Planning a Student Worker Training for a Campus Food Pantry

This document is a guide to planning a training curriculum for student workers at your campus pantry. A successful training and onboarding process should equip new student workers with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to run and represent the campus pantry while supporting the broader mission of fighting food insecurity.

1. Welcome & Context

Goal: Help students understand why the pantry exists and how it fits into the campus and community.

Key Topics:

- **Why Our Campus Pantry Exists**
    - The need for food assistance among students
    - How the pantry connects to campus goals
    - Mission, vision, and values (if available)
    - Links to relevant research (e.g., The Hope Center) and campus-specific data
- **Key Contacts**
    - Pantry manager, supervisor, student leads
    - How to connect: social media, email, phone, shared drives

- **Food Shelf 101**
    - Build awareness of how the pantry is part of the broader hunger relief system.
    - Basic concepts of how food shelves operate.
    - FFEN's Educational Sessions are available at no charge to cover this content.

2. Campus Pantry Operations

Goal: Familiarize students with the physical space, workflows, and operational details.

Key Topics:

- Hours of operation
- Who can use the pantry (students only, students + staff, general community)
- Typical numbers served
- Types of food available
- Staffing model — staffed during open hours or self-serve.
- Governance/leadership (Hunger-Free Task Force, student government, etc.).
- Key partnerships that make the pantry possible (food banks, other hunger relief partners)

Tour & Hands-On Overview:

- Walkthrough of spaces: storage, service area, check-in station, backstock
- How spaces work and the workflow during open hours
- Where to find current info (bulletin board, shared drive)

- Shift procedures: switching shifts, calling in sick, handoffs
- Emphasis on teamwork values

3. Role-Specific Training

Goal: Give clear, practical instructions for core pantry tasks.

General Duties:

- Stocking shelves
- Unloading food deliveries
- Checking students in/out
- Providing resource referrals
- Pantry outreach and events
- Special projects or one-time tasks

4. Expectations

Goal: Set clear behavioral and performance expectations.

Expectations for Student Workers:

- Be an ambassador for the pantry — share respectfully and accurately
- Welcome all visitors, avoid assumptions about who needs food
- Maintain reliability in hours and responsibilities
- Prioritize pantry tasks over homework/socializing during shifts
- Practice confidentiality
- Provide excellent customer service — greet visitors and assist as needed

What to Expect from Supervisors:

- Clear direction and constructive feedback.
- Support for your role.
- Commitment to a safe, respectful, and inclusive work environment.

5. Food Safety Basics

Goal: Ensure safe food handling and storage.

Key Topics:

- Reminders on hygiene and cleanliness
- **FIFO & FEFO** (First In, First Out; First Expired, First Out)
- Link to additional training materials and food safety resources

6. Deep Dive into Key Roles

Goal: Provide best practices for specific operational responsibilities.

Examples:

- **Check-In Process** — Script for welcoming students, confidentiality reminders, and data entry steps.
- **Organizing Food** — Labeling, grouping, and facing products.
- **Backstock Management** — Proper rotation, storage temperatures, and restocking procedures.

Tips for Delivering the Training

- **Interactive Elements:** Include hands-on practice (checking in, stocking shelves)
- **Visual Aids:** Use diagrams of the pantry layout, workflow charts

- **Scenarios:** Role-play customer service and troubleshooting situations
- **Resources Packet:** Provide printed or digital handbook with all key information and contacts

Appendix

- Sample Student Worker Position Description
- Sample Food Cupboard training manual from NHCC