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Welcome to MCUM!

Welcome to Monroe County United Ministries, and thanks for volunteering to be a part of our team! Here at MCUM, we provide two major services to people in Monroe County:

1) An acclaimed, accredited, and subsidized childcare center that serves low-income families
2) Self-sufficiency assistance and stabilizing services for families experiencing hardship.

The food pantry is part of our Self-Sufficiency Center. Our pantry provides clients with a 3-day supply of shelf-stable food supplemented by fresh fruits, vegetables, and frozen meat whenever possible. The amount of food clients receive is based on the size of their family, with a larger family receiving a greater quantity of food. Clients can visit the pantry once per calendar month.

Most of our food is donated from people, churches and organizations in our community, with additional food provided by the Hoosier Hills Food Bank. When necessary, we purchase supplemental food using monetary donations. We also often distribute some basic human necessities in the pantry, such as toilet paper, soap, and travel-size hygiene products; these items are also donated to us.

Our pantry is almost entirely volunteer-run. Clients select food items from the pantry after meeting with our professional coaches – qualified caseworkers who meet with each and every client personally to better understand their needs and help them plan for a better future for themselves and their families. Our coaches connect clients to other resources in Bloomington, provide vouchers for clothing and household items from the Opportunity House, and can even authorize payments for overdue utility or rent bills, depending on a client’s situation.

MCUM’s Mission:

MCUM’s mission is to “create lasting solutions to economic, educational and social injustice in our community through quality services, collaboration and innovation.” In effect, our goal is to assist people through the hardships of life and empower them to achieve stability. Things like sudden injury, illness, loss of employment, change in family status, or the loss of a vehicle can drastically affect a family’s financial situation. Coaches meet with individuals one-on-one to discuss these and other circumstances, then provide assistance any way we can, including referrals to other agencies or government programs.

We also offer a premier childcare center for kids ages 0 to 5 at a very low cost to families. This service allows parents to gain or retain steady employment and support their families without worrying about the outrageous and prohibitive cost of daily childcare. Most of our families are enrolled using a government voucher system and pay nothing at all for childcare; those who do pay are on a sliding fee scale, and pay considerably less (~$50/wk) than the market rate (~$275/wk) for licensed childcare.
The Need for Self-Sufficiency Services

Poverty in Monroe County

Our local community has a sad secret that lies just beyond the beauty and wealth of Indiana University: **Nearly one in four families (24%) in Monroe County lives in poverty.** This is the highest poverty rate of any county in the state of Indiana. More sobering still, it represents almost 35,000 people in our community – ¾ the size of the entire student population of IU – who live below the poverty line and struggle daily to make ends meet. MCUM’s Self-Sufficiency Center provided relief to almost 18,000 such people (4,000+ families) in 2016 and is on pace to serve nearly 6,500 families (a 65% increase) in 2017.

Still, the need in Bloomington continues to outrun our services. An incredible 42% of respondents in a recent resident survey reported that “running out of money at the end of each month to cover essential needs” was a “major” (19%) or “minor” (23%) problem (Bloomington SCAN Report, 2012). MCUM directly addresses these concerns, providing services and guidance to help families meet these “essential needs,” including assistance with food, clothing, shelter, utilities, and cleaning/hygiene items.

MCUM’s Clients & Theory of Change

Our food pantry, in particular, provides a 3-day supply of food indiscriminately to people with the least resources for meeting their basic needs. About 86% of families served in 2016 earned less than $13,000 annually (30% of area median income [AMI]), and another 9% made less than $21,000 (50% AMI). Almost 60% of families included a child (<18), and 22% were single mother households. Of all clients, 32% were unemployed, 29% were disabled with pending or insufficient benefits and 27% were employed full- or part-time but unable to meet expenses.

All of these statistics are upsetting, but the fact that working families are still unable to afford the local cost of living is a tragedy. In fact, according to the Indiana Institute for Working Families, a single mother of two working minimum wage would need to work 139 hours per week in order to be considered “self-sufficient” in Bloomington – that leaves less than 5 hours each day for sleeping, cooking, eating, commuting, chores, and family time. At MCUM, we believe this is wrong, and we believe that with a little help, we all have the potential to stand on our own.

The first step to achieving self-reliance is often to meet basic needs fully and immediately; we cannot expect those struggling with poverty to look ahead to tomorrow while today’s needs remain unmet. We cultivate empowerment, confidence and growth by offering help through a variety of services and options that meet people where they are, not where we think they should be: This is a core tenant of MCUM’s Self-Sufficiency Center. This also explains why MCUM’s services are exhaustive, intervention- and prevention-focused, and client-driven. Clients are presented a number of options and must determine (with as much guidance as they choose) the combination that best addresses their own circumstances. In this way, our food pantry is just a smaller version of the Self-Sufficiency Center, itself.
How MCUM’s Pantry Works

MCUM’s food pantry is a “client-choice” food pantry; this means clients can select the food items they want, in keeping with our selection guidelines. This style of distribution extends clients the decency to decide what they would like to eat, which respects their individuality while reducing food waste. Volunteers accompany clients as they make their choices in the shopping room, which is re-stocked each morning and periodically throughout the day to ensure there are plenty of options to choose from.

The flowchart below explains the basic structure of the pantry. The ovals represent volunteer tasks that are required on a regular basis:

Volunteers are the key to the pantry’s success; they handle everything from donation to distribution. With the exception of the work done by our coaches, the entire pantry operation is left to community volunteers and service learners from IU.

Put simply: Without you, MCUM’s pantry would not be possible.
Volunteer Roles

Our pantry is almost entirely volunteer-run; volunteers see things through from donation to distribution. There’s a lot of flexibility, but we have four main roles volunteers fulfill on a regular basis:

1) Personal Shoppers:

Volunteers guide and assist MCUM’s clients as they make their selections in the pantry. This role allows for friendly rapport with clients and involves helping them understand their options, using MCUM’s guidelines to ensure they receive a full complement of available food. Restocking the Shopping Room between clients ensures a more personalized and satisfying shopping experience. Because clients arrive unpredictably and on a walk-in basis, this job is essential whenever the pantry is open to clients.

2) Sorting:

Volunteers help us sort incoming donations to prep them for storage in the pantry. Incoming food is sorted first by kind (canned peas, cereal, canned tuna, pasta sauce, macaroni and cheese, etc.), by size, and by “Best By” dates to ensure we are cycling through our food stores and preventing expiration. Sorting is our first chance to spot damaged or expired foods and prevent them from entering the pantry. Hygiene products, cleaning supplies, and school supplies are also separated from food donations.

Although we seldom know when donations will arrive, we receive them often and it’s rare we can sort them immediately. This job is available most days, especially during food drives.

3) Removing Labels:

Many popular brands participate in label collection programs, where portions of product labels can be exchanged for funding for educational programming. Because MCUM operates a licensed childcare center, we can collect and exchange these labels to help fund our own programming. Given the volume of food we process each year, this funding is significant, and our volunteers remove and collect these labels from our donations to secure this funding. We have an efficient system for identifying products, removing labels and collecting them (more on that later). This job is less physically demanding, but no less time consuming as the others.

Recalls, Inventory, and Auditing:

There are many “odd jobs” necessary to keep the pantry functioning smoothly. These tasks include checking our stocks for recalled products; searching under the shelves for fallen food; tidying up for safety and to remove clutter; restocking the shelves in the Shopping Room; clearing out full flats from the sorting area; rotating products in pantry storage; monitoring our inventory; and helping us track our volunteer hours. We know what you’re thinking, but this isn’t “busy-work,” honest; even a well-oiled machine needs maintenance! A list of these maintenance activities can be found in the pantry.
Volunteer Code of Conduct

By volunteering with MCUM, you are becoming an essential part of our programs, our community service efforts, and our organization. You will also undoubtedly be interacting with our clients and our community as a representative of our agency. As such, we ask that you represent us in a manner that is consistent with our values.

To protect our relationships in the community and our organizational integrity, and to provide the best possible volunteer experience to all of our volunteers, we expect our volunteers to follow rules of conduct that will protect the comfort and safety of all volunteers, employees, and clients:

- Treat all clients and fellow volunteers with courtesy and respect at all times.
- Maintain a positive attitude, an open mind and an open heart.
- Keep clients’ personal information (including the information on their Pantry Card) confidential.
- Establish and maintain boundaries. It is MCUM’s policy that volunteers are not to provide additional resources or services to clients (such as food, money, or transportation) in excess of what is provided by the agency, especially while serving as representatives of MCUM.
- Do not lead or participate in faith-based activities (including prayer or proselytizing) with clients unless expressly invited to do so.
- Follow all posted rules (including those in your handbook), as well as all directions and instructions given by MCUM staff.
- Communicate with our volunteer coordinator or other MCUM staff if you are dissatisfied with your experience or wish to discontinue your service with us; we strive to resolve any issues that may be negatively affecting our volunteers’ experiences, but must be informed to do so.
- When sick, please excuse yourself temporarily from your volunteerism. When possible, please let our volunteer manager know at least 24 hours prior if you cannot work a shift.
- If you observe conflict between clients and/or volunteers, please report it to MCUM staff. Do not try to resolve or diffuse the situation yourself.
- Any volunteers receiving any of MCUM’s services must follow standard client protocol.
- Adults bringing children under the age of 16 are responsible for supervising their children. If children are disruptive or disrespectful, volunteers may be asked to excuse them from service.
Attendance Policy

When you join our Food Pantry Team at MCUM, you become an essential part of our operations. Our staff is depending on you to serve our clients quickly and compassionately so that together, we can help people become self-sufficient. Our volunteer program is purposefully designed to offer you a meaningful experience, and we trust you to value that experience and honor your commitment to our clients and community.

The most important thing you can do to help our clients is be here when you say you will be. Without you, the whole system falls apart. Clients can’t receive food if there is no one here to guide them through the pantry. Donations aren’t sorted and the shopping room isn’t restocked, meaning clients have fewer options and may receive less than others. When we say our pantry is volunteer-run, we mean it. We’re counting on you, and so are our clients; please don’t let them down.

Please arrive 10 minutes before your shift begins to ensure the person who serves before you will be able to leave on time. If you are not here, we will contact you via e-mail and phone.

Expected Absences or Late Arrivals:

That being said, we know that schedule conflicts may occur. We understand that things come up, schedules might change, and you may not be able to make every shift every week on time.

If you know you have a schedule conflict for a particular date, e-mail the Volunteer Coordinator or Service Learning Coordinator as soon as possible, preferably at least one week in advance of the absence. We will use this notice to fill your shift and ensure the pantry is fully-staffed.

Unexpected Absences or Late Arrivals:

If you’re ill or need to cancel your same-day shift (or will be late), call MCUM at (812) 339-3429. When you call, you must speak with a person, not an answering machine. The call order to follow is: Volunteer Coordinator/Service Learning Coordinator (x24); Pantry Manager (x13); Executive Director (x11); Office Manager (x20).

If none of these parties answer, wait 5 minutes and repeat this order until you speak with a staff member. Last-minute absences are much more difficult to fill, so please let us know that you will be absent as soon as there is a conflict.

No-Call-No-Shows or Repeated Late Arrivals:

For the clients’ sake, no-call-no-shows or repeated tardiness cannot be tolerated. The first no-call-no-show will result in a conversation with either the Volunteer Manager or Service Learning Coordinator. The second no-call-no-show may result in dismissal from your position.
Pantry Rules

Pantry Rules are in place for safety and efficiency, but mostly safety; all staff and volunteers are expected to abide by them.

1) All volunteers and staff must wear closed-toed shoes in the pantry.
2) Do not stack loose cans or jars of any size or at any height: Generally-speaking, nothing should ever be placed on a shelf without a flat.
3) Flats with uneven-sized products are unstable; be very careful!
   If they cannot be separated, place taller products in the perimeter to make a mixed-size flat more suitable for stacking.

![Safer Not Safe](image)

4) Use only designated stepstools to reach higher shelves; use common sense, and do not fully extend your arms over your head to pull down a flat.
5) Clean spills or broken glass immediately and very thoroughly. Accidents happen; don’t be afraid to report them!

Signing In and Signing Out

Tracking volunteer hours is extremely important to our programs.

1) It lets us know who to recognize and thank for their service AND
2) It helps us obtain measurable data to compete for funding, especially grants.

The sign-in binders are located in the staff hallway near the volunteer coordinator’s desk; service learners will use the Blue binder to sign in. All other volunteers should use the Red binder labeled “Volunteer Sign In.” Please sign in on the sheet denoting the day of the week you are here.

Please write your name legibly and sign in and sign out at the beginning and end of your shift!
Quality and Freshness Dates

Most (but not all) food products are labeled with a specific date that indicates when the product is no longer guaranteed to be at its best. Food manufacturers choose to include this date on their products.

- There is no (federal) law requiring that packaged food has any quality or freshness date at all.
- There are no (federal) laws regulating:
  - How the date is printed (i.e. 2/9/16, Jan 30, 2017, March 2018, etc.)
  - How it is worded (Best By, Use By, etc.)
  - Where the date is located on the product (top, bottom, side, etc.)

This leads to a lot of confusion. The most important thing to remember is:

*These dates are printed for quality, NOT safety.*

Provided it has been stored properly and is undamaged, it is perfectly safe to eat “expired” packaged foods. In fact, most foods don’t experience a decline in product quality until well after these dates, if at all. Quality exceptions include cereal, crackers, and macaroni and cheese, but they remain safe to eat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Code</th>
<th>Description of Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expiration Date</td>
<td>The date past which a product, such as food or medicine, must be sold or removed from availability because it is no longer expected to be fresh or effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sell by</td>
<td>Tells the store how long to display the product for sale. Retailers rotate stock to be sure they sell the oldest first. The consumer can add days to this before eating it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best by</td>
<td>The product is at its highest quality, is freshest and tastiest by this date. The “Best when used by” date is not a purchase or safety date. Most people would notice no difference after the date is passed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use by</td>
<td>This is the last date for use of the product at peak quality. This date has been determined by the manufacturer of the product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Date</td>
<td>Tells you when the product was produced. It does not tell you anything about the quality or safety of the product, as it does not tell you anything about shelf life. Production dates are used to track product, they are not meant for the consumer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What Do I Do With “Expired” Food?

**Sorting:** Place all food that has passed its “Best By” date into the “Expired” crate to be examined by MCUM staff. Food missing “Best By” dates should be placed into the “No Date” box beside it.

**Shopping:** Products that have reached the Shopping Room have been cleared by MCUM staff and are considered safe to distribute. Please ensure no products have been damaged or have clearly spoiled during their time in the pantry, but rest assured these products are safe to give out.
Damaged Products

Because “Best By” dates exist to regulate quality, not safety, damaged products almost always pose a greater health risk than “expired” products. Although minor dents and dings are common, we must always be careful and inspect every product that enters or exits the pantry for damage.

The following must be discarded:

**Cans**
- Missing or unreadable labels
- Severe dents in can seams
- Holes or signs of leaking
- Deep dents in can body
- Swollen or bulging ends
- Rust that cannot be wiped off

**Jars and Bottles**
- Missing or unreadable labels
- Lid is swollen, rusted, or dented. Button on lid is raised.
- Broken jar or signs of leaking
- Unusual appearance or separation of product
- Homemade food

**Boxes and Bags**
- Missing or unreadable labels
- Ripped, torn, or cut
- Signs of pests: gnaw marks, droppings, bugs, pin-sized holes in packaging

**What Do I Do with Damaged Products?**

**Sorting:** If something is clearly damaged – a broken jar, swollen or leaking can, pest-damaged or open package, etc. – please discard it. Place all other damaged products – unlabeled products, slightly-dented cans or crushed boxes, etc. - in the “Dented” crate to be sorted by MCUM staff.

**Shopping:** Like “expired” products, if a lightly-damaged product has reached the Shopping Room, it has been screened by pantry personnel and is considered safe to distribute. Products will occasionally fall from shelves or be otherwise damaged while in the pantry, however, so ensure nothing you distribute to clients is badly damaged or spoiled.
Rotation, Rotation, Rotation

**Rotation** is the practice of moving products that expire soonest to the front of our stocks, so they can be distributed first. It’s a simple idea that makes a huge difference in getting the best quality food to people who need it.

Rotation is a staple practice of all grocery stores, and we do it for the same reasons they do:

1) It reduces the amount of food we waste
2) It ensures that products do not expire while sitting on our shelves
3) It makes room for products with longer shelf-lives

The simple idea is that food that is “Best By” 2019 does not leave the pantry before similar food that is “Best By” 2017 or 2018. For example, a can of green beans dated 2017 should leave the pantry before a can of green beans dated 2018, and so on.

**MCUM’s Rules**

At MCUM, all food is sorted **by year**. We affix neon stickers that are color-coded by year to every flat. All products with “Best By” dates in 2017, for example, will be placed in flats labeled with an orange “2017” sticker.

**With a few exceptions, we are generally only concerned with the year of the “Best By” date.**

Exceptions that are sorted **by year AND by month**, strictly for quality purposes, include:

- Macaroni & Cheese
- Crackers
- Cereal
- Other foods when specified

**Rotation in Action:**

- **When sorting donations**: Remember that food is sorted by kind and by “Best By” year, so a can of beans that is “Best By” 2018 will be placed in a different flat than a can of beans that is “Best By” 2019. Note the exceptions that are also sorted by month.
- **When arranging flats on pantry shelves**: Make sure flats with the earliest “Best By” Years are the easiest ones to access.
- **When selecting food from the pantry to re-stock the Shopping Room shelves**: Select and bring forward the food with the earliest “Best By” Year (and month, when applicable).

*PLEASE BE VIGILANT*: Rotation is often the first thing volunteers forget or neglect.
Job Training: Personal Shopping

**Personal Shoppers** are the centerpiece of our client-choice food pantry. As a personal shopper, you’ll be providing direct service to community members, accompanying them as they make their way through the Shopping Room and informing them of their options and choices.

Training

**Pantry Cards:** Each client who meets with one of MCUM’s coaches receives a “Pantry Card,” which grants them access to our food pantry. This card indicates the client’s family size and how many return visits to the pantry they qualify for before they must check in with their coach again. When a card is dropped off, write the date on it, use the card to fill out the client log, and welcome the waiting client to the pantry when you’re ready.

- **Follow the Distribution Guidelines:** MCUM offers a 3-day supply of shelf-stable food to families. Match the family size indicated on the client’s Pantry Card to the family size on our Distribution Guideline sheet located in the Shopping Room; this will be your guide for what to offer the client during their visit to the pantry. As they select items, place them on the table in the center of the room; you may begin bagging while the client continues to make their selections.

- **Pay Attention to Product Sizes:** The Distribution Guidelines clearly indicate the sizes of the products to be distributed. Some products are listed in relative sizes (such as “small,” “medium,” or “large” jars of peanut butter). Other products are listed by quantity of a certain size package (such as 2 15 oz. cans of vegetables or one pound of pasta) or its equivalent (one 32 oz. can of beans is roughly equivalent to two 15 oz. cans). For larger families, larger products are often appropriate.

- **Baby Food:** A client’s Pantry Card will indicate whether or not a client provides care for infants. If so, be sure to follow the Distribution Guidelines and provide baby food (if available) for that client.

- **Dietary Needs and Restrictions:** Clients are responsible for selecting food that adheres to their own dietary needs and restrictions. Please ensure the Shopping Room is adequately stocked before clients enter to meet the most common needs (allergies and intolerances): **Once a client enters the Shopping Room, you may not enter the pantry to restock or accommodate special requests.**
Personal Shopping Tips:

- **Do Not Stray from the Guidelines:** We cannot emphasize this enough. The Distribution Guidelines are standardized based on family size to ensure that every pantry patron is treated fairly and equitably. This is a foundational value of our program and organization, and it’s imperative to ensure quality service is available to everyone in our community. An extra can here or a larger size there will quickly deplete our pantry’s resources, and while it may appear that we have “plenty” of particular items, we serve hundreds of families each month. Please trust in us, and know that our coaches provide a bounty of resources for people to access additional food elsewhere. Our pantry is not designed to be the only sustaining resource for our clients, and we work hard to ensure that it isn’t.

- **Do Not Venture Into the Pantry With or Without a Client:** Once a client arrives, the entrance to the Shopping Room should remain open. The door to the pantry stocks, however, should remain closed. This is to prevent clients from being paralyzed by choice, from requesting items or brands that are not currently available in the Shopping Room, or from being unattended while volunteers search the pantry. The Shopping Room will be adequately stocked each morning and you should restock it periodically to ensure a myriad of choices are available to clients. While we aspire to meet needs, we can’t always accommodate individual preferences. If you see that the Shopping Room is inadequately stocked, politely ask that the client wait outside the pantry in our reception area before they begin their shopping while you reset the shelves for them. Only then can you bring additional food forward.

- **Interacting with Clients:** Just as most everyone you know is kind, caring, and respectful, almost everyone who utilizes our services shares these qualities. Our clients are no different from your neighbors and friends, and should be treated as such.

  Occasionally, however, a client may express dissatisfaction about our services or about the pantry. Clients may not understand why they aren’t permitted to select certain sizes or additional items. You may have to decline special requests, or insist that the Distribution Guidelines be strictly followed. These situations may be uncomfortable, but can usually be resolved with a simple explanation about treating all families equitably or our limited resources that must serve our entire community.

  If this approach does not resolve the issue, however, calmly inform the client that we would be happy to set up a meeting with their coach to try to resolve the issue. Always be professional, courteous, and respectful with clients, but if a client becomes agitated or if you ever feel unsafe, leave the Shopping Room immediately and notify any MCUM staff member of the situation.

  While situations like these are rare, it’s important to know how you should respond and to be prepared. It’s imperative that you understand that all clients must receive equal resources, treatment and care, and to understand why this is so. You’ll be expected to adhere to the Distribution Guidelines and will occasionally have to say “no” to client requests; this will be the most difficult part of your volunteerism, but is essential to ensuring that no one who comes in need of assistance leaves hungry.
# Shopping List (Max Family Size 8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shelf 1</th>
<th>Family of 1</th>
<th>Family of 2</th>
<th>Family of 3</th>
<th>Family of 4</th>
<th>Family of 5</th>
<th>Family of 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables (15 oz cans)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits (any size 20 oz or smaller)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans - Canned or Dried (15 oz cans)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condensed Soups (10 oz cans)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Shelf 2 | | | | | | |
|---------| | | | | | |
| Tomatoes, Pasta Sauce, Etc. | Tomato products 15 oz | Tomato products 28 oz | Tomato products 28 oz | Tomato products 28 oz | Tomato products 28 oz | Tomato products 28 oz |
| Meat (Canned, Frozen, or Mealshare Bag) | 20 - 21 oz | 20 - 21 oz | 30 - 32 oz | 30 - 32 oz | 40 - 42 oz (or 1 pkg oversized frozen meat) | 40 - 42 oz (or 1 pkg oversized frozen meat) |

**Frozen Meat -- ONLY 1 PER FAMILY. If ounces are not met then fill the rest with canned meats.**

| Canned Pasta/Ready-to-Eat Soups/Chili (15 oz) | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 |

**Extras (Miscellaneous)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shelf 3</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>small box</td>
<td>small box</td>
<td>small box</td>
<td>large box</td>
<td>large box</td>
<td>large box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crackers (or chips for families of 5-6)</td>
<td>1 ind. Pkg</td>
<td>1 ind. Pkg</td>
<td>2 ind. Pkgs</td>
<td>2 ind. Pkgs</td>
<td>1 box/bag</td>
<td>1 box/bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muffin/Baking Mixes</td>
<td>1 small box</td>
<td>1 small box</td>
<td>1 small box</td>
<td>1 reg pkg OR 2 sm</td>
<td>1 reg pkg OR 2 sm</td>
<td>1 reg pkg OR 2 sm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helper Meals, Pasta, Rice or Potato Sides</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice or Pasta</td>
<td>1 box</td>
<td>1 box</td>
<td>2 boxes</td>
<td>2 boxes</td>
<td>2 boxes</td>
<td>2 boxes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Shelf 4 | | | | | | |
|---------| | | | | | |
| Peanut Butter | 1 small jar | 1 small jar | 1 small jar | 1 large jar or 2 sm | 1 large jar or 2 sm |
| Mac & Cheese | 1 box | 1 box | 2 boxes | 2 boxes | 3 boxes | 3 boxes |
| Snacks/Desserts | 3 ind. Items | 6 ind. Items | 1 pkg | 1 pkg | 1 pkg & 1 Jello | 1 pkg & 1 Jello |

| Shelf 5 | | | | | | |
|---------| | | | | | |
| Toilet Paper | 1 roll | 1 roll | 1 roll | 1 roll | 1 roll | 1 roll |
| Toiletry Items | 1 bar soap + 1 additional item for each person in the family |
| Baby Food* (if indicated on the card) | 1 formula, 1 infant cereal, 1 snack, 6 jars of veggies, 6 jars of fruit, 6 jars of meat, 6 fruit/veg pouches |

**Freezer**

| Breads (When Available) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Meal Share Bags | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

**Fridge**

| Fresh Produce | Client choice - as much as the family will eat within reason (but please leave some for other clients) |
| Blue Light Special: In Baskets | 1 of each item type (if available) |
Job Training: Sorting

**Sorting** incoming donations is among the most common volunteer tasks in the pantry. We receive donations weekly, most often during food drives. All of these donations must be broken down **by kind** (canned corn, boxed cereal, bottle of shampoo, jar of pasta sauce), **by date** (Best By December 2018, Best By August, 2019), and to a lesser extent, **by size** (15 oz. can, 28 oz. can, etc.).

**Training**

- **Familiarize yourself with the Sorting Area.** When sorting, you will rarely need to leave the confines of the Sorting Area, so getting to know the layout of this space is essential. The layout of the room rarely changes, so “scavenger hunts” will become easier. Study where products can be found, and pay special attention to the color-coded stickers that code “Best By” years on all flats.

- **Follow the Flow Chart on the Sorting Table.** The flow chart affixed to the table can guide you through the 5-step sorting process, including checking for labels/box tops, non-food items, damage and best by dates before sorting the product itself. This decision tree must apply to every product, but gets faster with practice!

- **Place All Non-Food Products in the Non-Food boxes.** If a donation is not food (hygiene, school supplies, etc.), place it in these clearly-labeled boxes on the shelves next to the Recall Wall.

- **Inspect Every Item for Damage.** Giving a client a damaged product is far more dangerous than giving them one that has passed its “Best By” date. Damaged packaging can taint food, and one in six Americans suffer food-related illness each year. Please be vigilant, and if a product appears damaged, place it in the “Dented/Damaged” box in the Sorting Area (beside “Expired Products” box).

- **Check the “Best By” Date.** Recall that Best By dates refer to quality, not safety. Nonetheless, if you find an incoming donation that has expired, place it in the “Expired Products” box in the Sorting Area. Our staff will evaluate the product to determine if we can or should distribute it as usual, place it in the “Free” box in our reception area, or discard it altogether. If a product has no “Best By” date, place it in the “No Date” box nearby.

- **Place Like-Items in Flats Together.** As mentioned, items are sorted by what they are, when they are “Best By” and (sometimes) what size they come in. All 15 oz. cans of corn that expire in 2019 will be placed in a flat together. That flat will have a color-coded sticker that indicates all products within it expire in 2019, which should make it easier to locate. When flats are full, they can be carried from the sorting area into the pantry and rotated into the existing full flats on the shelves.
Sorting Tips:

- **“Extras.”** There are literally thousands of products in a grocery store, including lots of things we don’t distribute on a regular basis. Odds and ends like condiments or non-staple items (think coconut milk, taco shells, coffee, salsa, etc.) get placed in the “Extras” box. “Extras” are distributed in the Shopping Room, and a list of common “Extras” can be found in the Sorting Area.

- **Be Mindful of the Subtle Differences.** Confusing as it may be, pancake and baking mixes are different than brownie or cake mixes (snacks/desserts). Likewise, we separate “broths” from “condensed” soups and “condensed” soups from “ready-to-eat” soups, stews, and chilis. There are a finite amount of distinctions and you’ll pick them up in no time, but in the meantime, ensure that the products you’re sorting are virtually identical to the like-products you’re placing them with.

- **It’s ok not to know!** It’s ok not to know where every last item goes. What’s worse is “guessing” and mixing things up. After all, if things aren’t sorted correctly, they may as well not be sorted at all, right? Take your time and search thoroughly for items, but if you absolutely can’t find something, are unsure of where to put it, or can’t find a staff member to ask, put it in the “I don’t know” box on the shelves near the non-food boxes. This will help us know where there is confusion and how to improve our system. Rest assured that all donations eventually find their way to someone who needs them!

- **Remember: Safety First!** Remember to be safe when making flats. Use taller flats for taller cans to prevent them from toppling out of the flats and from the shelves. Put like-sized containers together. Don’t stack flats or products to the point where they’re likely to fall. If you have to question whether something seems safe, it’s not safe enough!
Job Training - Labels

Many food brands sponsor label collection programs where portions of labels can be exchanged for funding for educational programming. Because MCUM operates a licensed childcare center, we can collect and exchange these labels to help fund our own programming. And these labels add up! A single “Box Top for Education” is worth $.10, and we collect tens of thousands of them every year. That’s a lot of revenue, and we need your help to collect it!

Training

- **Two Programs, Many Products:** The labels shown above are the two main programs for fundraising: “Labels for Education” and “Box Tops for Education.”

  1. **“Labels for Education”** are being phased out, but can sometimes still be found on some products like: Campbell’s soups, Spaghetti-O’s, V8, Emerald Nuts, Prego pasta sauce, Swanson broths, Pop Secret popcorn, and Pepperidge Farms cookies and crackers.
    - When clipping these, you **must include the barcode** of the product; properly clipped labels look like this:

  2. **“Box Tops for Education”** can be found on a host of products like: Green Giant canned veggies, General Mills cereal, Progresso Soups, Hamburger Helper, Betty Crocker baking products, Nature Valley granola bars, Fiber One snack products, Annie’s Macaroni and Cheese, Ziploc bags and Hefty products.
    - When clipping these, you should **not** clip the barcode; properly clipped box tops look like this:

- **The Label Station:** In addition to the desk in the sorting room, a second Label Station is located in the MCUM gymnasium, which is outside the pantry but in the same building. The gym is through the double doors by the entrance, and in the corner of the gym is a desk with utility knives, x-acto knives, scissors, a flat for trimmed Labels and a flat for removed Box Tops.
• **Sorting for Labels:** While sorting, keep an eye out for labels and box tops on products. If you find a product with a label or box top, place it in the Box Tops crate near the others in the Sorting Area. You can cut labels off of products in this crate when it is full or when things are slow.

• **Removing Labels:** When removing labels, *please do so carefully*; if a product is damaged in the process of removing a label, we may earn 10 cents, but we lose that product! Most box tops are printed on an exterior package with an additional seal between it and the food (cereal is in a bag inside a box, for example). Removing the box top should not damage the product, but there are ways to ensure you do not damage a product:

1. If a label or box top is too close to a seal on packaging, **leave it!** It's not worth the risk. **NEVER cut the label on a pouch.**

2. If a label is printed on cardboard, it can be carefully removed without cutting through the entire package. Use a knife to carefully score the paper around the edges of the box top, then peel it from the cardboard to remove it while leaving the cardboard intact. With a little practice and some patience, this can be done quickly and efficiently.

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**Job Training – Odds and Ends**

In addition to the usual tasks (shopping, sorting, and removing labels), there will occasionally be special projects to be completed. Some of these projects are seasonal (like making room for excess holiday donations) and others are more routine (like taking out the trash or organizing empty flats). Occasionally we’ll receive a government recall on a food product, and we have to comb through the pantry to ensure we discard all recalled products. Sometimes inspiration strikes, and we might rearrange existing stock or implement some new system for sorting a particular product.

Being willing and able to help with ensures the pantry runs smoothly, even in a dynamic environment.

• **Check the News and Notes Board for Special Projects:** Notes with special projects or requests for volunteers are posted on a white board just beyond the shopping room and updated weekly. If you don’t understand what the board is talking about, ask a staff member or continue to do the usual pantry tasks that you feel more comfortable with.

• **Cleaning is never “busy work”**: Keeping our pantry clean and organized is essential to safe and smooth operations, not to mention it mitigates catastrophic losses from pests. Please help us maintain a safe, pest-free environment by chipping in on cleaning tasks whenever needed.
Pantry Reminders and Tips

- **Please Follow the Rules**: The short list of pantry rules is essential to ensuring everyone’s safety. They can be found near the beginning of this manual, and posted around the pantry. Please read them carefully and follow them diligently and at all times.

- **Please Follow the System**: MCUM tries very hard to maintain a pantry that operates as a well-oiled machine. Our clients really do depend on it. With so many volunteers coming and going, it’s important for everyone to be on the same page, or we’ll end up running in circles and correcting each other’s work. Take some time to learn how the pantry operates, and feel free to share ideas about how things might work better – the people who do the work are in the best position to identify ways it can be done faster, easier, or more simply. We value your input!

- **Please Be Patient and Detail-Oriented**: Please take your time, be thorough, and ensure the good quality of your work. Simply getting things done is not as important as doing them well, and we want you to take pride in your work at the end of the day. MCUM is depending on you to help us provide quality service that is fair and equitable. Someone in this community will receive assistance because of your efforts, and the quality of your work will directly affect their quality of care.

- **Remember to Sign-In and Out for your Shifts**: Not only does this help us track your hours individually, but it helps us track all volunteer hours over time, which can help secure grants and other funds for our programming.

- **This Training Manual is Your Friend**: This training manual will help you to remember key elements of your pantry training, and can help answer your questions if you forget things or start to feel lost. Copies of this handbook can always be found at the Volunteer Station. If you have a question, the first place to search for an answer is this handbook!

- **Pantry Signage is Also Your Friend**: Be sure to read the signage around the pantry, including the Weekly News and Notes Board – some if it may also answer your questions, like what to do with an empty box or how to sort a particular kind of product. Keep watch for special assignments and notes from MCUM staff, as well.

- **Fellow Volunteers and MCUM Staff are Also Your Friends**: If ever you feel lost or confused and can’t find an answer from the manual or the signage, please don’t hesitate to seek help from fellow volunteers or MCUM staff. We’re glad you’re here and are happy to help! If we can’t help in the moment, we’ll offer you your best available option at that point, which is...

- **When All Else Fails, It’s Better to Leave It Than to “Guess”**: It’s possible you’ll have questions that will be hard to answer, even for staff or other volunteers. That’s ok! If there’s not a clear answer about where something goes or what something means, don’t guess! Move on from a task, if needed, and leave a note for our staff so we’ll know what the issue was. Knowing where the gaps are will help improve our training for you and for future volunteers! “Guessing” creates more work for someone else later and sweeps the problem under the rug.