



FOOD PANTRY HEALTHY FOODS POLICY

PURPOSE

The Other Way Ministries Healthy Food Policy outlines practices, guidelines and goals for the foods we receive, purchase, and distribute. Our food pantry has many members; neighbors, donors, volunteers, and staff. Our values and practices on nutrition, wellness, and wholeness matter to all our members and have a health impact on members with the least access to healthy, affordable, and equitable food.

At The Other Way, we believe food is power and all members have a right to that power. We consider the health benefits of all our pantry offerings because we believe food is more than calories. Our food pantry works to offer food that prevents chronic disease, increases productivity in the classroom, community, and workplace, and promotes equity to our members. We believe a healthy food supply leads to lower short and long-term healthcare costs by reducing the likelihood of chronic and life-threatening illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease, joint disease, mental illness, and cancer, along with increasing the physical and mental development, especially in our youngest members.

The Other Way Ministries Healthy Food Policy is a living guide to values and practices which sets the table for all. Our greatest goal is to continually create a healthy, accessible, affordable and equitable food system that gives all our members a seat at the table where ideas are shared and plates are passed.

COMMITMENT TO NUTRITION VALUES

Commitment to food engagement as the vehicle to member involvement, ownership and organizing.

- Shift current charitable food beliefs and practices among stakeholders and members.
- Member-powered policy making for healthy, accessible, affordable and equitable food systems.
- Source 20 percent of our food products from Michigan growers, producers, and processors by 2020.
- Community potlucks and cook-offs using vegetables from local farm shares.
- Community taste-testings, cooked by members.
- Postings created and modeled by members promoting healthy foods and practices.
- Participate in the Michigan 4 x 4 Grant and Health, Access and Equity in our Local Food System Collaborative with members.
- Canning and freezing clubs.
- Community gardening and orchards, including connecting members to Gardens for Grand Rapids.
- Partnerships with Urban Roots, Grand Rapids Urban Forest Project, and Heartside Gleaning Initiative.
- Continued partnerships with Grand Valley State University Kirkhof College of Nursing and New City Urban Farm.
- Building membership in Agape Co-op.
- Sugar-free days in the Community Resource Center.

COMMITMENT TO NUTRITION GUIDELINES

The Other Way Food Pantry follows the recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines for Healthy Americans (www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2010.asp). The Other Way is committed to offering food which provides the highest nutrition and connections to local communities. The Other Way will strive to eliminate foods offered in our pantry which are high in calories and low in nutrients, and will continue to promote messaging that makes healthy choices attractive, easy, and understandable.

THE OTHER WAY MINISTRIES WILL PRIORITIZE THE FOLLOWING FOR DISTRIBUTION:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables .
- Fruit that is minimally processed – whole, cut, pureed, canned, frozen, dried, dehydrated, and 100% juice.
- Vegetables that are minimally processed – whole, cut-up, mashed, frozen, canned, dried, dehydrated, and 100% vegetable juice.
- Whole grain products.
- Food low in sodium, sugar, saturated fats, and trans fats.
- Protein from animal and vegetable sources, including eggs, nuts, seeds, beans, and canned meat with no additives.
- Products high in calcium and low in fat.
- Beverages including 100% fruit juice, skim or low-fat milk, and bottled water.
- Basic staple foods that provide the best nutrition.

THE OTHER WAY MINISTRIES WILL NOT DISTRIBUTE:

- Any diet or regular sodas and other sugary, non-nutrient dense beverages (i.e. energy drinks, vitamin waters, punches or “ades”, sweetened teas, or Frappuccinos).
- Hard candy, lollipops, chocolate bars, meal replacement, diet supplement, or sport bars.
- Soft candy such as marshmallows, caramels, taffy, licorice, or gummy items.

THE OTHER WAY MINISTRIES WILL PHASE OUT AND DISTRIBUTION OF BY OCTOBER 2017:

- Pastry, desserts, and dessert mixes.
- Highly-processed snacks.
- Highly-processed meal packages.

Nutrition Rationale: These foods contain little to no vitamins, minerals, or other nutrients. When eaten in excess, they lead to an increased risk for obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic illnesses and diseases.

PURCHASED PRODUCTS

- The Other Way Ministries is committed to purchasing high quality, fresh produce for neighbors visiting our pantry and Agape Co-op members. We will give preference to purchasing foods from local or domestic sources to support our agricultural and economic systems, when practical.
- The Other Way Ministries will purchase foods that reflect the culturally-specific needs of our neighbors and Agape Co-op members.

DONATED PRODUCTS

- The Other Way Ministries will communicate healthy food drive guidelines to all food drive partners.

- The Other Way Ministries is committed to sourcing fresh produce.
- The Other Way Ministries will consider the nutritional value of all donations offered and will consider alternate placements of donations that do not meet our nutrition standards.