

[Organization] Overarching Healthy Foods Policy

Purpose and Scope

Good nutrition helps people to live long, productive lives and reduces their chances of developing debilitating chronic diseases, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and certain cancers.¹ Additionally, there is evidence that a healthy diet may decrease risk for depression,² cognitive impairment,³ and diet-related damage to the brain centers involved in learning and memory.⁴ Unfortunately, most Americans do not have a healthy diet,¹ and Americans with lower socioeconomic status disproportionately shoulder the burden of poor diet quality.⁵ Not only can an unhealthy diet negatively impact physical and mental health, but diet-related chronic diseases can lead to overwhelming health care costs.⁶

In accordance with its mission to provide on-site health and education services to families, children, and seniors living in affordable housing communities, [Organization] is committed to providing and modeling nutritious foods and beverages to its residents and guests. As such, this policy ensures [Organization] spending and procurement efforts are directed toward foods that are supportive of health. Specifically, the “Food Pantry Policy” shall guide foods procured and provided for the [Organization] food pantry. The “Meals and Snacks Policy” shall guide foods served by [Organization], including but not limited to foods served for community meals, meetings and events. Refer to the current version of any Food Policy Guidance documents for further guidance.

Healthy Foods Policy

[Organization] will work to align foods procured and served with the current version of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Generally, [Organization] will support the consumption of minimally processed fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and lean proteins. [Organization] will limit the provision of ultra-processed foods, and foods high in saturated and *trans* fats, added sugars and/or sodium. Additionally, [Organization] will seek to accommodate dietary restrictions and preferences including but not limited to those for allergies, medical conditions and religious or cultural reasons, whenever possible.

¹ Poor Nutrition. (2020, February 10). Retrieved February 14, 2020, from <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/factsheets/nutrition.htm>

² Jun S Lai, Sarah Hiles, Alessandra Bisquera, Alexis J Hure, Mark McEvoy, John Attia, A systematic review and meta-analysis of dietary patterns and depression in community-dwelling adults, *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Volume 99, Issue 1, January 2014, Pages 181–197, <https://doi.org/10.3945/ajcn.113.069880>

³ Spencer, S.J., Korosi, A., Layé, S. *et al.* Food for thought: how nutrition impacts cognition and emotion. *npj Sci Food* 1, 7 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41538-017-0008-y>

⁴ Reichelt, A. C., Westbrook, R. F., & Morris, M. J. (2017). Editorial: Impact of Diet on Learning, Memory and Cognition. *Frontiers in behavioral neuroscience*, 11, 96. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnbeh.2017.00096>

⁵ Nicole Darmon, Adam Drewnowski, Does social class predict diet quality?, *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Volume 87, Issue 5, May 2008, Pages 1107–1117, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcn/87.5.1107>

⁶ Jardim TV, Mozaffarian D, Abrahams-Gessel S, Sy S, Lee Y, Liu J, et al. (2019) Cardiometabolic disease costs associated with suboptimal diet in the United States: A cost analysis based on a microsimulation model. *PLoS Med* 16(12): e1002981. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1002981>

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[Organization] will aim to make it easy for residents and guests to identify and choose healthier food options. “Behavioral design” strategies employed to accomplish this may include indicating healthier options with signage, sharing nutrition information, and encouraging healthy portion sizes by providing optimally sized serving and dishware.

Monitoring

It is important that the [Organization] Healthy Food Policies reflect the needs and preferences of residents and guests. As such, [Organization] will make satisfaction surveys regularly available to residents to complete at events where food is provided. Additionally, [Organization] will ensure an audit of the implementation of both the “Food Pantry Policy” and the “Meals and Snacks Policy” is conducted at least annually. [Organization] will review the information provided by residents in satisfaction surveys and the results of the audits at least annually to determine whether any updates to the policies are warranted.

Communications

[Organization] will ensure key audiences are made aware of the Healthy Food Policies through, at a minimum, the strategies outlined below:

- Display this “Overarching Policy” in the [Organization] common area and include it in the Welcome Packet for new residents.
- Train [Organization] staff and interns on all Healthy Foods Policies.
- Give the “Meals and Snacks Policy” to families sending children to the after-school program.
- Share and review the relevant Healthy Food Policy with any partners providing food.

Endorsements

Date

Date

Date

Date

[Organization] Food Pantry Policy

About Our Policy

Good nutrition helps people to live long, healthy lives and reduces their chance of developing chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and certain cancers. Unfortunately, most Americans, especially those experiencing food-insecurity, do not have a healthy diet.

As such, [Organization] is committed to providing nutritious foods and beverages that support dietary needs to its food pantry clients. This policy outlines the food donations we are thrilled to receive, those we accept, and those we do not accept. We really appreciate your partnership, generosity, and support in getting healthy foods into the hands of the residents who need them!

Food Pantry Policy^a

Category	Encourage	Accept	Decline ^b
Fruits and Vegetables	Fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits and vegetables without added sugars or sodium (salt)	Canned vegetables (low sodium preferred), canned fruit in light syrup	Dried fruit with added sugars, canned fruit in heavy syrup
Grains	Plain whole grains, whole grain cereal with ≤6 grams sugar/serving	Plain refined grains, oatmeal with added sugar, cereal with 7 – 11 grams sugar/serving	Grains with seasoning mixes, cereal with >11 grams sugar/serving
Protein	Dried beans, low-sodium canned beans, plain nuts, nut butters and seeds, plain poultry and fish, eggs, tofu	Canned beans, nuts and nut butters with added sugars or sodium, plain red meat	Refried beans, processed meats (deli meat, bacon, sausage, breaded chicken, etc.)
Dairy and Alternatives	Unsweetened and fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese, unsweetened non-dairy alternatives	Milk, yogurt and non-dairy alternatives with ≤11 grams added sugar/serving, regular cheese	Milk, yogurt and non-dairy alternatives with >11 grams added sugar/serving, cream cheese
Beverages	Unsweetened water (still or sparkling), coffee and tea	100% juice, diet and sugar-free beverages, sparkling water with added sugar, coconut water	Regular sodas, energy drinks, sports drinks, juice drinks with added sugars
Packaged Snacks	None	Plain popcorn, whole wheat crackers, vegetable crisps, rice cakes, unsalted whole grain pretzels, bars and granola with ≤6 grams added sugars/serving	Potato chips, pretzels, cheese crackers, flavored popcorn, bars and granola with >6 grams sugar/serving
Desserts	None	None	All desserts
Other	Per resident request, [Organization] encourages foods that support special diets, including foods that are gluten-free, easy to chew, easy to prepare, low-fat, and low-carbohydrate		

^aAdapted from the Healthy Eating Research Nutrition Guidelines for the Charitable Food System, March 2020

^bWhile most products listed in the “decline” column do not meet standards, there may be healthier versions that do. Please refer to the table in the training materials to identify these exceptions.

[Organization] Meals and Snacks Policy

[Organization] hosts community meals and other events with food not only to build community, but also to provide access to nutritious foods that support the dietary needs of residents and guests. As such, except for two events per year, all foods procured and served by [Organization] will meet the below guidelines. Please see the Meals and Snacks Policy Guidance Document for more information. This policy does not apply to any foods or beverages purchased by staff or residents with their own funds.

1. Water – Put drinking water out any time food and/or beverages are served.
2. Other Beverages – Other than water, the following beverages can be served:
 - Unsweetened coffee without added cream or milk (sugar and milk can be put out for people to add themselves)
 - Unsweetened tea (sugar and milk can be put out for people to add themselves)
 - 100% juice (can be diluted with water or sparkling water)
 - Unsweetened low-fat or non-fat milk
 - Unsweetened milk alternatives (soymilk, etc.)
 - Diet (zero calorie) beverages (not recommended)
3. Fruits and Vegetables – Have at least one unsweetened fruit and/or non-fried vegetable option every time food is served.
4. Grains – When purchasing and serving grains such as breads, rice and pastas, make sure at least half of those grains are whole (100% whole grain or whole grain as the first ingredient).
 - If the store, restaurant or caterer does not have enough whole grain options, serve as many whole grains as possible.
 - Examples include whole wheat bread, brown or wild rice, whole wheat or whole corn tortillas and whole wheat pasta.
5. Fried Foods – Do not serve deep-fried foods.
 - Examples include regular chips, French fries, tater tots, doughnuts and chicken strips.
6. Pastries – Do not serve pastries or sweet breakfast breads.
 - Examples include doughnuts, croissants, muffins, cinnamon rolls, scones, and toaster pastries.
 - If bagels are served, at least half should be whole grain (if available) and cut into quarters. It is suggested to serve spreads other than cream cheese and butter, like hummus and nut butters.
7. Dessert – Desserts should be limited. Do not leave chocolate or candy in meeting spaces.
 - When desserts are served, they should be bite sized or cut into small portions.
 - It is recommended to serve fruit as a dessert.
8. Vegetarian Option – Make sure at least one vegetarian option (no meat, poultry or seafood) is available any time food is served.
 - Vegetarian protein sources include hummus, nuts and seeds, beans and peas, tofu, and eggs.
 - It is recommended to avoid red meat (e.g. beef, pork, lamb, etc.) and processed meats (e.g. luncheon meats, pepperoni, sausage, bacon, hot dogs, etc.).
 - It is recommended to accommodate dietary restrictions whenever possible.
9. Packaged Meals – If ordering packaged meals (e.g. boxed lunches) ask for fruit or vegetables to be included instead of chips and dessert.
 - If fruit and/or vegetables are not available, choose baked chips, pretzels or similar instead of regular chips, and do not get the dessert.