

Dear Community Partner,

I would like to clarify some misconceptions about accessing Marion-Polk Food Share food resources. At Marion-Polk Food Share our mission is to “lead the fight to end hunger in Marion and Polk counties because we believe no one should be hungry.” Unfortunately, due to immigration concerns many people are scared to leave their homes and access services they need.

We would like to share a few things about our food pantries and the services they provide so you can help people understand that food is available to everyone.

1. **Our network of 50 food pantries is open to ANYONE regardless of immigration status, nationality, country of origin, available documentation or age.** We only ask that people meet income requirements, but no proof of income needs to be provided.
2. **You do NOT need a driver’s license or any type of ID to get food at a food pantry in our network.** Some of our pantries want to provide food for people living in their geographic area, but a person does not need to have an ID to show where they live.
3. **Information our pantries collect is confidential and cannot be shared with any other organizations.** To receive food a person just has to provide their name, address, and number of people in their household. Pantries are required to keep these records on file for 3 years, but they are not accessible by any agency without a court subpoena. These records are shredded or burned after 3 years. Our pantry records are never entered into, or shared with, government databases.
4. **A 3rd party can get food for a family if they have a note from the family giving permission and providing their name, address, and household size.** This additional help can allow service providers, neighbors, friends or family members help a family get the food they need without leaving their home.
5. **Food at the pantries is free of charge!** All our sites are free of charge and do not ask for any contributions from people that receive services. Most sites ask that a family get food only one time in a 30 day period due to limited food supplies. Families are offered a selection of rice, pasta, canned goods, frozen foods, and lots of fresh produce.

We are working with all of our pantries to make sure they are training their volunteers to understand these rules and feel confident in how to respond if law enforcement were to come on their properties or request information. At Marion-Polk Food Share our goal is to not only end hunger, but to make sure that people have a positive experience at any of our pantries. Enclosed/Attached you will find a list of locations where people can get a supply of food that will last 3-7 days or a free hot meal. We also included a form we use for a 3rd party to pick up food for another family.

Please share this information with coworkers and any other individuals you know that works with families and individuals who may be in need. Also print and spread the attached list of pantries and meal sites widely. We want people to feel welcome at all our distribution sites.

If you have any feedback from a pantry visit or have other concerns we haven’t addressed here, please contact us via phone or email. Thank you for all the work you do to help people in our community and for working with us to spread the word that food is available!

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