



## San Diego Food Bank Nutrition Policy



The Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank's mission is to combat food insecurity in San Diego County. Food insecurity is a major contributor to both hunger and obesity in our society. Additionally, those who lack regular access to healthy foods are at increased risk for chronic diseases like hypertension and diabetes. Food insecurity and poor nutrition can be alleviated by providing nutrient-dense foods and nutrition education.

The Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank is committed to providing nutrient-dense food to partner agencies and clients through purchased and donated products along with fresh produce. In addition, the Food Bank will provide nutrition education to our clients and partner agencies, and through CalFresh Outreach.

The Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank utilizes the Choose Healthy Options Program (CHOP) as a tool to rank the nutrient quality of the food being donated or purchased. The CHOP program scores foods into three primary categories based upon nutritional quality:

- 1) Choose Frequently
- 2) Choose Often
- 3) Choose Sparingly

Foods received by the case lot and in quantities of a pallet or more will receive a ranking in The Choosing Healthy Options Program.

### **Section I: Purchased Nutrition Policy (Implemented January 2012)**

**Policy:** The Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank, when appropriate and possible\*, will purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, canned fruits in light syrup, natural juices, or water, low sodium & no salt added canned vegetables, lean protein foods, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat dairy & dairy substitute products.

The Choosing Healthy Options Program will inform the food purchasing decision. Purchased foods, when appropriate and possible\*, will rank a 1 or 2 in the CHOP ranking system.

**Applicability:** This policy is applicable to all purchases of food including, but not limited to, Farm 2 Family, Food 4 Kids, EFAP, and Bulk Purchase.

### **Section II: Direct Distribution Nutrition Policy**

**Policy:**

1. **Phase I (September 1, 2014)**  
Eliminate the general distribution of energy drinks, soda and candy.
2. **Phase II (September 21, 2015)**  
Eliminate the general distribution of any sports drinks and fruit juice drinks other than 100% fruit juice.
3. **Phase III (March 2017)**  
Eliminate the general distribution of frozen desserts or ice cream products.



## **Rationale**

The Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank is committed to the distribution of nutrient dense foods. Often, low nutrient, calorie dense foods are easily accessible within the community, so having the ability to provide consistent access to a supply of healthy, nutritious food is a key step towards moving the focus from not only Food Banking but Nutrition Banking. Eliminating the general distribution of calorie dense products through the Food to Nonprofits Program aligns with our commitment to promoting health to our nonprofit partners and clients. Donations that cannot be distributed according to the guidelines of this policy will be recycled, composted, or redirected to preapproved organizations for repurposing.

Also included in this policy:

**Foods to promote whole cooking:** The Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank will support the distribution of foods that promote whole cooking such as vegetable oils, baking goods, and other ingredients typically used in whole recipes.

**Dietary Supplements:** While the Food Bank is positioned as a supplier of health and nutrition in the community, it is important to supply safe items. Seeing that dietary supplements are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration prior to reaching consumer markets, we have chosen not to distribute. Supplements can be beneficial for health in certain situations but they also have inherent health risks, especially when used improperly or without supervision of a medical care team.

**Over The Counter (OTC) Medications:** The Food Bank will not distribute any over the counter medication.

**Applicability:** Direct Distribution refers to the distribution of foods that come directly from Food Bank Warehouses. This policy is applicable to donated products procured for the Food to Nonprofits Program.

## **Section III: Indirect Distribution Nutrition Policy**

**Policy:** The Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank will encourage all non-profit partner agencies to adopt this nutrition policy or one similar. However, we understand that it may not be possible to accurately evaluate all food products for nutrient quality when donated directly to registered non-profit partners from sources such as retail stores or food manufacturers. While the continued effort to expand and adapt this policy will persist, at this time, this nutrition policy exempts foods acquired directly by registered non-profit partner agencies participating in the Fresh Rescue program.

**Policy Authority:** In the case of interpretation or clarification of intent, questions can be directed to the Nutrition & Wellness Educator. The Vice President of Operations must review final decisions and/or interpretations.



### Recommended Implementation Procedures Overview:

Implementation procedures should include but are not limited to:

1. Official announcement of policy, including an opportunity to comment, to staff, board members, and member programs.
2. A review of purchased food items should occur monthly to ensure adherence to policy and to make changes to policy if necessary.
3. Provide procedures on how to document when the food purchaser chooses to use the "...when appropriate and possible..." clause.
4. Provision of training materials to the Volunteer Department for sorting donations.
5. Spot checks of the sorting room by the Nutrition Department to ensure efficiency and policy adherence.

### Definition of Terms:

- Low sodium is defined by FDA regulations as containing 140 mg or less of sodium per serving.
- Lean protein foods include, but are not limited to dry beans, fish (such as tuna packed in water), white meats (such as skinless chicken and turkey), and extra lean (90-95% lean) ground beef.
- Made from whole grains is the equivalent of a whole grain listed as the first ingredient on the food label. Examples of whole grain include, but are not limited to whole grain bread, brown rice, whole grain cereal, or whole wheat pasta.
- Fat free, low fat dairy and dairy substitute products include, but are not limited to nonfat or 1% milk, reduced fat calcium-fortified soy and almond milk, yogurt made with nonfat or 1% milk, and reduced fat cheese.
- \*"...when appropriate and possible..." The food purchaser, to justify purchases that do not meet the nutrition guidelines, may use this caveat. The exceptions include but are not limited to: food is not available to purchase within fiscal parameters, food is not physically available and is part of the core inventory, a demonstrated lack of interest from clients has been documented and food is not rotating out of stock, and a specific demand by clients for a particular item can be documented.
- Energy drinks include, but are not limited to, Red Bull, Monster, Rock Star, and any other highly caffeinated beverage marketed as an energy drink.
- Candy includes, but is not limited to the following categories:
  - **Jellies & gums:** this category includes jellylike items such as gum, gum drops, jelly beans, jellied and fruit-flavored slices, gummy bears
  - **Hard candy:** characterized by a hard, brittle texture and includes items such as sour balls, lollipops, candy sticks, mints, jaw breakers, sugar wafers, rock candy, cinnamon candies, breath mints, jolly ranchers
  - **Chocolate:** this includes items such as chocolate bars, chocolate covered items
  - **Soft candy:** this includes items such as caramels, licorice, marshmallow candies, wrapped candies
- Sports drinks include, but are not limited to, Gatorade and PowerAde.
- Fruit juice drinks include any juice product labeled Juice Drink or Juice Cocktail
- The FDA has announced that trans fat, the major dietary source being partially hydrogenated oils, are no longer Generally Recognized as Safe, or GRAS. Partially hydrogenated oil laden products include, but are not limited to, baked goods, snack foods, and margarines.
- Frozen desserts include ice cream, ice cream products, and popsicles. This does not include frozen pastries or other items that won't melt upon defrosting.
- Dietary supplements include isolated or combined nutrient supplements such as vitamin, mineral, or protein supplements. Protein or meal replacement bars or drinks such as Ensure or Boost are not counted as a dietary supplement as they are regulated by the FDA as a food item.



- OTC medication includes all prescription drugs and any other medications designed for internal use such as nasal sprays, ingestion, and drops. Topical medical aid equipment such as bandages and non-prescription creams like sunscreen are not an OTC medication.

**Next Required Review Date:** This policy should be reviewed six-months after initial implementation and annually thereafter.

This policy was created with the input and support of many nutrition and food banking experts to include Mazon, UC Center for Weight and Health, and a collaboration of other Food Banks working to improve the nutrient quality of food bank inventory. Moreover, a Nutrition Policy Advisory Committee comprised of local nutrition leaders provides input and recommendations yearly.