

School Pantry Best Practices

In March 2025, a survey was sent to School Pantry partners to get feedback on best practices used within the program and to give insight to our Regional Food Bank and School Pantry partners looking to incorporate new practices into their program. Here are some of the results.

BEST PRACTICES

- The thing most mentioned as the key to success: open communication with families.
- The thing mentioned second most as the key to success: collaboration with staff, volunteers, and families. These collaborations encourage community building while maintaining the productivity of pantry programs.
- Social media and flyers were the most mentioned promotional methods.
- Several pantries mentioned that staff involvement in pantry shopping helps maintain balanced nutrition in the foods students select.
- To sustain the program, schools reported collaborations with:
 - Food drives
 - PTA events
 - Local or small businesses
 - Local grocery stores
 - Local farms
 - The Stewart's Holiday Match Program. Applications are taken from Thanksgiving Day to January 31.
- Student volunteers may be able to participate for:
 - Volunteer hours
 - School clubs
 - Course credit
- Student volunteers can help rotate inventory and package bags. And, at one site, they helped research recipes that were included in bags for families each week.
- One site used an app called Dojo, which allows parents to share ideas and feedback directly with teachers!

FUN FACTS

- The most popular distribution models mentioned were the shopping model and pre-packed model.
- Most sites give weekly access to their pantries through sign-ups and prepare extra pre-packed bags for emergency walk-ins!

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about these best practices, or need more information, please contact our Children's Programs team at childrensprogramms@regionalfoodbank.net.