. Together, this series comprises a valuable resource that will aid anyone who is seriously considering establishing a food bank.

Our Global Reach

The Global FoodBanking Network supports food banks in over 40 countries worldwide.





At Taiwan People's Food Bank Association, staff meets with a GFN regional representative. Technical assistance post-launch can help a food bank grow.

The complete series includes:

- **Toolkit 1: Understanding Food Banking** (this document)
- **Toolkit 2: Laying the Groundwork**
- **Toolkit 3: Assessing Feasibility**
- **Toolkit 4: Building a Business Plan**
- **Toolkit 5: Generating Support**
- **Toolkit 6: Launching & Beyond**

This first toolkit explains in detail what a food bank is and is not, and clarifies the role of GFN as a global facilitator of food banks. Toolkits two through six address each of the planning phases and provide guidance for completing them. Readers who are committed to starting a food bank should access the full series of *Starting a Food Bank* toolkits.

Then the next step would be to complete the feasibility assessment as detailed in **Toolkit 2: Assessing Feasibility**. Assuming a positive indicator resulting from your feasibility assessment and

a mutual decision between GFN and your initiative to work together in planning for the food bank, GFN requests the execution of a bilateral Letter of Engagement (see **Draft Letter of Engagement** in Resources). This letter, while not legally binding, would define our mutual intent to collaborate to advance the planning, capitalization, launch, and initial assessment of food bank operations.

GFN's role throughout the engagement will not be that of a researcher, plan author, or funding resource. In GFN's extensive experience, a viable food banking system requires the commitment of local ownership throughout the process of its development and establishment. Accordingly, GFN will function as a consultant and coach to advise the work of the local planning team to ensure that the best critical thinking is applied to each aspect of the process. Additionally, GFN will use its connections with its global corporate, NGO, and multilateral partners to help open doors and/or solicit the engagement of local representatives of those partners.

Technical Assistance & Certification

Once the food bank has been launched, GFN will assign the appropriate regional field agent to continue the provision of technical assistance, best practice sharing, and additional resources to help the food bank to expand capacity and achieve scale.

“Working with GFN, we have seen a significant improvement in our organization structures within the food bank, outreach to the agencies we serve, and the amount of food that we were able to get from donors.”

KINGSTON MMOLAWA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
FOOD BANK BOTSWANA

Once the food bank operations and administration have matured to the point of compliance with GFN’s Membership Criteria (see Resources), and assuming the food bank desires full GFN membership, then GFN will guide the food bank

through the certification process—an aspirational focus that the food bank should hold throughout its development.

GFN certification is a valuable attestation of the food bank’s adherence to high global standards of transparency, integrity, and operational credibility. Many of GFN’s global partners—corporate and otherwise—recognize and place high value on GFN’s certification in their determination of whether to engage with a food bank in any country where they do business.

Certification is awarded after the food bank has achieved compliance with the standards delineated in GFN’s policy statement *Engagement Criteria* (see Resources). Such compliance is verified by GFN field staff and legal counsel through parallel operational and legal due diligence audits. Once certified, the food bank is regularly re-certified every one to two years, based on the maturity of the organization.

Support for Every Stage

The Global FoodBanking Network offers a full range of support to food banks at all stages of maturity, from getting off the ground to expanding and meeting recognized standards for excellence.

New Food Bank Development

GFN serves as a consultant to local leadership to ensure solid planning and execution.

Technical Assistance

GFN provides more intensive support scaling operations and expanding programming.

Certification & Leadership

GFN continues with general assistance to further grow capacity and capabilities.



Planning Phases

Assessment, business planning, and capitalization



Launching & Beyond

Operating and adjusting during year one



Scaling Operations

Increasing reach and impact in the community



Achieving Standards

Meeting global best practices for food banking



Membership Certification

Applying and meeting GFN network criteria



Continued Development

Maturing into food banking leaders

Next steps & how we can help

OUR MISSION AT The Global FoodBanking Network is to nourish the world's hungry through uniting and advancing food banks. Since 2006, we have supported the launch of food banking organizations in 15 countries, making it possible for people in need to have access to food, and empowering communities to support those who suffer from hunger and lack of nutrition.

Having learned what food banks are, how they work, and what is involved in creating them, it is time to decide whether you want to undertake the process for your community. Although The Global FoodBanking Network cannot conduct research or write planning documents for you, we can provide counsel and help you in managing the process. GFN will function as a coach and consultant for your planning team, ensuring that all relevant plan components are being developed, and give advice regarding the various decisions that must be made at each stage.

Next Steps

To move forward with the establishment of a food bank, follow these next steps:

1. Download **Toolkit 2: Laying the Groundwork** at www.foodbanking.org/new-food-bank-dev.
2. Share this document, **Toolkit 1: Understanding Food Banking** as well as **Toolkit 2: Laying the Groundwork** with any colleagues who may be setting off on this journey with you. Learn how to design an effective planning process and set the stage for an eventual successful launch of food banking in your community.
3. Don't hesitate to contact GFN with any questions as you proceed by emailing our team at newfoodbankteam@foodbanking.org.

Good luck in your endeavor and we look forward to hearing from you.

Resources

Learn more with practical examples and templates to help you take the next step toward starting a food bank.

14 **Draft Letter of Engagement** 

15 **The Global FoodBanking Network Engagement Criteria** 

Photo Credits

Cover: São Paulo, Brazil, November 26, 2020: Volunteers unload a truck filled with fresh produce for people facing hunger. The food is provided by Mesa Brasil SESC, a GFN supported food bank. Mesa Brasil SESC receives food donations from several food companies every day and shares it with families supported by the Union of Nuclei Associations of Residents of Heliópolis and Region (UNAS Heliópolis). Heliópolis has more than 100,000 residents in an area that is approximately one million square meters. It is the largest slum in the city. (Photo: The Global FoodBanking Network/Carlos Macedo)

Page 3: Bali, Indonesia, July 10, 2020: A local man receives a bag of food from Scholars of Sustenance Bali, a food bank that prevents food waste to rescue food and alleviate hunger in Bali. (Photo: Scholars of Sustenance Bali)

Page 8: São Paulo, Brazil, November 26, 2020: Staff from Mesa Brasil SESC, a GFN supported food bank, load and organize food and grocery donations before

they are given to organizations that fight hunger all over the state of São Paulo. (Photo: The Global FoodBanking Network / Carlos Macedo)

Page 10: Ghana, April 14, 2021: Food For All Africa's vocational program provides single mothers and youth with a variety of apprenticeship trainings to increase employment in Ghana. A group of women attend a culinary training to obtain jobs in the school foodservice and hospitality industry. (Photo: Food For All Africa)

Page 12: Taipei City, Taiwan, May 27, 2019: GFN Regional Consultant Alfredo Kasdorf listens to a staff member at Taiwan People's Food Bank Association during a trip focused on providing country-specific technical assistance at the food bank's facility in Taiwan. (Photo: Taiwan People's Food Bank Association)

Draft Letter of Engagement

[New Food Bank Logo]



Letter of Engagement

Scope of Engagement

The purpose of this Letter of Engagement is to confirm that **New Food Bank Name** is committed to pursuing the establishment of a food bank in **City/Country** and desires the engagement of The Global FoodBanking Network (GFN) as advisor/coach in pursuit of that objective. Accordingly, GFN will commit the necessary time and resources to review **New Food Bank Name**'s feasibility assessment and decision to move forward and will advise **New Food Bank Name** in its efforts to develop a comprehensive business and capitalization plan to ultimately launch food bank operations. The overall scope of engagement and process of planning and launch are defined in *Toolkit 2: Laying the Groundwork*.

This Letter of Engagement is non-binding on all parties but articulates a sincere good-faith intent of engagement. This letter does not require either party to proceed with further engagement, nor does it constitute any type of partnership, membership, affiliation, joint venture, or similar undertaking between GFN and **New Food Bank Name**.

About **New Food Bank Name**

New Food Bank Summary

About The Global FoodBanking Network

The mission of The Global FoodBanking Network (GFN) is to nourish the world's hungry through uniting and advancing food banks. GFN achieves its mission of nourishing hungry people by building efficient public and private partnerships, providing environmentally friendly alternatives to food loss and waste, and promoting best practices in charitable food distribution. GFN is the only global not-for-profit organization committed to creating, supporting, and strengthening food banks and food bank networks for hunger relief and environmental sustainability.

GFN's effectiveness depends upon objective and exacting standards for membership and operational performance to ensure social impact in the countries in which its Members operate. Accordingly, GFN must be able to assure its stakeholders that food banks are accountable, operate with transparency, and with the highest standards for food safety, logistics, and distribution.

Agreed

By signatures affixed below, **New Food Bank Name** and The Global FoodBanking Network agree to work as indicated in the above Scope of Engagement to establish food banking in **New Food Bank Name**'s community/country.

NEW FOOD BANK NAME :

THE GLOBAL FOODBANKING NETWORK:

Name , Title of CEO or Board President

Name , Title

The Global FoodBanking Network Engagement Criteria



POLICY STATEMENT

Engagement Criteria

Adopted 21 June 2017 – Amended 26 March 2020

GFN VISION & MISSION STATEMENTS

Our Vision is: A world free of hunger—A world where people facing hunger can reliably access nutritious meals through food banking.

Our Mission is: To nourish the world's hungry through uniting and advancing food banks.

GFN VALUES STATEMENT

- **Respect:** We believe that the culture, customs, and structures that groups build to reflect and sustain their lives constitute a framework for our involvement, not an obstacle to our progress. The people and organizations that we serve are of all nations and types. Our resources and solutions are similarly diverse.
- **Service:** We are committed to serving those facing hunger and selflessly supporting the food banking organizations that partner with them. Our role is to foster their aspirations and capabilities in advancing food security in their lives, families, and communities.
- **Innovation:** We know achieving our mission comes from an ongoing commitment to creativity and new ideas. We are committed to being entrepreneurial in finding the best possible solutions to advance our mission.
- **Excellence:** We challenge ourselves to achieve greater learning and impact, with the aim of advancing our mission as effectively as possible.
- **Rigor:** We pursue our mission with focus, discipline, and a commitment to evidence-based approaches to maximize our impact.
- **Collaboration:** We realize that our work—and food banking alone—is one small part of what is needed to achieve our vision and that our impact is greater when working together.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF FOOD BANKS

Numerous hunger relief organizations operate around the globe, each with varying degrees of similarity and difference, with similar aims of reducing hunger, malnourishment, or food insecurity. Yet, each of these modalities to provide food assistance has strengths and drawbacks. GFN exists to advance the food bank model, and to distinguish the food bank model from these other food assistance modalities, and seeks to lead and advance the food bank movement.

1. Food banks exist for hungry people (defined as low-income, economically disenfranchised, unemployed, under-employed, economically at risk, food insecure, malnourished or undernourished, or impoverished) without discrimination.

2. Food banks distribute meals or meal equivalents (food and grocery product) to the hungry (poor and/or food insecure persons or households) at scale.
3. A substantial portion of food (and grocery products) distributed is donated from commercial food systems or government (such as government commodity or surplus removal programs).
4. A food bank is ideally private sector-owned and operated (NGO).
5. A food bank is generally born from and dependent upon alliances—comprised of community and/or national stakeholders.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF NATIONAL NETWORKS

To attain scale, effectiveness, and broader societal impact, a group of food banks in a country typically coalesce into a National Network, which then becomes responsible for the development, monitoring, and standards management of their members at the national level.

1. A national network has a formal agreement-based relationship with its member food banks.
2. GFN will have only one National Network Member in any given country.

Categories of Engagement

GFN, though broadly participating in the community of development and humanitarian assistance, limits the focus of our work to the food bank model (previously defined). Food banks in the GFN system are identified along the following lines:

EMERGING PROJECT

Emerging Projects are food banks or food programs at the inception stage or earliest stages of development. GFN's interaction with these entities is defined through the Letter of Engagement (LOE) which outlines GFN's role and the agreement of the entity to engage with GFN toward certified membership. LOEs are reviewed every 12 months after an assessment by GFN on the organization's progress toward the membership candidacy stage.

MEMBERSHIP CANDIDATE

Membership Candidates are food banks that have advanced past the emerging project stage, and can be very mature NGOs applying for GFN Certified Member status for the first time (i.e., a food bank which has successfully operated for many years opting to become a GFN member for the first time), or food banks which GFN has engaged, but have not yet met the necessary criteria for certification. A food bank's Membership Candidate status is reviewed every 12 months and may be renewed as long as the food bank is making progress toward certification.

CERTIFIED FOOD BANK MEMBER/CERTIFIED NATIONAL MEMBER

Certified Food Bank Member is the highest level of attainment for an individual food bank (There may be more than one Certified Food Bank Member in any country, though preference is for the development of a National Network to effectuate the food banks' development and maximize national impact.)

Certified National Member is the highest level of attainment for a National Network of Food Banks. Typically, to attain scale, effectiveness, and broader societal impact, a group of food banks will coalesce into a National Network, the highest level of Certified Member status. National Networks are responsible for the development, monitoring, and standards management of their members at the national level.

In instances where more than one Certified Food Bank Member operates in a country, GFN will work with those Members toward the establishment of a National Network. When a National Network is eventually formed and ready to seek membership in GFN, the membership of the independent food bank(s) in that country will terminate in deference to the National Network's membership.

In some cases, there may be only one Certified Member in a country, but that one Member may have built its infrastructure to effectively extend the reach of its services throughout the country, essentially functioning as a truly national system. In such cases, the Member would be classified by GFN as a Certified National Member rather than as a Certified Food Bank Member.

Certified Members meet exacting standards and achieve a GFN seal of approval on their operations and effectiveness which may be communicated to external stakeholders as evidence of the food bank's high-performance. Certified Members are subject to 1, 2, or 3-year re-certification based on where they fall along GFN's Development Spectrum (DS2) model—Developing, Defined, Managed, Effectual, and Optimal. **Developing Food Banks** are subject to 1-year recertification, **Defined & Managed Food Banks** are subject to 2-year recertification, and **Effectual & Optimal Food Banks** are subject to 3-year recertification.

In addition, Certified Members are also subject to a remediation process for failure to comply with standards or deficiencies identified in recertification. Food banks determined to be out of compliance are subject to: 1) verbal warning, 2) written warning, 3) possible probation, and 4) possible expulsion from the Network. Food banks placed on probation are ineligible to receive GFN aided grants; partner organizations (corporations and other stakeholders) may be informed of the remedial status, and the Member is given a time interval to correct deficiencies or face expulsion from the Network.

Membership Criteria

The central role of GFN is the promotion of food banking as a viable catalyst for mobilizing the necessary collaborations between the public, private, and voluntary sectors of any society to alleviate the problem of hunger faced by that society. As noted in our values, GFN's effectiveness and credibility depend upon clear and demanding standards for membership and performance. Accordingly, GFN must be capable of assuring its stakeholders that food banks represent a safe, accountable, transparent system for receiving, storing, and distributing grocery products donated by and/or purchased from the public and private sectors for the benefit of people at risk of hunger and malnutrition. The only way to ensure that such an assertion by GFN is true and verifiable is that the food banks and networks that are Certified Members of GFN must agree to adhere to a set of common operating standards, and must allow GFN to enforce compliance with those standards among its Members. Likewise, National Network Members must enforce those standards within their own network infrastructure.

Standards for All Certified Members

All Members of GFN agree to the following criteria for membership:

1. Effective organizational governance structure

Because of its unique role in direction setting and resource deployment (including human resources), the Member's Board of Directors is a critical component to the successful administration and operation of the food bank. Accordingly, the Board is structured in compliance with the country's nonprofit law, meets regularly (at least as required by law), maintains records of its meetings, and exercises appropriate oversight and fiduciary responsibility, and strategic direction. In cases where the role of the nonprofit Board does not usually reflect the duties identified above, but more narrowly is charged with fiduciary oversight and legal reporting only, GFN looks for evidence that the roles of strategic direction and planning are effectively executed by the Chief Administrator and his/her management team.

2. Fiscal transparency

The Member's governance practices, general management practices, and operational structure foster effective fiscal management. Appropriate external controls over fiscal management are employed (e.g.: the Board regularly reviews financial statements; financial statements are audited annually by an independent third party (as appropriate/required); the audit is available to stakeholders; etc.). The Member agrees to honor any and all terms and restrictions placed by a donor on services and/or funding donated, and further agrees to transparent accountability regarding the use of those services and/or funding.

3. Operational transparency

The Member's governance practices, general management practices, and operational structure foster effective operations. The Member appropriately engages with those governmental or private sector authorities that have access to and/or oversight responsibility for any of the management or operations of the Member (e.g.: Departments/Ministries of Agriculture or Health, Food Industry Trade Associations, etc.). The Member agrees to honor any and all terms and restrictions placed by a donor on products and/or services donated, and further agrees to transparent accountability regarding the use of those products and/or services, and to support any donor's request for product recall.

4. Food safety practices compliant with statutory and regulatory requirements

Protecting the integrity of the products distributed by the Member is a critical core function to ensure that the ultimate consumer of the products benefits from their nutritive value and is not harmed by the consumption of contaminated or spoiled food. The Member exercises reasonable due diligence to learn the requirements of and to comply with the relevant public and private sector food safety regulatory environment. If a National Network, the Member exercises appropriate compliance management protocols with its member food banks to ensure their knowledge of and adherence to these regulatory requirements.

5. Effective inventory management with distribution tracking capability that supports recall of donated products on demand

Accurate and traceable management of inventory and record keeping systems is critical to the trust between the donors and the food banks. The inventory management system and

procedures used in the receipt, handling, and distribution of products are effective and accurate and can support an effective and timely product recall.

6. Active and effective food sourcing

The establishment of the food bank in its community articulates a moral commitment (spoken or unspoken) to that community to provide a source of food and grocery products to serve the population at risk of hunger and malnutrition. It is, then, incumbent on the food bank to optimize its pursuit of food and grocery products from as broad a donor base as possible and to seek to continually scale the volume of products acquired. The Member's food sourcing activities are effective and productive, as demonstrated by the trend lines for both volume and variety of donations secured over recent years. The food bank has a person responsible for the function of food sourcing (at least part-time) and demonstrates knowledge of both the various sectors of the food and agricultural industries and the legislative and regulatory environment within which the donors and the food bank must operate (e.g., restrictions on donations, tax advantages for donations, donor liability exposure, etc.). The food bank maintains effective protocols to meet donor reporting requirements and to encourage donor trust.

7. Effective management and support of beneficiary institutions (and, in the case of National Network Members, their member food banks)

Maintaining a fully vetted and committed distribution infrastructure is critical to a food bank's ability to sustain trustworthy relationships with its donor base and to ensure the provision of safe, wholesome products to the population served by the food bank's network. Accordingly, the Member must demonstrate appropriate and effective protocols and controls to manage and support its Beneficiary Institutions. If the Member is a National Network, it must demonstrate appropriate and effective controls to manage and support its Member Food Banks, and the Member Food Banks must do so with their Beneficiary Institutions. This extends to the protocols for qualifying and engaging with such entities, and to the compliance oversight of relevant regulations, policies, and standards (those promulgated by law and regulation as well as those established by the food bank itself).

8. Nondiscrimination policies

The Member, and, if a National Network, its Member Food Banks, have a Board-approved policy to ensure that services are delivered without discrimination to any person in need. The food banks include language in their standard Agency Agreements to require that the agencies deliver services without discrimination.

9. Positive network relations

Becoming a Certified Member of The Global FoodBanking Network makes the Member part of a powerful global movement of food banks that increasingly delivers positive impact on the issues of hunger and malnutrition across the world. The unified voice and strength of programming represented by GFN requires the proactive engagement of all parts of the Network to be effective. Accordingly, the member agrees:

- to assist with the development of multinational resources within its country or community that may bring resources to other Members of the GFN Network.
- to annual participation in GFN's Food Bank Leadership Institute, and to the use of GFN eLearning—at all relevant position levels within the staff (and Board, as appropriate).

- to seek GFN pre-approval prior to the establishment/conduct of operations outside its home country.
- to respond to requests from GFN for information regarding its operations and those of its Member Food Banks or Beneficiary Institutions in a timely manner.
- to support GFN's various efforts to promote food banking by providing not only data, but also anecdotal stories and program impact case studies that highlight the value added by food banking in the fight against hunger and food waste.
- to support the work and impact of the GFN network by advertising its Membership in/certification by GFN in its communications and marketing activities. This includes active engagement in network social media and other communications initiatives. GFN also encourages the Member to make consistent use of the GFN "Certified Member" logo, for example, on its website, relevant collateral materials, and vehicles. Also, the Member agrees to avoid disparaging GFN, its supporters, and other GFN network Members in any public forum or media.

10. Public, non-partisan leadership on the issue of hunger

The Member exercises effective leadership on the issue of hunger in its country or community in a neutral, non-partisan manner, and is recognized by key stakeholders relative to its role in fighting hunger and food waste.

Additional Standards for Certified National Members

GFN also defines several additional criteria that Certified National Members must meet in order to secure GFN Certification:

11. National scope of service

The Member demonstrates a national scope of services throughout its country and is proactively seeking to expand its network to reach the majority of the vulnerable population of the country.

12. National representation

The Member exercises effective leadership on the issue of hunger in its country or community in a neutral, non-partisan manner, and is recognized by key stakeholders relative to its role in fighting hunger and food waste. Toward this end, the Member participates in various relevant national and/or regional spaces, public and/or private, related to food banking, hunger and malnutrition, food waste, NGOs, volunteerism, public policy affecting food banking and food bank beneficiaries, and sustainability. The member takes part or leads in communication strategies (networks, press, television, radio) related to food banking.

13. Measurable and material impact

The Member demonstrates meaningful impact on the problem of hunger in its country.

14. National network standards management

The individual food bank members of a Certified National Member (referred to by GFN as Associate Food Banks) must be held to the same operating standards defined above for GFN Certified Food Bank Members. Accordingly, the Certified National Member maintains an appropriate and effective standards management process for its network which defines

minimum standards consistent with and ensuring compliance with these GFN Member Criteria. The Member exercises a regular compliance auditing protocol with its member food banks and effectively follows-up on any deficiencies in compliance identified during such audits or during any other interaction with a particular member.

15. National network capacity building

The Member delivers reasonable support for the ongoing development of existing members and provides training and knowledge sharing to newly starting food bank initiatives. Such support may be delivered via an annual meeting, technical assistance visits, webinars, access to GFN's eLearning platform, etc.

16. National network resource development

The Member's food sourcing and fundraising activities are effective and productive, as demonstrated by the trend lines for volume, variety, and national scope. The Member regularly works to build national alliances and campaigns with national/regional donors to provide food and grocery products, funds, volunteers, and other in-kind resources for its member food banks. The Member understands and discloses the tax benefits or tax regime related to the donation of food, services and/or funds.

All Members agree to maintain a regular process for verifying adherence to the standards throughout their infrastructure and agree to allow GFN to conduct compliance audits of their operations to verify a fully integrated vertical compliance management system.

In addition to the operational due diligence that GFN conducts via an on-site compliance audit, GFN also undertakes a legal due diligence process prior to awarding membership to an applicant. To conduct this legal due diligence, the applicant will be required to provide:

- Formation documents, as now in force and including all relevant amendments (trust agreement, articles of incorporation or certificate of formation, or equivalent)
- Bylaws, Constitution, or other internal regulations, as now in force (including any amendments)
- Evidence of nonprofit and/or charitable status, and applicable national or local income and other tax exemption(s), including for each: government agency or authority; registration or identification numbers; type of status; expiry date, if any; copy of certificate recognizing status; webpage address of agency or authority where status may be verified, if applicable
- Names, affiliations (place of work or organization they represent), and addresses of:
 - Directors, trustees, or other persons who are part of the organization's legal governing body
 - Officers of the organization
 - Key management staff and other persons with the authority to spend or distribute funds or commit the organization's assets
- Organizational chart (staff structure)
- Name and contact details for organization's legal counsel
- Mission statement

- Current year budget
- Most recent audited financial statements

GFN Rights of Process

These Engagement Criteria are established by the Board of Directors of The Global FoodBanking Network (GFN), and GFN reserves the right to amend these Engagement Criteria, and/or amend the process of Certification without notice. Further, GFN reserves the right to request such additional information as it considers appropriate in connection with any Application for Membership.

The determination on whether to accept any Application for Membership shall be made by the GFN Board of Directors, upon the recommendation and counsel of its President and CEO (or her/his designee), whose decision, made in compliance with the Membership Criteria as stated herein, shall be final.