



Nutrition Policy

Nutrition Statement

South Louisville Community Ministries (SLCM) provides various food options in our food choice pantry in partnership with Dare to Care/Feeding America, community gardens, and individual and business partners. As an organization centered on the wellbeing of our diverse neighbors, we are also committed to ensuring our neighbors have access to healthy and culturally relevant food.

Rising rates of obesity in Kentucky and across the nation have led to community food pantries becoming increasingly intentional in reviewing the dietary content for donated food. In South Louisville, approximately 37% of our residents live below the federal poverty level guidelines and most residents live over a mile from a grocery store with limited transportation. [1] As the second highest poverty rate in Jefferson County, interventions to address food insecurity and health are of critical need.” [2]

Nutrition Policy

The goal of the SLCM Pantry is to distribute foods that will improve neighbor health and reduce food insecurity. Due to the diverse population that we serve, we want to ensure the provision of culturally relevant food items as well. The purpose of this nutrition policy is to guide decisions around food purchasing, procurement and distribution in order to reach that goal. This also involves the training of agency staff and pantry volunteers, the education of neighbors accessing the pantry, and the encouragement of our donors and partners to embrace and understand SLCM focus on healthy and culturally relevant food.

The SLCM Pantry uses the Healthy Eating Research (HER) guidelines to determine our healthy food choice pantry distribution plan. Purchased foods are restricted to HER “choose sometimes”, and “choose often” nutritional ranking based on sodium, fat, salt and sugar content.

Additionally, we conduct surveys and needs assessments with the neighbors who access our pantry in order to determine dietary restrictions and health needs, as well as desires for food items specific to their culture or background. We also determine neighbor access to cooking and food storage equipment. We use this information to assist in guiding our purchasing and procurement of food items.

This policy applies to all foods acquired by the SLCM including:

- Food and beverages purchased by the SLCM Pantry for all programs
- Foods and beverages donated by food manufacturers, distributors, retailers, organizations, producers and community members

Goal: Each year, the SLCM Pantry will achieve an increase in our overall HER score on the “choose sometimes” for distributed inventory.

Goal: Each year the SLCM Pantry will increase the amount of fresh produce distributed.

Healthful Foods to Encourage

The SLCM Pantry will prioritize purchasing items from this category and will actively seek, procure and distribute the following foods:

- A wide-variety of nutrient-dense fresh fruits and vegetables
- Canned and frozen fruits – fruit packed in water or in its own juice
- Canned and frozen vegetables – low-sodium or no salt added
- 100% Whole Grain (that contain whole grain as the first ingredient)
- Unflavored/Unsweetened low-fat (1%) or skim/non-fat milk or yogurt
- Flavored skim/non-fat milk or yogurt
- Reduced fat or low-fat cheese
- Unsweetened milk substitutes (e.g. soy milk or almond milk)
- Lean protein foods including: Meat, poultry, seafood (low-fat, low-sodium); Eggs; Nuts, seeds, beans and lentils (low-sodium or no salt added)
- Plain water
- 100% Juice
- We accept and save for special populations: Any item that is designed for specific population health (Glucerna, Ensure, Boost for Seniors, Similac for Infants, etc...). These products are available to Partner Agencies serving nutritionally at-risk clients.

Foods to Reduce

To promote healthy choice options, SLCM will not actively seek foods in this category and will encourage donors and partners to instead focus on providing us with items of higher nutritional value.

- Savory snack foods, including, but not limited to: chips, crackers or savory snack foods that are calorically dense with low nutritive value
- Sweet snack foods and desserts, including, but not limited to: snack bars, cakes, candy, cookies, donuts, ice cream, pies, pastries

- Sugar-sweetened beverages, including, but not limited to: sodas, sports drinks, vitamin-enhanced waters

SLCM Pantry Does Not Accept or Distribute

- Alcohol

Food Sources Not Covered By the Policy

In FY23, the SLCM Pantry received over 26% of its food through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) TEFAP program (The Emergency Food Assistance Program). Based on availability, some items received through TEFAP, national donors and other core SLCM Pantry sources may not fully meet the Healthful Foods to Encourage standards outlined through this policy; however, these items do provide clients with some important nutrients and the ability to serve complete meals.

Policy Implementation

SLCM will continually train staff and pantry volunteers to understand and utilize the HER guidelines through:

- Materials and handbooks
- Signage
- training workshops

Neighbors will be encouraged to make healthy choices through:

- One-on-one conversations with staff and volunteers
- Signage
- Printed and electronic materials

NOTE: due to the diverse languages spoken by our neighbors, information is available in multiple languages and signage is color-code/image-based for ease of communication

For more information: <https://healthyeatingresearch.org/>

[2] Community Foundation of Louisville. (2020, February 28). *Hunger innovation fellowship*.

<https://www.cflouisville.org/community-support/hunger-innovation-fellowship/>

[1] Great Louisville Project. (2022, September 14) *Food security*.

<https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/food-security/>

Nutrition Policy – Appendix A

Healthful Foods to Encourage/Foods to Reduce

Healthful Foods to Choose Often

1. Fruits and Vegetables

- a. Fresh produce including colorful varieties because they are rich in nutrients and low in calories
- b. Frozen fruits and vegetables packed without syrup or sauces
- c. Fruits canned in water or 100% juice
- d. Vegetables canned with no added salt or reduced sodium

2. Whole Grain and Whole Grain-Rich Foods

- a. 100% whole grains such as rolled oats, barley, brown rice
- b. Whole grain-rich bread, pasta and tortillas
- c. Whole grain-rich cereals that contain whole grain as the first ingredient

3. Dairy Foods: Low-Fat Dairy or Dairy Substitutes

- a. Plain milk and yogurt: Low-fat (1%) or skim/non-fat milk and yogurt, unflavored/unsweetened
- b. Flavored milk or milk substitutes
- c. Flavored yogurt
- d. Milk substitutes: Unsweetened milk substitutes (e.g., soy milk, almond milk)
- e. Cheese: Reduced fat or low-fat

4. Lean Protein Foods

- a. Meat, poultry seafood and beans-low-fat, lower sodium
- b. Eggs
- c. Nuts and seeds (no added salt), including spreads such as peanut butter (no partially hydrogenated oil in the ingredient list)
- d. Beans and lentils (if canned, no added salt or low-sodium)

Less Nutritious Foods to Choose Sometimes

1. Fruits and vegetables

- a. 100% juice
- b. Fruit canned in light syrup
- c. Canned vegetables
- d. Plain dried fruit

2. Whole Grain and Whole Grain-Rich Foods

- a. White breads ,pasta, rice
- b. Oatmeal with added sugar

3. Protein

- a. Canned beans
- b. Baked beans

- c. Some nut butters
- d. Regular canned fish; pork

4. Dairy

- a. Reduced fat or whole milk
- b. Cheeses; cottage cheese, whipped cream cheese
- c. Full-fat sour cream
- d. Low-fat flavored milks
- e. Low-fat flavored yogurt

5. Non-Dairy Alternatives

- a. Plant-based cheese
- b. Some flavored soymilks
- c. Plain and flavored soy, almond, rice, cashew and oat milk yogurts

6. Beverages

- a. Diet soft drinks
- b. Diet iced teas
- c. Sugar free energy drinks
- d. Sparkling water with sodium or added sugar
- e. Coconut water

7. Processed/Packaged Snacks

- a. Plain popcorn
- b. Whole wheat crackers
- c. Green pea snack crisps
- d. Rice cakes
- e. Unsalted whole grain pretzels
- f. Some snack bars

Less Nutritious Foods to Choose Rarely

1. Savory Snack Foods (including, by not limited to):

- a. Chips (not including lower/reduced fat or baked)
- b. Crackers (not including lower/reduced fat or baked)
- c. French fries
- d. Onion rings
- e. Pork rinds

2. Sweet Snack Foods and Desserts (including, but not limited to):

- a. Bars (including granola, cereal, energy, snack bars)
- b. Cakes
- c. Candy
- d. Chocolate
- e. Cookies
- f. Donuts

g. Frozen Desserts

h. Ice Cream

i. Fruit Snacks

j. Muffins

k. Pastries

l. Pies

m. Popsicles

n. Pudding

3. Sugar Sweetened Beverages (including but not limited to):

a. Energy Drinks

b. Fruit Drinks (<100% juice)

c. Sodas

d. Sports Drinks

e. Sweetened coffees

f. Sweetened teas

g. Sweetened shakes and smoothies

h. Vitamin-enhanced waters