

Operation plan for Bayonne Client Choice Pantry

The proposed pantry will provide dignified, equitable access to nutritious food for households experiencing food insecurity. The pantry will be operated by a nonprofit organization that will be selected through a fair and open process orchestrated by Hudson County Department of Health and Human Services. The intended operator will have extensive experience serving large numbers of households and will maintain an affiliation with the Community FoodBank of New Jersey to ensure consistent and diversified food supply.

Purpose and Community Need

In 2022, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority produced a map of food desert communities across the State. Bayonne has been formally designated as a food desert, meaning residents have limited access to affordable, nutritious food options. The development of this pantry aims to:

1. Provide year-round equitable food access.
2. Improve health outcomes by increasing availability of nutritious foods.
3. Supplement and extend household Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) purchasing power.
4. Offer a convenient, grocery-like experience in a safe and organized environment.

Client-Choice Pantry Model

The pantry will utilize a client-choice model, in which households select foods based on their dietary needs, cultural preferences, and household size. This model mirrors a small grocery store with sections such as:

- Fresh produce
- Frozen and refrigerated items (as available)
- Shelf-stable goods
- Grains, rice, and pasta
- Proteins
- Snacks and household essentials (as inventory allows)

Designing a pantry of this type offers several benefits for the Community including:

- **Dignity & Autonomy:** Families select what they need, reducing stigma.
- **Reduces Waste:** Eliminates distribution of unwanted items.
- **Culturally Responsive:** Supports diverse food traditions.

- **Enhances SNAP Benefits:** Food commonly purchased with SNAP—such as canned goods, pasta, rice, proteins, and produce—will be available at the pantry. This allows families to use SNAP benefits at grocery stores for additional items such as fresh meats, specialty foods, or baby supplies not regularly distributed by pantries.

Operation

To ensure orderly operations and prevent long lines commonly seen at traditional food pantries, this pantry will utilize an appointment-based model. Walk-in emergency assistance may be allowed in limited circumstances without disrupting scheduled appointments.

Operating hours will include both daytime and select evening hours, increasing accessibility for working families. Specific operating days and times are to be determined.

Staffing

The pantry will be operated by a qualified nonprofit with established expertise in food distribution and community service. While we do not anticipate a large number of salaried positions, volunteers will be recruited.

Volunteer involvement will support pantry operations; however, the scope of volunteer roles and scheduling is to be determined.

Food Supply Assurance

The pantry will maintain strong partnerships to ensure a consistent supply of high-quality food, including:

- Affiliation with the Community FoodBank of New Jersey
- Retail rescue partners (as available)
- Community donation partners

Community Impact and Outcomes

The proposed pantry is expected to:

- Increase residents' access to nutritious foods in a food desert.
- Improve household food budgeting by supplementing SNAP.
- Provide an orderly, respectful experience through scheduled appointments.
- Reduce visible lines and public disturbances associated with high-volume distributions.
- Strengthen community stability through reliable nonprofit and Community FoodBank partnerships.

Compliance and Neighborhood Considerations

The pantry will operate in compliance with all municipal zoning requirements, health and safety standards, and community guidelines. Measures will include:

- Controlled traffic flow facilitated by scheduled appointments.
- Minimal noise and line congestion.
- No overnight queuing.
- Safe food storage and waste management practices.

Conclusion

This client-choice pantry will provide a well-organized, appointment-based, dignity-centered food access point for families living in and around Bayonne. With the support of an experienced nonprofit operator and the Community FoodBank, the initiative is positioned to significantly improve community food security while maintaining minimal disruption to the surrounding area.