



Partner Agency Survey Toolkit

A member of:



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Table of Contents

The following headings are linked to the corresponding pages of this document. When viewing this document on a computer, tablet or smartphone, you can click on each heading and then click “Bookmark” to go directly to that section. Additionally, there are links (look for the underlined words) throughout this document to help navigate to other sections or to supporting resources.

[Client Feedback](#)

[FBST Evaluation Timeline](#)

[Planning](#)

- [Sample Size](#)
- [Translation Services](#)
- [Incentives](#)
- [Closing the Feedback Loop](#)
- [Online Survey Platforms](#)

[Optional SIMC Questions](#)

[Informed Consent](#)

[Who / How food was received](#)

[Food](#)

[Client Experience](#)

[Barriers or Access Issues](#)

[Possible Changes](#)

[Services or Process](#)

[Opportunities for Further Engagement](#)

This Toolkit is most useful when viewed online with a computer, tablet or smartphone. This ensures you’re seeing the most recent version and provides access to links to additional documents. If you have a paper copy, you can access the online version at tinyurl.com/FBSTSurveyToolkit.

A [Partner Education Webinar: Formalizing Feedback](#) is also available with more detailed information. Please reach out to the [Collecting Client Feedback Contact](#) with any questions or assistance.

Client Feedback

In a 2023 survey of Food Bank pantry partners, 95% reported that they actively engage with the people they serve to get feedback – primarily through informal conversations. Some partners are interested in using more formal processes, like surveys, but have reported that they would like support to do so. The following information is to help any partner incorporate survey questions into their feedback process.

Keep in mind that surveys are just one tool for collecting feedback and the Food Bank staff is available to talk through specific partner goals for getting feedback and what the easiest and most useful tools and questions may be. A [Partner Education Webinar: Formalizing Feedback](#) is available with more detailed information and please reach out to the [Collecting Client Feedback Contact](#) with any questions or assistance.

FBST Evaluation Timeline

The Food Bank conducts a large survey getting feedback from more than 1000 pantry, mobile food pantry, senior mobile food pantry and school food center clients every other year. Current information is based on a survey conducted in February 2024 and the next survey will be in February 2026. **Please keep this in mind when planning to survey clients being served by any of these programs.** We can share our results, which may help answer your questions without the need to survey since we have a very large sample resulting in a low margin of error. We also want to avoid over-surveying clients. **For this reason, you should avoid surveying between October 2025 and June 2026 without first reaching out to [Collecting Client Feedback Contact](#) to ensure that we are not duplicating efforts.**

For those who would like to do their own survey outside of the above timeframe, the following offers planning tips and basic questions for some common areas of interest. However, there are many other areas that you may be interested in, and the Food Bank's Evaluation Manager can help with other questions on a case-by-case basis. Please be in touch! We are here to help.

Planning

The key to a good survey is planning. The following information and questions will help make sure you ask the right survey questions and consider all the next steps. These are examples of questions that you can use. You are not required to use them and can adjust as you see fit for the purposes of your survey.

Sample Size: If you serve an average of 100 unique households each month, you will need surveys from ~90 households for a margin of error of ~3%. This means that if 50% of your survey respondents answered a question a certain way, you can reasonably assume that 48-53% of your total households would respond similarly. If you only get surveys from 20 people, the margin of error goes up to 20% and changes that range to 30-70%. This is not helpful for generalizing across all your clients and only tells you about the experience and preferences of the 20 survey takers. If you were to make a change based on these results, it may not be the right change for most people. The [Collecting Client Feedback Contact](#) can help with this if you decide to do a survey.

Translation Services: If you have clients who speak or read a language other than English, you should consider translating your survey into their language. Cornell University offers free translation services and the [Collecting Client Feedback Contact](#) can connect you with this resource. Partners also have used the free [Google Translate App](#) which can help translate both text and conversations.

Incentives: It is a best practice to offer an incentive like a drawing for a gift card for those who complete the survey. Be clear about the expectations for any incentives and if / how a survey taker will be notified if they will receive one.

Closing the Feedback Loop: Don't forget to communicate this information back to the people you serve. Research shows that even if a person didn't take a survey, hearing about the survey results and next steps builds trust and can improve future survey response rates. The [Collecting Client Feedback Contact](#) can share templates

Online Survey Platforms: Online surveys platforms are useful for simplifying surveys. They often have an option known as "routing" or "logic" that allows you to ask follow-up questions based on how a previous question was answered. Again, the [Collecting Client Feedback Contact](#) has a lot of experience and can help. Free platforms include:

- [Google Form](#)
- [JotForm](#)
- [SurveyMonkey](#) (free version has a limit of 10 questions per survey and will only collect up to 25 responses per survey)

What do you want to know?	Why do you want to know this?	How will you use the results? What actions do you think you can take as a result of knowing this information?	Are there other stakeholders you should talk with before finalizing the plan?
			• Board members? • Clients / Client Advisory Council? • Donors? • FBST staff (for support / resources)?

How many survey responses do you need ?	How will you distribute the survey?	Who will summarize the data and how long do you think that will take?	How will you communicate to your stakeholders what you learned and what you will be doing as a result?
	• Paper vs online? • How long will the survey be open? • Will you offer an incentive? • Do you need to translate the survey into other languages?		

Optional SIMC Questions

For partners who utilize the SIMC Service Insights Platform, there are optional questions that you can turn on and may provide the information you are looking for rather than doing a survey

If you want to ask any of the following questions as part of SIMC, they appear with the following frequency:

- Once per year
 - Language
 - Military Status
 - Dietary Restrictions
 - Food Insecurity
- Every 6 months
 - Employment Status
 - Disability Status
 - Living Situation

None of these questions are anything that FBST is requiring you to ask - it's just an option. You cannot customize the wording of the questions or answers. It may be possible to leave any questions you are interested in asking in for a certain period of time and then remove them from the system for you if you prefer to do it that way. Reach out to the contact for [Fresh Trak / Service Insights Questions](#) to learn more.

Informed Consent

It is a best practice to share some basic information and expectations at the beginning of your survey. The following is an example and should be edited based on your specific survey and situation:

{SITE NAME} is inviting you to answer survey questions about you, your household, and your experiences. Answers to these questions will help us better understand the needs of the people we serve and can help us to improve our services.

This survey is for adults 18-years and older. The survey takes about {X-X} minutes. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can always change your mind and stop answering questions at any time. You don't have to answer any questions you don't want to. Whether or not you choose to take the survey, it won't change the services you receive from {SITE NAME} now or in the future.

(If applicable) As a thank you for taking the survey, we will be doing a drawing of {X} number of {\$} gift cards. While we need a name and contact information to follow up if your name is drawn, this information will never be connected to the answers you provide. When we share results from the surveys, we will only share about the full group so that individuals cannot be identified.

If you have any questions concerning the survey, please contact {X} at {X} (you can also offer a space for participants to share their contact information to be contacted directly either to answer questions or complete the survey)

Who received food / How food was received

Depending on your program and the services you offer you may want to ask a question to help ensure you understand what program the participant is giving feedback on. Or you may want to direct people to specific questions based on how they answer the question.

Thinking about the LAST TIME you received food at this site, which best describes how you got the food:

- ☐ Myself / another adult went to the site and shopped for the food.
- ☐ Myself / another adult went to the site and picked up pre-packed food at the curb.
- ☐ A student in my household went to the site and picked up the food. {for a school food center or Backpack site}
- ☐ The food was delivered.

Food

The following can help you understand how satisfied people are with the quality, amount and variety of perishable or shelf-stable foods. You can substitute other variables or name a specific food that you want to learn more about. The important thing is to be as specific as possible to help ensure people are interpreting the question in a similar way. While you are probably interested in knowing how people feel about the food in general, asking about the “last time” can help them provide the most accurate answer from a recollection standpoint and it ensures that different survey takers are responding to the same time period. Offering the open-ended follow up question allows them to share more broadly.

Thinking about the last time you got perishable food (like dairy, meat, fresh fruits & vegetables) from <u>this site</u> , how satisfied were you with:	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Not applicable / Don't know
Quality / Freshness				
Amount				
Variety				

Is there anything else you would like us to know about the perishable food you have received?

Thinking about the last time you got shelf-stable food (like canned & boxed goods) from <u>this site</u> , how satisfied were you with:	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Not applicable / Don't know
Quality / Taste & Texture				
Amount				
Variety				

Is there anything else you would like us to know about the shelf-stable food you have received?

The following can help you understand more about people's dietary needs and if your program is meeting those needs.

Does your household need foods that meet any of the following diets? Select all that apply.

- ☐ No, we don't need foods meeting a specific diet.
- ☐ Low-sugar / low-carb ("diabetic-friendly")
- ☐ Low-sodium (salt) / low saturated fat ("heart-healthy")
- ☐ Gluten-free
- ☐ Vegan
- ☐ Vegetarian
- ☐ Soft diet / dental concerns
- ☐ Kosher
- ☐ Halal
- ☐ Other culturally relevant food. Please specify:
- ☐ Dairy-free / lactose-free
- ☐ Limited / no cooking equipment
- ☐ Food allergen (ex: peanut, seafood, dairy)
- ☐ Other. Please specify:

If needed, are you able to get these foods at this site:

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Always

This open-ended question lets people tell you in their own words what foods they want. Depending on the number of responses, this can take time to summarize and you may get requests you won't be able to meet.

What **food items** do you need but can't regularly get at the pantry?

Another option is to offer choices from the Food Bank menu that you don't currently carry, but could if you knew there was demand.

If 16 oz bags of dry lentils were regularly available here, how often would you choose to take them?

- ☐ Every visit
- ☐ Some visits
- ☐ Never

Client Experience

The following can help you understand more about people's experience getting food at your site. This series of questions asks people to focus on the "last time" they got food. There are options for both an adult reflecting on their experience or an adult sharing on behalf of a child, which may be the case for partners working in schools. As a practice, the Food Bank does not survey minors, but your program can determine this based on your own policies and procedures.

Thinking about the last time you got food from <u>this site</u> :	Yes, definitely	Somewhat	No, not at all	Not applicable / Don't know
Were you treated with caring and respect ?				
Did you feel safe ?				
Were you satisfied with the amount of time it took to get your food from the time you arrived until the time you left?				

Is there anything else you would like us to know about your experience?

Thinking about the last time your student got food from <u>this site</u> :	Yes, definitely	Somewhat	No, not at all	Not applicable / Don't know
Did your student feel comfortable picking up food?				
Was the food too heavy for your student?				

Is there anything else you would like us to know about your student's experience getting food?

In some cases it does make sense to frame a question to find out how the client feels “in general” about something. The examples below focus on communication and information sharing, but there may be other areas that you are interested in learning more about and could adapt as you see fit. Since these areas aren’t necessarily going to be something people need every visit, it makes sense not to limit the question to the “last visit”.

Thinking about <u>this site</u> in general:	Yes, definitely	Somewhat	No, not at all	Not applicable / Don't know
Do you know who to talk to if you have questions or concerns?				
Does this site share important information with you / other participants?				
Does this site care about your thoughts & opinions ?				

Please share anything else about how this site can better share information:

Barriers or Access Issues

When asking questions like the following, keep in mind that the people who have made it to your site and are taking this survey may be less impacted by these barriers than people who have never come or came, but did not return. Asking these questions of current clients can still improve service, but a lack of reported barriers does not mean that others in your community are not experiencing them.

Thinking about the past 6 months , how often have the following kept you from getting food you needed from <u>this site</u> :	Often	Sometimes	Never
The site was not open when I was able to go.			
I felt uncomfortable, unsafe and / or unwelcome when I went to this site and did not want to go back.			
I did not have transportation to get to the site and delivery was not available / I did not know how to get a delivery.			
I was not able to leave my house and delivery was not available / I did not know how to get a delivery.			
I did not know about this site or I did not know when this site was open.			
I worried that I would be taking food from someone who needed it more.			
I had already gotten food the maximum number of times in a month.			

Please share anything else to help us understand any barriers you have experienced getting food that you needed at [this site](#):

The following questions can help you better understand if clients are having difficulty while getting food due to mobility or other issues.

Thinking about your last visit , did any of the following impact your experience while getting food?	Yes, definitely	Somewhat	No, not at all
I had trouble getting food from the site to my car.			
I had trouble getting around the site to pick out the food.			
I had trouble communicating with the staff or volunteers because of hearing loss / hearing impairment.			

Please share anything else to help us understand your experience getting food at [this site](#):

Possible Changes

Before you make a change it might be a good idea to find out how participants will be impacted.

If this site were to change our food distribution hours on Tuesdays from 2-4 pm to 6-8 pm, would you still be able to come and get food between 6-8pm?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe. Please explain to help us better understand how this change would impact you:

Services or Process

You can ask questions to help understand how a specific process is working. The following questions are about processes related to home delivery, but others can be substituted as well.

Thinking about the deliveries you have received in the past 3 months :	Yes, definitely	Somewhat	No, not at all	Not applicable / Don't know
Did you get the amount of food delivered that you expected?				
Were you contacted ahead of time if a delivery needed to be canceled?				
Was the expectation for receiving delivery clear? Ex: If you needed to receive the delivery from the driver or if it could be left at the door.				

Were you comfortable with the driver who delivered the food?				
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Please share anything else to help us understand how deliveries are working for you:

Opportunities for Further Engagement

A survey also provides an opportunity to follow-up with clients to learn more about their responses or to determine interest in other initiatives you may be working on. Below is sample language that can be adjusted for your purpose.

Thank you for your time and input! Are you interested in any of the following? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Being contacted to participate in an online or telephone feedback session to share more about your experience.
- ☐ Learning more about participating in a Client Advisory Board.
- ☐ Learning more about volunteering at this site
- ☐ I am not interested in any of these

{The following language also includes wording for a drawing. It can be adjusted based on your specific needs.}

Please share your contact information below*. You will be entered into a drawing to win 1 of 5 \$20 electronic gift cards.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

*This information will only be used to contact you if your name is drawn or if you said that you are interested in being contacted to participate in a feedback session or to learn more. Otherwise, no information on this survey will be connected to your name.

Thank you!

