



Nutritional Guidelines

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the program operating guidelines and intended purpose.

BEDS Plus is committed to providing fresh food and meals to support and improve the health and dietary needs of the clients across its programs. BEDS provides supplemental fresh produce, whole grains and lean meats on a regular basis, delivered and offered to clients. In addition, we provide educational materials including nutrition, disease management and recipes. In addition, BEDS provides daily, balanced meals to emergency services clients who are experiencing homelessness.

BEDS has traditionally provided hot meals to homeless clients in shelter each day. Meals are provided thanks to the generosity of individuals or community groups serving as meal teams. Three meals were typically provided at congregate-based emergency shelter including a hot, balanced dinner, full breakfast and a bag or to-go lunch. Shelter has transitioned to a motel-based model and meal service modified to reduce the risk of infection spread amongst this highly-vulnerable population. Meal service now consists of a once-daily delivery of food which includes at least one hot meal, something to drink, substantial snacks and a second microwavable meal per person. Clients opt into the meal program and provide dietary preferences or restrictions as well as quantity changes.

The need to keep vulnerable, housed clients safe during the early days of the pandemic, BEDS Plus began delivering supplemental food to the homes of clients before food pantries opened again and public transportation was a dangerous endeavor for the unvaccinated. BEDS coordinated regular donations from local grocery stores, restaurants and food pantries. Food delivery continues to serve clients who are food insecure throughout our client base, up to 50 households who receive an average of 25 lbs. of food a week.

Goals

The goal of our food rescue is:

1. To improve the health and food security of vulnerable clients.
2. To reduce barriers and access to fresh, nutritious food to highly vulnerable, low-income clients.
3. To provide education to utilize healthier options.

Our Guidelines

Donated Meals

1. All meal team and on-site food rescue volunteers are required to take a food handlers course through ServSafe online.
2. Meal donors must adhere to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, including by providing minimally processed fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and lean proteins. Additional guidance will be provided as part of the Meal Train and Cook Team Instructions.
3. BEDS Plus will continue to limit the availability of sugar-sweetened beverages, including regular soda, juice drinks, energy and sports drinks. We will keep these locked in our pantry so they are not readily available.
4. BEDS Plus will continue to suggest non-fried snacks be provided (e.g., baked chips, pretzels, etc.)
5. BEDS Plus will discourage donations of high sugar-content items such as pastries or sweet breakfast breads such as doughnuts, muffins, cinnamon rolls etc.
6. Desserts, when provided, are individually portioned.
7. Staff reviews all meals before distribution to ensure meals meet guidelines before distribution.

Donated Food

1. BEDS has established relationships with institutional donors including several local grocery stores and restaurants.
 - BEDS staff works with store or restaurant staff to manage donations, coordinated pick-up, ensure food safety practice adherence and ensure proper acknowledgement.
 - BEDS accepts donations exclusively through these established sources, with few exceptions.
2. Community supporters and donors may donate food utilizing an Amazon Wish List listed on the agency's website. The healthiest options are listed prominently.
3. BEDS does not accept:
 - Expired baby formula.
 - Food with mold
 - Partially consumed food or food tray.
4. BEDS Plus will update our Amazon Wish List and our website to include healthier shelf stable options. The healthier options will be at the top of the Amazon Wish List.
5. BEDS Plus will include produce, whole grain breads and lean proteins in each supplemental client food box.


Beneficiaries

1. Case managers recommend clients based on stated or observed food insecurity, number of people in the household and access to fresh food. Case managers submit a referral sheet to the food rescue program including a survey of household members and food preferences.
2. Once approved, clients receive a letter explaining our delivery instructions as well as a copy of the *BEDS Plus Nutritional Guidelines*. This letter and copy of the guidelines will be hand delivered by their food delivery volunteer.
3. BEDS Plus makes every effort to meet the unique needs, including allergies, restrictions or preferences of every beneficiary and regularly requests feedback from beneficiaries in order to meet their individual needs.
4. Food benefit is recorded in the client database by the case manager.
5. Beneficiaries must live within the agency's catchment area.
6. Number of beneficiaries are limited to average weekly donations and availability of food delivery volunteers.
7. Clients must be available for delivery weekly or they will be removed from the program.
8. Clients may choose to either weekly or bi-monthly delivery schedule or pick-up at the LaGrange office.
9. Clients will be informed by written letter or flyer included with their food of any changes to their meals/boxes, nutritional education materials, healthy recipes and meal tips.
10. All excess perishable food is open to walk-in clients, staff and given to a local farm for animal consumption.

Monitoring

1. Guidelines will be periodically reviewed and updated as needed. Any changes will be posted on the BEDS Plus website and circulated among all parties involved.
2. BEDS Plus will regularly ask for input from staff, volunteers and clients via surveys, conversations with meal delivery volunteers etc.

Endorsements



Tina Rounds, BEDS Plus Executive Director

5/12/2022
Date



Sue Dever, BEDS Plus Emergency Services Coordinator

5/12/2022
Date



Janie Cundiff, Housing Case Aide

5-12-2022
Date



Javon Harris, Supportive Housing Director

5/12/22
Date