



STUDENT CARE NETWORK

BASIC CARE AND
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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Welcome Letter

Welcome!

Welcome to our Dallas College Basic Needs department! We are thrilled to have you join our dedicated team of volunteers. Your commitment to helping fellow students and community members is invaluable, and we are grateful for your generosity and spirit of service.

The Dallas College Food Pantries are more than just a place where food is distributed; they are a beacon of hope and support for those in need. Our mission is to ensure that no student or community member faces food insecurity alone. With your help, we can provide nutritious food and essential resources to those who need them most.

As a volunteer, you will play a crucial role in our operations. Whether you are stocking shelves, assisting clients, assisting with food drives or helping with administrative tasks, your efforts will make a significant difference. This handbook is designed to provide you with all the information you need to succeed in your role. It includes our policies, procedures and guidelines to ensure a safe, respectful and efficient environment for everyone.

In this handbook, you will find:

- An overview of the College Food Pantries mission and values
- Detailed descriptions of volunteer roles and responsibilities
- Important safety and confidentiality policies
- Guidelines for interacting with clients and maintaining a supportive atmosphere
- Information on how to log your volunteer hours and who to contact for support

We believe that volunteering should be a rewarding experience, and we are committed to making sure you feel supported and appreciated throughout your time with us. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact your volunteer coordinator.

Thank you once again for your willingness to serve. Together, we can make a meaningful impact in our community, ensuring that everyone has access to the food and resources they need to thrive.

Welcome aboard!

Warm regards,
Dallas College Student Care Coordinators — Resource Leads
Basic Needs and Community Connections Department

Mission Statement and Care Coordinator Role

Dallas College Mission

To transform lives and communities through higher education.

Care Coordination Mission Statement Student Care Coordination at Dallas College promotes student success and retention, reduces risk and enhances overall community well-being and safety by identifying needs, removing barriers, leveraging resources and fostering student self-efficacy.

Who We Are and What We Do

Dallas College exists to support the community at large with accessing affordable high-quality education and training but understanding that students are unique and need support to thrive.

Students need more than textbooks and tutoring to earn college certificates or degrees. You have physical, mental, spiritual, financial and social needs as well. The Basic Needs department is a holistic network of care (both services and resources) committed to helping students meet all their needs. Whether they need food, medical resources, legal aid, housing and rental assistance, scholarship information or mental health support, the Student Care Network can help.

With the help of volunteers like you, we can support our students and communities and drive impactful change in student lives.

Community Impact Fall 2023

6,278 student interactions
65,827 visits to the food pantries
1,235 visits to the clothing closets
6,656 multiple services
6,582 individuals served in at the mobile food pantries
114,000 lbs. of food distributed
36,937 items collected during Pack the Pantry

Family Care Initiative Program

490 total applications
154 approved students
\$247,000 spent 100%
1,840 items distributed

Programs and Initiatives

There are many ways to volunteer with the Basic Needs department. See some of our opportunities outlined below:

Drive-Thru Pantry Days

On Drive-Thru Pantry days, community members can drive through campus and pick up free groceries, including fresh produce and milk. Drive-Thru Pantry is first come, first served and rotates monthly at different locations.

Volunteers are critical for the success of these events. On these drive through days volunteers assist with sorting, packaging and distributing the food to community members. The shift is from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. To learn more and sign up, please visit our webpage at DallasCollege.edu/FreeFood.

Delivery/Restock Days

Every month each campus food pantry receives a restock order from the North Texas Food Bank (NTFB). These volunteer shifts are limited, but volunteers are critical to the receiving and restocking of pantries. Each shift can be between 4-6 hours.

To learn more and sign up visit DallasCollege.edu/FoodPantry.

Clothing Closet Sorting

Periodically we have large clothing donations that need to be sorted. These events are organized and vary in location, date and time. However, signing up as a volunteer at our campus pantry will keep you in the loop for when these events occur.

Clothing Closet or Food Pantry Shift

We have opportunities for students to receive service learning hours through a volunteer shift in either the clothing closet or food pantry on campus. The best way to sign up for these shifts is through the volunteer interest form at DallasCollege.edu/FreeFood.

How to Get Involved

The easiest and best way to stay informed on volunteer opportunities is to sign up through our volunteer forms. Email updates are sent regularly.

Resource leads send out a campuswide email requesting volunteers to assist with mobile food drives and monthly food deliveries. Community members as well as partnering organizations are included in the emails.

Staff, students and community members may sign up to volunteer at our mobile food drives, on campus, or through our website at DallasCollege.edu/FoodPantry. Volunteer service will not be accepted without the Volunteer Registration Form being completed.

Pictures are taken at each mobile food drive and sometimes posted in TEAMS and/or SharePoint. A photo release form will need to be completed at the time of volunteering.

Volunteer Policies and Code of Conduct

Dallas College volunteers are expected to abide by the Dallas College Code of Conduct. [Insert link to Code of Conduct]

This code encompasses the expectations of appropriate behaviors and consequences for breaking it. Additionally, for any concerns for safety of self or others there are multiple offices here to support. Visit the websites below for more information.

- DallasCollege.edu/TitleIX
- DallasCollege.edu/TitleIXNotice
- DallasCollege.edu/StudentRights

Volunteers are expected to sign up for volunteer opportunities using the Volunteer Registration Form on the Dallas College website. Volunteer service will not be accepted without completion of the Volunteer Registration Form.

You are expected to be respectful and treat all persons you encounter with dignity.

You are expected as a volunteer to keep all information encountered confidential when it comes to students visiting the food pantry and clothing closet.

You are expected to follow the supervision of the resource leads when volunteering.

You are expected to complete all tasks accurately in a timely matter.

Social Media Policy

We use social media every day. It is a wonderful way to stay connected to friends and family, find out about fun events and network with others.

Volunteers are encouraged to use social media at their discretion to share and highlight their experience; however, it is expected that the confidentiality of students/clients accessing services be respected.

Be strategic! Use your social media to:

- Promote events
- Network
- Encourage others
- Do not record license plates and close-ups on community members
- Promote the Dallas College brand (@dallascollege and #dallascollege) and learn new things about our world and the people in it!

Post with the motivation to represent yourself and Dallas College well.

As a volunteer with Dallas College, you are a role model in the community. Have fun but keep it family friendly and make Dallas College proud!

Volunteer Shift Check In

Arrive on time for your shift. If you're late or unable to show, contact the coordinator as soon as possible so they will not expect you.

Sign in at the kiosk upon arrival, this enables us to keep track of precisely how many volunteers have worked each week and how many hours they have worked. Notify a coordinator of your arrival. Your coordinator will provide you with your task/assignment.

Clothing Closet, Drive-Thru and/or Food Pantry Volunteer Shift

Volunteering for a shift in our clothing closet or food pantry is one that requires a bit more training and information than our other volunteer opportunities. Outlined below is needed information to ensure that your shift goes smoothly, and you are well prepared and supported to serve our students and communities. Please note that your volunteer coordinator will go over all of this with you — this is just a quick reference!

Drive-Thru Pantries

The Dallas College Drive-Thru Pantry program is like a market on wheels that travels to each of the Dallas College campuses to deliver nutritious food, including fresh produce and refrigerated items. Basic Care and Needs staff work directly with NTFB to order food for distribution at all Dallas College campuses. There is no need to register for Drive-Thru Pantry pickup, and food is available first come, first served. Participants must provide their name, family size and income requirements to receive food. No proof is necessary as the process is a self-declaration.

Dress Code:

Volunteers are expected to dress appropriately for your volunteer assignment. Please make sure you dress comfortably and wear comfortable closed-toe shoes and pay attention to the weather as the drive through pantries are outdoors. Bring a coat, a fan, water, etc., to ensure you are comfortable during your shift. Snacks and refreshments will be provided.

Safety:

Your safety is our top priority! In addition to dressing appropriately, yellow vests will be provided to volunteers to ensure you are visible to all cars. This shift requires light lifting of 50 lbs. or less. Please trust yourself and your limits, we do not want anyone to get hurt during their shift. Please note that the Drive-Thru Pantry has active moving vehicles driving through to pick up food. Volunteers are not permitted to enter clients' cars and are instead encouraged to gently place the bagged grocery items into the vehicle's back seat or trunk. Be mindful of your toes!

Logistics of the day:

Volunteer shifts for the mobile pantry begin at 9 a.m. It is important that volunteers show up on time so when the truck arrives, we can begin sorting the food items and getting them placed on tables for distribution to clients. After the delivery truck arrives, you will be assigned to a station to begin sorting through items. Once all food has been sorted, we will start the car line flowing and place the food into cars. Once all the food is gone, the Drive-Thru Pantry will end. Cleanup is easy and if you can stay to assist, we will happily welcome you.

Organizing the Clothing Closet

Dress Code:

Volunteers are expected to dress appropriately for your volunteer assignment. Please make sure you dress comfortably and wear comfortable closed-toe shoes.

Safety:

Your safety is our top priority! In addition to dressing appropriately and comfortably, this shift requires light lifting of 50 lbs. or less. Wear plastic, disposable gloves when handling clothes. Ask your coordinator for clothes if not automatically provided. Please trust yourself and your limits, we do not want anyone to get hurt or fall ill because of working the closet during their shift.

Logistics of the shift:

The volunteer will organize clothes on racks and shelves, making sure clothes are hung properly on hangers by size facing the same direction and folded neatly. Make sure shelves and floors are clean, neat and free of trash. Volunteers will also remove broken and empty hangers from racks.

Duties:

Make sure display cases and racks have merchandise on them.

Place items on hangers. Hang clothing on the right side, not inside out. There should never be empty hangers on racks. Replace and throw away broken hangers.

Neatly fold items.

If items are stacked make sure it is a reasonable height, or if in a cubby or cube, they are stacked so items are not crammed in. This allows the shopper to sort through items with ease.

The displays should be dusted, accessories like handbags can get dusty periodically. Check the condition of the merchandise, displays, carpet, windows, glass door, etc., and wipe off or clean areas in need.

Arrange items by gender — ladies, men's, children's — girls/boys, baby-girls/boys.

Arrange items by category — blouses, shirts, pants/shorts, short sleeved/long sleeved, jackets, sweaters, coats.



Arrange items by seasons — spring, summer, (light weight clothes, T-shirts/short sleeved), fall, winter (heavier items, sweaters, coats).

If racks are broken, or the room or glass needs cleaning, inform the coordinator. He/she will provide you with cleaning products and gloves for cleaning. For broken racks, the coordinator will arrange removal.

No food or drinks in the clothing closet. Spills could lead to unwanted issues.

Do not leave the clothing closet unattended.

Do not be distracted by your phone or lose focus of your tasks/assignments while on duty.

Do not leave your assigned area for any reason without notifying a coordinator (including a bathroom or other breaks).

Do not work when you are ill.

Donations

Often donors will stop by the pantry and clothing closet to drop off items. This may happen during your shift. Please utilize the guide below to assist with accepting items.

Accepting Donations

Always be attentive, smile and offer sincere thanks to any donor for their donation. The donor should be treated with admiration. Ask donors if they would like a receipt for tax purposes — often referred to as a “charitable donation” or “deduction of charity.” Exercise discretion regarding acceptance and/or disposition of donated goods.

Evaluate

Quickly identify if donations are in attractive shape, presentable to offer to our students, staff, or the public.

Check items!

If items are wet, soiled, stained, torn, ripped, missing pieces, buttons, belts, shoelaces, etc., discard them.

If you notice bugs, insects, spiderwebs — Do not remove items from their container or bag if you notice they are infested, or suspect infestation. They should be handled as little as possible and thrown away immediately.

Handling Donations

Donations should be placed on a cart or in a designated area for inspection then moved to the clothing closet or storage closet and not remain on the floor of the pantry beyond the day of donation. Piles of donations can be mistaken for trash. People that donate items want to ensure their donations are appreciated and not left piled up.

The way we interact with a donor and how donations are handled lets the donors know we appreciate their efforts and consideration of Dallas College as a donation site. Please remember that as a volunteer in the pantry or clothing closet you are representing Dallas College.

Restocking Campus Food Pantry

Dress Code:

Volunteers are expected to dress appropriately for your volunteer assignment. Please make sure you dress comfortably and wear comfortable closed-toe shoes.

Safety:

Your safety is our top priority! In addition to dressing appropriately and comfortably, this shift requires light lifting of 50 lbs. or less. Please trust yourself and your limits, we do not want anyone to get hurt during their shift.

Logistics of the Shift:

Sign in on the kiosk in food pantry and get a task/assignment before starting your shift. This enables us to keep track of precisely how many volunteers have worked in each week and how many hours they have worked.



Food Pantry — Food Safety

One of the most important things that you can do to prevent food borne illness is to keep your hands washed or at least gloved.

Coughing and Sneezing — There is only one proper way to cough or sneeze if you can, LEAVE THE ROOM. If you must, sneeze the right way, back away from the food, turn away, and cough or sneeze in the sleeve of your shirt or jacket. Immediately wash your hands.

The area where food is to be handled, sorted, served and/or distributed must be a sanitary, healthy environment. Regular cleaning practices need to be understood and maintained by staff and/or volunteers handling food items. Be sure that the food preparation area, microwave and all surfaces and utensils that will touch food are clean.

Check “use by” dates on packaged food items.

Remember this rule of thumb when dealing with all foods ... WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!

Food Handling — Be mindful of opening the fridge repeatedly.

Cold Food Handling — Foods that are to be eaten cold, for example, tossed salad, milk, cottage cheese, lunchmeat, chicken and tuna salads, must stay at BELOW 40 degrees Fahrenheit at ALL times. If a refrigerated food is allowed to sit at room temperature for any length of time, it will enter the FOOD DANGER ZONE. The food danger zone is from 40 to 140 degrees. Many bacteria will grow at these temperatures, and they can make you ill.

Food Safety Seals

Ensure that tamper-proof seals are intact

Discard the item if the seal is pierced, not adhered to the edge of the container, or if there is visual evidence of product contamination.

Look for plastic or metal caps on bottles attached by small links to a ring fastened around the bottle neck. If these connecting links are broken, discard the item.

If the shrink-wrap around bottles is completely broken, discard the item.

If the seal is slightly damaged but shows no tampering was possible, retain the product.

A paper seal may be glued around the cap and neck of a bottle. If this paper is torn, discard the item.

Cans

Look for these red-flag indicators of a “bad can.”

Dispose of cans with sharp dents on the squeezed lid seams, if the dent extends below the lid’s seam and into the side of the can, or if the dent peels back the lid seam or bottom.

Accept cans with a long and flat dent on a seam unless the dent is tipped inward.

Dispose of cans with dents that cause sharp corners or sharp creases. If a fingernail applied to the edge of the crease can suspend the can, discard it.

Discard cans with side dents causing points at the ends of the crease and cans that when the crease is so deep it also deforms an end of the can, causing it to wobble. Also dispose of severely crushed cans with the sides folded in on itself.

Dispose of swollen cans. You can detect a slight amount of swelling by pressing on the end. If the end can be pushed in, contamination is present. Discard even if the end springs back after it is released.

Rust that remains after wiping may indicate rust pitting that is deep enough to allow contamination. Discard the can.

Glass and Plastic

What to look for in a “good” jar.

Check for a vacuum that makes the jar airtight. An inward dished lid (usually marked with a printed pop-up indicator) shows the jar has a vacuum and is airtight. If a container is not vacuum-sealed, a screw cap and seal protect the contents from tampering and physical contamination.

Discard the item if there is visual evidence of contamination or if the seal is broken.

What to look for in a “bad” jar.

Discard jars with a raised center that may or may not spring back after being depressed. Note: An item may have both a pop-up seal indicator and a tamper-proof band. If the band is broken and the pop-up seal is intact, the item is acceptable. Discard glass jars with dents on the lids. This indicates that glass chips may be in the food.

Food Pantry Volunteer Shift

Dress Code:

Volunteers are expected to dress appropriately for your volunteer assignment. Please make sure you dress comfortably and wear comfortable closed-toe shoes.

Safety:

Your safety is our top priority! In addition to dressing appropriately and comfortably, this shift requires light lifting of 50 lbs. or less. Please trust yourself and your limits, we do not want anyone to get hurt during their shift.

Logistics of the Shift:

Sign in on the kiosk in food pantry and get a task/ assignment before starting your shift. This enables us to keep track of precisely how many volunteers have worked in each week and how many hours they have worked.

Volunteering is performed during regular business hours, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. during Fall and Spring and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during Summer.

Duties:

Greet students when they visit the food pantry and clothing closet.

Engage with students, staff, faculty and community members with a positive attitude.

Explain to new students how the food pantry operates and the sign in process.

Make sure students sign in for the appropriate service.

Assist students with groceries, if needed.

Follow food handling procedures in the North Texas Food Bank Procedure Section.

Keep the shelves organized and clean.

Report if restock is necessary.

Restock items as needed.

Restock from back, older items in front and latest items in back.

Break down all boxes and take out all trash right after restocking.

Dispose of garbage daily, clean up areas as needed.

Connect students with case managers and explain the services case managers can provide.

Assist in the organization of events such as information tables, fairs, Giving Day, food drives, etc.

Other duties as assigned.

No food or drinks in the food pantry — spills could lead to unwanted issues.

Do not leave the food pantry unattended.

Do not be distracted by your phone or lose focus of your tasks/assignments while on duty.

Do not leave your assigned area for any reason without notifying a coordinator (including bathroom or other breaks).

Do not work when you are ill.

Keep all information, names and conversations regarding all visitors, donors and students confidential. We are protective of our visitor's anonymity.

You may be asked to supervise or instruct other volunteers if necessary.

Have any paperwork to document your work, available for completion at the end of your shift. Good volunteers are timely, able to do assignments, demonstrate reliability and teamwork and require minimal supervision.

In the event of an emergency — weather, fire, intruder, for your safety — follow the established drills/alarms/policies set forth by Dallas College



North Texas Food Bank Procedures

Food Storage Requirements

Below outlines the food storage requirements for all pantries. These requirements are in accordance with the health and safety of all food and NTFB and health department laws and regulations.

1. Store food in a secure room, preventing the entry of bugs and rodents. Check the walls, ceiling, shelf connections and around windows and doors. Seal all gaps, holes and cracks. Install a strip on the bottom of the pantry door to seal out bugs and rodents.
2. Store all food on nonporous, easily sanitized surfaces. Food may not be stored on bare wood, rusty metal or shelf liner.
3. Store food properly. Do not repackage any products except for rice and beans. Only use plastic zip-lock bags, not paper bags. Rice and beans may be kept in a tight-lidded container on the platform. The bottom shelf or platform should be 4-6 inches off the floor. Food products may not be stored closer than 4 inches from the wall. This prevents pests from being able to hide and protects your product from moisture.
4. Check incoming food to see that it is in good condition. Discard bloated, heavily dented or rusty cans. Also discard containers that leak or do not have labels. Expired or out-of-date baby food and formula must be discarded immediately. Leave enough room on the shelves so that you can move products around for cleaning purposes. Restock shelves from back to front using oldest products first.
5. Store nonfood items separately from food. Never store nonfood items or cleaning products above or mingle with food products. Some common nonfood items are hazardous.
6. Keep the pantry clean. All food storage areas should be checked and cleaned every time the pantry is used. Post specific cleaning tasks that are to be completed at the end of every shift. Floors and shelving can be sanitized with a solution of one teaspoon of bleach combined with a quart of water. Wipe out refrigerators/freezers as soon as spills occur.
7. Store nonperishables at safe temperatures. Food should be protected from extreme heat and humidity. Proper ventilation is between 75° and 80° Fahrenheit, which is the ideal range for nonperishable products.
8. Store perishables at safe temperatures. Keep temperature gauges in all refrigeration equipment. Using TDHS temperature chart, record the date and temperature of each unit once every other day, late Friday and early Monday, if there are no operations on the weekend. Safe temperatures in a refrigerator range from 34° to 40° Fahrenheit, in a freezer 0° Fahrenheit or less.

9. All grain products must be refrigerated from May through September to deter contamination by pest invasion. Grain products such as flour or corn meal should be kept refrigerated during warmer months to deter the invasion of pests.
10. Food and other products from NTFB are for the clients of the approved program only. The pantry, food storage area, refrigerators and freezers containing products from NTFB are to be kept locked and separated from all other agencies and programs.

Other Food Storage Requirements

- All surfaces should be of a nonporous, washable material, and be washed with a USDA approved disinfectant at least quarterly, and as needed during the interim.
- No product can be stored directly on the floor. If supply exceeds shelving capacity, excess can be stored on pallets but must be 4 inches from all walls.
- Thermometers must be present in all dry storage areas.
- Dry food storage should be of adequate size to allow for easy stock rotation and inventory.
- All nonfood products must be stored separately from food products. At a minimum, all nonfood products should be stored on lower shelves and never above food products.
- Monthly pest control must be documented and filed for audit purposes.

Refrigerated and Frozen Storage

- Refrigerators should maintain temperatures not exceeding 45 degrees. Freezers should maintain 0 degrees.
- Thermometers must be present in all refrigerators and freezers.
- Refrigerator logs must be documented and maintained daily.
- All refrigerators and freezers should be defrosted and cleaned with a USDA approved disinfectant at least quarterly and as needed in the interim.
- Refrigerators and freezers should be large enough to allow for easy stock rotation and inventory.

