

Brazos Valley Food Bank, Inc.

Statement of Values and Code of Ethics

Introduction

As a matter of fundamental principle, Brazos Valley Food Bank, Inc. (“the Food Bank”) will strive to adhere to the highest ethical standards. As a matter of pragmatic self-interest, we should do so because public trust in our performance and stewardship is the bedrock of our legitimacy. Donors and volunteers support charitable organizations because they trust them to carry out their missions, to be good stewards of their resources, and to uphold rigorous standards of conduct.

The Food Bank must earn this trust every day and in every possible way. Our board members, executive leaders, staff, and volunteers must demonstrate their ongoing commitment to the core values of integrity, honesty, fairness, openness, respect, and responsibility.

Adherence to the law is the minimum standard of expected behavior. The Food Bank must do more, however, than simply obey the law. We must embrace the spirit of the law, often going beyond legal requirements and making sure that what we do is matched by what the public understands about what we do. Transparency, openness and responsiveness to public concerns must be integral to our behavior.

Our Mission

The Food Bank strives to alleviate hunger in the Brazos Valley by distributing food and educational resources to our neighbors in need through a network of hunger relief partners.

Our Goals and Values

- Distribute food through a network of accredited partner agencies (pantries, meal sites, shelters, etc.) which in turn ensure that the food is distributed to individuals in need.
- Be accountable for the most efficient and effective use of our resources, realizing that these resources have been placed in our care, and are ours to administer, because of the generosity of others.
- Reduce food waste by utilizing an organized and efficient system to acquire and reclaim food that might otherwise be wasted.
- Play a leadership role in discussions and actions to resolve hunger issues in the communities we serve.
- Increase individual and community awareness and action concerning hunger and potential solutions.

- Value the diversity of those we serve. Seek to understand the needs of individuals and organizations, and remain flexible when determining how best to meet those needs.
- Recognize the right of all human beings to be treated with dignity and respect and pass on this value to our partner agencies who work directly with individuals in need.

Our Code of Ethics

1. Personal and Professional Integrity

All staff, board members and volunteers of the Food Bank must act with honesty, integrity and openness in all their dealings as representatives of the Food Bank. The Food Bank promotes a working environment that values respect, fairness and integrity.

2. Mission

The Food Bank has a clearly stated mission and purpose, approved by the board of directors, in pursuit of the public good. All of its programs must support that mission and all who work for or on behalf of the organization must understand and be loyal to that mission and purpose. The mission shall be responsive to the constituency and communities served by the Food Bank and of value to the society at large.

3. Governance

The Food Bank is governed by a Board of Directors that is responsible for setting the mission and strategic direction of the Food Bank and oversight of the finances, operations, and policies of the Food Bank. The Board of Directors shall:

- Ensure that its members have the requisite skills and experience to carry out their duties and that all members understand and fulfill their governance duties acting for the benefit of the Food Bank and its public purpose;
- Develop and maintain a conflict of interest policy that ensures that any conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof are avoided or appropriately managed through disclosure, recusal or other means;
- Be responsible for employment decisions concerning the Executive Director of the Food Bank. This includes, but is not limited to a regular review of the performance of the Executive Director, and a periodic review of the compensation paid to the Executive Director to ensure that such compensation is reasonable and appropriate;
- Ensure that the Executive Director and appropriate staff provide the Board with timely and comprehensive information so that the Board can effectively carry out its duties;

- Ensure that the Food Bank conducts all transactions and dealings with integrity and honesty;
- Ensure that the Food Bank promotes working relationships with board members, staff, volunteers, and program beneficiaries that are based on mutual respect, fairness and openness;
- Ensure that the Food Bank is fair and inclusive in its hiring and promotion policies and practices for all board, staff and volunteer positions;
- Ensure that policies of the Food Bank are in writing, clearly articulated and officially adopted;
- Ensure that the Food Bank is responsibly and prudently managed; and,
- Ensure that the Food Bank has the capacity to carry out its programs effectively.

4. Legal Compliance

The Food Bank will be knowledgeable of and will comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

5. Responsible Stewardship

The Food Bank will manage its funds responsibly and prudently. This will include the following considerations:

- It will spend a reasonable percentage of its annual budget on programs in pursuance of its mission;
- It will spend an adequate amount on administrative expenses to ensure effective accounting systems, internal controls, competent staff, and other expenditures critical to professional management;
- It will compensate the Executive Director and staff, and any others who may receive compensation, reasonably and appropriately;
- It will have reasonable fundraising costs, recognizing the variety of factors that affect fundraising costs;
- It will prudently draw from endowment funds consistent with donor intent and to support the public purpose of the Food Bank;

- It will spend adequate amounts on operational expenses, and on maintenance and development of facilities necessary to properly conduct its operations and serve individuals in need ;
- It will ensure that all spending practices and policies are fair, reasonable and appropriate to fulfill the mission of the Food Bank; and,
- It will submit itself to an annual audit, and will have its books, records and accounts examined on a monthly basis by a certified public accounting firm. It will ensure that all financial reports are factually accurate and complete in all material respects.

6. Openness and Disclosure

The Food Bank will provide comprehensive and timely information to the public, the media, and other interested persons and will be responsive in a timely manner to reasonable requests for information. All information about the Food Bank will fully and honestly reflect the policies and practices of the organization. Basic informational data about the Food Bank, such as the Form 990, reviews and compilations, and audited financial statements will be posted on the Food Bank's website or otherwise available to the public. All solicitation materials will accurately represent the Food Bank's policies and practices and will reflect the dignity of program beneficiaries. All financial, organizational, and program reports will be complete and accurate in all material respects.

7. Program Evaluation

The Food Bank will regularly review program effectiveness. The Food Bank is committed to improving program and organizational effectiveness and developing mechanisms to promote learning from its activities and the field. The Food Bank will be responsive to changes in its field of activity and is responsive to the needs of its constituencies.

8. Inclusiveness and Diversity

The Food Bank will endeavor to promote inclusiveness and diversity in its staff, board and volunteers, and will take meaningful steps to promote inclusiveness in its hiring, retention, promotion, board recruitment and constituencies served.

9. Fundraising

The Food Bank will respect the privacy concerns of individual donors and expend funds consistent with donor intent. The Food Bank will disclose important and relevant information to potential donors.

In raising funds from the public, the Food Bank will respect the rights of donors, as follows:

- To be informed of the mission of the Food Bank, the way the resources will be used and the capacity to use donations effectively for their intended purposes;
- To be informed of the identity of those serving on the Food Bank's Board of Directors and to expect the Board to exercise prudent judgment in its stewardship responsibilities;
- To have access to the Food Bank's most recent financial reports;
- To be assured their gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given;
- To receive appropriate acknowledgement and recognition;
- To be assured that information about their donations is handled with respect and with confidentiality to the extent provided by the law;
- To be informed whether those seeking donations for the Food Bank are volunteers, employees or hired solicitors;
- To have the opportunity for their names to be deleted from mailing lists; and,
- To feel free to ask questions when making a donation and to receive prompt, truthful and forthright answers.