

EASTERN ILLINOIS FOODBANK

Agency Handbook



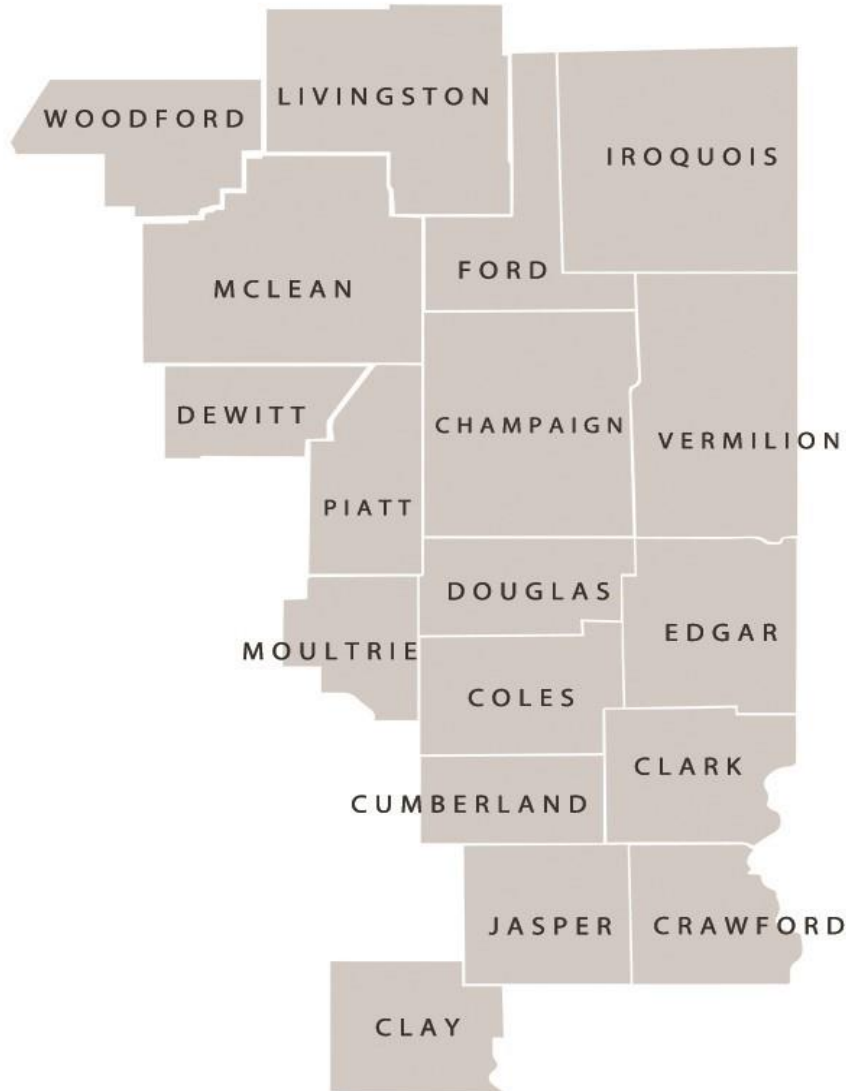
Our mission:

Eastern Illinois Foodbank exists to alleviate hunger in eastern Illinois by providing a reliable source of food for the hungry through cooperation of a network of food pantries and agencies.

Table of Contents

- EIF Service Area3**
- EIF Contact Information3**
- What is the Eastern Illinois Foodbank?4**
- Limitations of Liability4**
- Partnership Requirements5**
 - 501©35
 - Primary Contact5
 - Site Visits5
 - Client Rights and Agency Availability6
 - Mandatory Training6
 - Shopping, Pickups, Warehouse7
 - Order Cancellation7
 - Deliveries8
 - Storage, Handling & Distributing Product8
 - Unauthorized use of EIF Product.....9
 - Voluntary Contributions from Food Recipients10
 - Reporting (Link2Feed)10
 - Billing and Payments11
 - Changes in Programs or Personnel11
 - Members in Good Standing11
- Agency Conference12**
- USDA Government Commodity Program.....12**
- Addressing Agency Violations12**

EIF SERVICE AREA



EIF CONTACT INFORMATION

Office Phone Number: 217-328-3663

Customer Service Email: CSR@EIFoodbank.org

What is Eastern Illinois Foodbank?

Eastern Illinois Foodbank (EIF) is a member of Feeding America, the nation’s leading domestic hunger relief charity. Its mission is to feed America’s hungry through a nationwide network of member food banks. EIF is also a member of Feeding Illinois, a coalition of eight food banks serving Illinois.

What is EIF’s service area?

EIF serves 18 counties in eastern Illinois, including: Champaign, Clark, Clay, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, DeWitt, Douglas, Edgar, Ford, Iroquois, Jasper, Livingston, McLean, Moultrie, Piatt, Vermilion, and Woodford.

How does EIF receive its food?

EIF receives donations from major manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, farmers and community food drives. We also purchase food from wholesalers to supplement donations.

What types of programs does EIF support?

EIF supports a variety of programs, including: food pantries, school pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, group homes, rehabilitation facilities, daycares, snack programs, backpack programs and senior nutrition programs. EIF handles all partnership inquiries on a case-by-case basis, and may be able to make accommodations for your program.

How EIF works



Limitations of Liability

EIF provides its agencies food and other grocery products on an “as is” basis and does not make any express or implied warranties of the food or grocery products that it distributes. Further, EIF believes that it qualifies for the liability limitations of the **Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act (P.L. 104-210, 110 Stat. 2011 (1996))**, when it distributes donations of apparently wholesome food and apparently fit grocery products. This federal law is applicable so long as EIF is acting in good faith, but it does not apply if damages are the result of intentional acts or gross negligence. This law applies to agencies except for intentional acts or gross negligence.

EIF reserves the right to limit quantities of food to agencies. In the event of product shortage, EIF will distribute food based on the following, which ranks agencies by the highest priority:

1. Emergency food programs (such as food pantries, homeless shelters, and soup kitchens)
2. Supplemental programs (such as snack programs, residential facilities, and rehabilitation facilities)
3. All other programs

Partnership Requirements

EIF is required to adhere to rules and regulations set by the Federal, State, and Local governmental bodies. Therefore, all participating agencies are required to follow the same rules and regulations, and any other guidelines set by EIF. Additionally, all agencies are required to serve the ill, the needy, or children.

Agencies are subject to a ninety (90) day probationary period. During this time, EIF reserves the right to terminate membership at will. Please refer to the section on “Addressing Agency Violations” for more information on termination once the ninety (90) days have been completed. For the duration of membership, agencies reserve the right to terminate membership at will. This termination is required to be in writing and signed by the agency’s primary contact.

A. 501(c)3 STATUS

Agencies are required to maintain 501(c)3 status throughout their partnership with EIF. Proof of 501(c)3 status in the form of an IRS determination letter is required and will be checked at each agency monitor. Churches who do not have proof of 501(c)3 tax exempt status can utilize the “Documentation List for Independent Churches and Other Religious Organizations.”

If an agency is a program or part of a larger “umbrella” organization, the umbrella organization will need to provide a copy of the 501(c)3 IRS determination letter, as well as a written letter from an officer of the umbrella organization describing the relationship between the agency and the umbrella organization. The umbrella organization must agree in writing to be fiscally and legally responsible for EIF products handled by the agency.

B. PRIMARY CONTACT

Agencies are required to establish a primary contact for their organization. The primary contact is responsible for all communications with EIF, major decision making and must notify EIF of any changes within the organization.

C. SITE VISITS & MONITORING

EIF staff will conduct regular site visits to assist your program with reaching its maximum potential and strengthen partnership with your agency. EIF staff will inspect storage and other requirements discussed in this handbook. Additional monitors may be conducted at the discretion of EIF.

D. CLIENT RIGHT & AGENCY AVAILABILITY

1. Notice to the Public of Availability
 - a. Food is required to be supplied directly to the clients in the form of groceries for home consumption or meals.
 - b. Agency hours should be displayed publicly. If a scheduled distribution must be changed, the agency should notify the public via visible signage on the outside of the building as well as EIF staff.
2. Client Eligibility
 - a. All member agencies must provide written documentation of their criteria and outline the procedure that is used to determine whether clients of their emergency food program(s) meet the criteria.
 - The criteria must be posted in a place where prospective clients can view the criteria before receiving services. This criteria must be applied to all clients.
 - b. Products must be distributed without adding to, reducing, or otherwise modifying the client eligibility criteria.
 - c. Agencies are required to use a reasonable standard percentage based on the current Federal Annual Income/Poverty Guidelines as an income-eligibility standard.
 - Choosing an acceptable percentage of these guidelines such as 185% or 200% is recommended, but not required.
 - EIF recommends that agencies allow clients to self-attest to their income status, rather than asking for proof of income statements
 - d. Agencies are required to distribute EIF product to all persons who qualify for assistance, and not discriminate against any person based on their race, creed, national origin, religion, or lack thereof, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. EIF recommends that agencies allow clients to self-attest to the income guidelines. If a client is outside of the agency's service area, organizations are encouraged to serve the client for that visit and refer them to an agency in the client's county of residence.
 - e. Partner agencies cannot require clients to pray, worship, or to receive religious or political messages as a condition of receiving food. Partner agencies are welcome to invite clients to participate in religious services, but must not tie those services to the food distribution process.
 - f. Clients may not be required to volunteer as a condition of receiving food.
 - g. Volunteers who do wish to receive food must meet all of the eligibility criteria and go through the same eligibility and distribution process as clients who do not volunteer.
 - h. Services of the agency must not be restricted to the membership of the sponsoring organization.
 - Exceptions to this are programs whose primary purpose is a service to a particular population, such as behavioral health group homes, residential facilities, daycares, sheltered workshops, and after school programs.
 - i. On-site feeding programs are required to submit documentation attesting that at least 50% of those served are at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level.

E. MANDATORY TRAINING

1. Food Safety Training - Agencies are required to receive food safety training annually. Training will be provided at the annual Agency Conference or alternative method when needed. Should you not attend the conference, the primary contact will be responsible for ensuring this training remains current.
2. USDA Commodity Training - USDA Commodity agencies must attend an annual training session to ensure that they receive information that will keep them in compliance with the program requirements. This will

be provided at the annual Agency Conference or alternative method when needed. The training sessions cover record keeping, civil rights, storage of products, non-discrimination, proper signage, and allocations of products.

3. Shoppers Training - A new shopper (as identified by the agency's Primary Contact) must attend a shoppers training with EIF before they can shop at the EIF onsite shopping area, order via the phone, or pick up product at the EIF warehouse. *Agency Express Training is required to shop on EIF's online shopping portal and is highly recommended for all shoppers.*
4. EIF Partner Orientation - New partner agencies and new Primary Contacts will be required to attend EIF Partner Orientation.

F. SHOPPING, ORDER PICK UP, & WAREHOUSE GUIDELINES

1. Agencies must acquire product from the Foodbank on a consistent basis. Agencies who receive delivery must place an order every month to hold their spot on the schedule.
 - a. For USDA Commodity Agencies, monthly orders are IN ADDITION to commodities received through Eastern Illinois Foodbank
 - b. EIF reserves the right to send free product in a proportionate amount (based on numbers served) if orders are not placed
2. When picking up an order at EIF, please do not order or select more products than you can load in your vehicle. Agencies are responsible for loading their vehicles and verifying the product being loaded against your invoice.
3. Please refrain from bringing children under the age of 13 to the warehouse when picking up and/or shopping at the warehouse. Please refer to the "Shopping at the EIF Warehouse" manual you receive at Shoppers Training for more info.
4. Refrigerated and frozen food items must be transported in a way that maintains the integrity of the product. This may be done with cooler, cold packs or freezer blanket to prevent thawing or spoilage. EIF has freezer blankets and thermometers for purchase. Please ask an EIF staff member if you are interested.
5. Agencies agree to support EIF with a per pound shared maintenance fee. This is a handling fee that helps to cover part of EIF's operating costs and is already built into the cost of the product.

G. ORDER CANCELLATION POLICY

To cancel an order for pick up, notice must be provided to EIF by 9:00 AM the day before the agency's scheduled pick up appointment time. To cancel a delivery, notice must be provided at least one week before the agency's scheduled delivery by 3:00 PM. A restocking fee will be assessed for any order (full or partial) not picked up within 24 hours of the scheduled appointment time or not accepted at the scheduled delivery time. The restock fee consists of a \$25.00 flat fee plus \$1.00 per case for every case returned and will be charged to any agency that fails to cancel within the required time frame or refuses their order in part or in full.

H. DELIVERIES

1. Delivery appointments are scheduled by EIF Supply Chain Manager.
2. The primary contact will be responsible for coordinating deliveries at their agency.
3. The agency is expected to wait up to thirty (30) minutes after the scheduled delivery time before calling EIF or leaving the site.
4. Orders are delivered on pallets and pallets will be dropped at the delivery area.
 - a. Dropped means the spot where the pallet leaves the pallet jack, pallets can be delivered only as far as the pallet jack can travel.
 - b. Hand trucks/carts are often required and must be supplied by the Agency.
 - c. It is the Agency's responsibility to verify the product being unloaded against your invoice and move the product into your pantry and shelve them.
5. The agency is expected to notify EIF immediately if they are unable to accept a delivery.
6. Failure to comply with any part of this policy will be handled by EIF staff on a case by case basis.
7. For new members, or a new delivery site, a visit by the EIF Supply Chain Manager will occur to determine delivery area, truck parking, and delivery entrance.
 - a. The primary contact must be present to walk through the delivery process.
 - b. The same contact must also be present at the first scheduled delivery.

I. STORAGE, HANDLING, & DISTRIBUTING PRODUCT

All agencies must be licensed or certified by public health authorities as required in the agency's county.

1. Agencies are required to have the capacity to receive, store, and distribute food safely and efficiently according to EIF standards. This includes meeting the local Health Department and EIF guidelines governing food storage, preparation, handling, and security.
2. Agencies are responsible for the security of EIF's products and for assuring that all products are used only according to approved program purposes.
3. All product must be delivered to and stored at approved locations.
4. Kitchen facilities, storage areas, and cooler space are required to be clean, dry, and adequate to store all food received. Grocery products are required to be stored on pallets four (4) inches off the floor or on shelves six (6) inches off the floor. Also, food must be stored four (4) inches away from the wall and provide a two (2) foot ceiling clearance.
5. Non-food items must be stored away from food items to ensure no cross contamination.
6. It is recommended shelf stable food is stored between 50-70 degrees Fahrenheit to insure maximum freshness.

7. Temperature storage requirements for refrigerated and frozen food are as follows:
 - a. Refrigerated food: 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below
 - b. Frozen food: 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below
8. Refrigerators and freezers must be in good condition, clean, and in working order. Foods are required to be stored in adequate refrigerators or freezers maintaining constant temperatures. Thermometers are required for each unit as well as temperature logs. If you need temperature logs, please contact Partnership Services.
9. A documented pest control system is required to be in place. Sites must contract with a professional or have a qualified person on staff and maintain pest control records documenting inspections. If you need pest control logs, please contact Partnership Services.
10. Repackaging of food is not a practice that many agencies are equipped to handle. In many cases, repackaging of food requires regulatory licenses and permits. If in doubt, we suggest you refrain from repackaging food. If you have any questions, please contact EIF or your local health department.

J. UNAUTHORIZED USE OF EIF PRODUCT

Agencies must use EIF product only in a manner related to its exempt purpose and for the feeding of people in need stated by the agency in its partnership application.

1. Agencies must agree to not sell, barter, or exchange food received from EIF for goods, services, or donations. Agencies must agree not to charge for meals served.
2. Religious organizations may not use EIF product for any religious functions, including, but not limited to, church dinners, Sunday school classes, or vacation Bible schools.
3. EIF product may not be consumed or used by the agency's program staff unless the following conditions are met:
 - a. Program staff in a group home, shelter, soup kitchen, or other on-site programs may consume EIF product when client meals/snacks are served. Primary service must be to clients.
 - b. If a program staff member has a legitimate need because of an emergency, a pantry program may provide them with groceries. This distribution of food must be documented in the same manner as any other pantry client.
4. EIF products may not be used for fundraising either as prepared food (such as spaghetti dinners or bakes sales) or as "prizes."
5. Agencies must not redistribute EIF product to other agencies without the approval of EIF.
6. Agencies may not "thank" volunteers for their efforts with bags of food or other products from EIF. This practice violates both labor and tax laws.
7. Volunteers who may also be eligible as a client must meet all of the eligibility criteria and go through the same process as clients who do not volunteer.

K. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM FOOD RECIPIENTS

Agencies may not charge clients any fees for food, transportation of food, to cover operating expenses, etc. Partner agencies also cannot post or communicate “suggested donation” amounts to food recipients. Agencies that charge fees to food recipients will be terminated from membership with EIF.

However, agencies may set up donation canisters, jars, or boxes, but these must be located in places where donations can be made in a completely anonymous way so that agency staff/volunteers do not know which food recipients are donating.

L. REPORTING AND RECORDS

Link2Feed is a database system EIF uses to record agency totals.

1. Food pantries are required to utilize the Link2Feed System in real-time to record the following data:
 - a. Households served
 - b. Individuals served (number of individuals in the household)
 - c. Number of children under 18 served
 - d. Number of households receiving SNAP benefits
 - e. Additional personal and household demographics
2. Meal programs, including soup kitchens, shelters, daycares, residential programs, and snack programs are required to submit the total number of meals served via the Link2Feed System or the EIF website for the previous month by the 5th of the month.
3. Addressing Agency Link2Feed Violations -

It is essential that all food pantries are utilizing Link2Feed in real-time, as it is vital to accurately collect information from clients. If you feel your agency cannot utilize Link2Feed in real time, you must submit a written request to EIF. Please allow 30 days for review. The following procedures will be applied to any agency violation:

- a. If an agency is found to be in violation of not applying the Link2Feed system correctly, the agency shall be given a warning addressing the issue of concern. Notification will be confirmed in writing and corrective action must be completed.
 - b. If the agency is found to be in violation a second time, said agency shall be put on hold for 30 days and corrective action must be completed. Notification of probation will be confirmed in writing.
 - c. If the agency is found to be in violation a third time, said agency shall be put on hold for 60 days and corrective action must be completed. Notification of probation will be confirmed in writing.
 - d. If the agency is found to be in violation any subsequent times, said agency shall be put on hold for 90 days and corrective action must be completed. Notification of probation will be confirmed in writing.
4. With Link2Feed, there are no physical records to retain. Agencies utilizing any paper forms must retain files for 3 years.

M. BILLING & PAYMENTS

Upon receipt of the product, agencies will receive an invoice. This invoice will be sent electronically to the billing contact, as provided to EIF by the primary contact. Please contact EIF with any errors concerning your order within 24 hours of pick-up or delivery. Payment terms for invoices are net 30 days. All payments must be made utilizing a (business) check from the 501(c)3 on file. EIF does not accept cash, credit/debit cards, money orders, cashier's checks, or personal checks.

If the check is returned due to insufficient funds, your account will be charged \$10.00 and placed on product HOLD. A new check that indicates the insufficient funds charge must be presented to remove the HOLD. Any agency that has more than two returned checks in one year will be required to pay in advance for one year.

N. COMMUNICATING CHANGES IN PROGRAMS OR PERSONNEL

The Primary Contact must notify EIF of any program changes in writing, this may be done by email from the primary contact's email on file with EIF.

1. Please notify EIF of any operational changes in your program that may affect your shopping volume, or frequency. These types of changes include changes in days and hours of service, additions or terminations of programs and additions of facilities. Some programs that your agency offers may not qualify to utilize EIF product.
2. Once an agency identifies and authorizes shoppers for their organization, the primary contact must request training for that individual in writing with the individual's name, phone number, and email address. The shopper must complete training to become an authorized shopper at EIF. Only these trained individuals can access and utilize the shopping area and online shopping.
3. Please notify EIF with changes in address, phone number, email address for the agency, and when authorized shoppers have left the agency.
4. The primary contact must notify EIF in writing when they are leaving the agency. Please provide name, email address and phone number of the new primary contact.

O. MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING

The following standards will ensure that your partnership will remain in good standing:

- a. Account balance current with net-30 policy
- b. Totals submitted on time each month or if applicable, correctly using Link2Feed
- c. Current and accurate agency information on file (including 501(c)3 status)
- d. Acquiring product from EIF on a consistent basis

Members in good standing maintain the ability to shop in the EIF warehouse shopping area and online. On occasion EIF can make price reductions on products available to members through grants or donations. Some of these offers will only be made available to agencies that remained in Good Standing during the previous 12 months.

Agency Conference

EIF hosts an annual Agency Conference for partner agencies to engage with other agencies in the network and to learn new and upcoming ideas to enhance programming. Participation at the Agency Conference is highly recommended.

USDA Government Commodity Program

EIF serves as a distribution site for USDA Commodities. Participating agencies are required to meet additional guidelines to distribute USDA Commodities. Only Members in Good Standing will be considered eligible for this program. Interested agencies should inquire of opportunities to be a distribution site by contacting Partnership Services.

Addressing Agency Violations

The following procedures will be applied to any agency violation:

1. An agency found to violate any requirements shall be issued a warning addressing the issue of concern, the corrective action required, and the time frame for correction.
2. Shipment of EIF product may be immediately suspended.
3. If the agency fails to comply, the agency will be suspended until the corrective actions have been completed. Notification of probation will be confirmed in writing.
4. If compliance is not accomplished as determined by EIF, the agency's membership will be terminated. Upon termination, an agency will lose the privileges of a member agency for a minimum of six months. At the end of six months, an agency may reapply for membership as a new agency.
5. Any member agency may appeal the termination decision by sending written notice of appeal to the President & CEO within 30 days of such notification.