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Food Pantry Charter

Ridgewood Commons Food Pantry Charter

Working Group / Admin Committee Name: Ridgewood Commons Food Pantry ("Food Pantry")

Date Charter Ratified: XX/XX/2025 (to be filled in once charter is ratified)

Connection Statement:

Food Pantry is a mutual aid effort committed to providing consistent and reliable access to essential goods for our neighbors in Ridgewood. We are a local, donation-based food pantry currently serving over 100 families every week through twice-weekly distributions. Food Pantry helpers pick up, sort, portion, and distribute food donated by local grocers to food-insecure residents every Monday and Wednesday morning. We use a ticketing system to manage distribution fairly, and we operate a dedicated Disability Line for neighbors who provide proof of disability. Our goal is to reduce food insecurity through direct, neighbor-to-neighbor support. By showing up regularly, we seek to build relationships of trust, mutual respect, and care. We invite people to get involved–whether by volunteering, contributing supplies, or helping shape how we operate. We also partner with local businesses and other mutual aid groups to strengthen our shared commitment to collective care.

Powers & Rights:

Food Pantry is empowered to:

RC Space Use:

- Distributions ("Distro") take place Mondays and Wednesdays from approximately 7:45 AM to 10:00 AM. During these times, Food Pantry has primary use of RC.
  - General Schedule:
    - 7:45 AM: Assess food volume, distribute appropriate number of tickets, sort and bag shares ("Opening Tasks").
    - 9:00 AM: Disability Line begins.
    - 9:30 AM: Ticket holders given food shares, followed by non-ticket holders
    - 10:00 AM: Clean up and closing tasks
- Pre-sorting sessions are held Sunday and Tuesday nights from approximately 9:30 PM to 2:00 AM, depending on driver pick-up times ("Sorting"). During these hours, Food Pantry does not require primary use of RC.
- Food drop-offs from drivers typically occur on Sundays and Tuesdays. Times for drop-offs vary throughout the day. All food is delivered to RC to be fridged or binned until Sorting and Distro.

- Receive and store dry goods, produce, and supplies from designated city distributors at various times.
- Use of RC for Food Pantry-related meetings or fundraisers when space is otherwise unoccupied.
- Request and receive updates on facilities management and issues (e.g. fridge capacity, infrastructure upgrades, electrical work).

Access and Storage

Key-code access to RC is granted to:

- Drivers (for food drop-offs)
  - Sorters (for Sorting tasks)
  - Openers (for Opening Tasks)

  Fridge use: Use the three large fridges at the RC entrance to store food shares, with shared use extended to other Working Groups upon request. For clarity, CSA deliveries are considered part of Food Pantry until CSA becomes an autonomous Working Group.
  Dry goods storage: Use of space next to fridges, metal wire shelving at entrance, and filing cabinet near basement for pantry supplies. All open food containers will be stored in sealed bins.
  Use of equipment: Food Pantry may use kitchen items (knives, cutting boards, coffee machine, etc.), folding tables, and cleaning supplies (e.g., Fabuloso, bleach, disinfectant spray) as needed for operations.

Grants and Fundraising

Apply for grants and city programs on the behalf of Food Pantry.

Use grant funds for Pantry-related needs first, unless otherwise specified.

Fundraise independently; CSA contributions earmarked for Food Pantry shall be directed accordingly.

Partnerships and Procurement

Maintain working relationships with groups such as [redacted], EV Loves NYC, and distributors like City Harvest to secure access to larger donations streams, food access, and efficiency.

Contact grocery stores and other establishments to solicit food donations; access legal/corporate documentation (EIN, etc.) to facilitate partnerships.

Maintain procedural documents in a shared Drive, available upon request.

Responsibilities & Liability

Food Pantry is responsible to:

Food Safety and Hygiene

Maintain clear opening and closing checklists that ensure Food Pantry leaves the space better than we find it.

Mitigate the risks that come with distributing donated food. To keep community members safe Food Pantry helpers (1) inspect and sort food before distribution; (2) keep digital thermometers in the fridges and log their temperatures; (3) have regular Food Pantry helpers attend the city's food safety course for soup kitchens; (4) submit to regular inspection from the city's food pantry department; (5) report vermin sightings to the appropriate Admin Council committee.

Properly store dry and refrigerated goods to prevent spoilage and pests. Submit compost reports to 311 as needed.

Waste Management

Manage trash, recycling, and compost on Distro days (Mondays and Wednesdays), including coordination with BK Rot, Sunday Dinner Group for compost, CSA and Food Fight to coordinate fridge space.

Utilize grant funds to purchase shared consumables (e.g., trash bags, toilet paper, cleaning products) and provide itemized purchase records to Spokescouncil and Admin Council at time of grant applications.

Space Maintenance

Wash and store all dishes used during Distro preparation and helper snacks; put away dishes left out to dry the previous night; Sweep, mop, and sanitize surfaces used.

Disability Access and Confidentiality

Maintain accurate and confidential records of Disability Line documentation in a secure Drive. Disability line eligibility is based on a signed doctor's note confirming disability status. approved neighbors receive a physical card used to access the line at 9:00 AM.

Emergency Preparedness

Prioritize elderly safety and readiness for health-related incidents during distribution. This necessitates access to emergency medical supplies (Narcan, bleeding control equipment, ice packs) and contact information for insurance claims from Admin and Spokescouncils.

Coordination, Communication, Conflicts

Liaise with Admin Council and other Working Groups (such as the Basement Group) regarding facilities management. This includes electrical infrastructure (especially fridge power load) and safety issues (e.g., trip hazards, snow/ice removal, repair needs).

Ensure smooth coordination with other Working Groups during overlapping activities.

- Example: Accepting deliveries during events might be mitigated with a shared calendar that drivers can access.
  Communicate with Spokecouncil and Working Groups regarding improper use of Food Pantry space, supplies or items borrowed and not returned.
- Example 1: If the cart for local pickups is borrowed by a Working Group but is not returned before Distro.
- Example 2: Unauthorized fridge use that results in lack of space for Food Pantry and/or CSA shares.
- Create process for labeling/use of items between Food Pantry and other groups (e.g., unlabeled FoodFight goods).

Ratified: XX/XX/2025

Gym Charter

Ridgewood Commons Group Charter: Gym

Working Group / Admin Committee Name: Gym Working Group
Contact Information: [email redacted]

Date Charter Ratified: XX/XX/2025

Connection Statement:

The Gym Working Group stewards a collectively-run, donation-based strength training space within Ridgewood Commons. The gym exists to allow us to build strength as individuals and as a collective in a supportive environment outside the confines of for-profit fitness culture. Through shared labor and non-hierarchical organizing, we maintain the gym as a resource for the Ridgewood Commons community.

Powers & Rights:

The Gym Working Group is empowered to:

- Maintain a collective membership of maximum 45 people, each of whom has 24/7 access to the gym space via door code. [The gym space is the back room of Ridgewood Commons, including the bathroom inside the gym, and the cubbies outside of the gym door.]
- Host regular open gym hours, scheduled and led by collective members. These are the only times when community members not in the gym collective may use the gym.
- Access and contribute to the Ridgewood Commons shared calendar.
- Use the shared Ridgewood Commons space for gym meetings and other events, in coordination with the Planning Working Group and the shared calendar.
- Operate a donation-based model (pay-what-you-can / NOTAFLOF) for collective and community members to support our rent contributions and ongoing equipment and supply needs.

Responsibilities & Liability

Liability:
All individuals using the gym are required to sign a waiver acknowledging the physical nature of the space and releasing Ridgewood Commons and the Gym Working Group from liability in the event of injury.

Rent contribution:
The Gym Working Group contributes a monthly total of **$400** to Ridgewood Commons for rent and

shared utilities.

This amount is based on an annual review of gym income and expenses and may be updated via proposal to the Spokescouncil and in collaboration with the Finance Working Group and other RC committees to ensure the gym remains sustainable while providing an equitable and comradely contribution to the broader community.

Responsibilities:
The Gym Working Group is responsible for:

- The maintenance and upkeep of the gym space inclusive of the bathroom inside the gym and the cubbies outside of the gym door. Keeping it clean and safe, maintaining fixtures such as lights, etc. with the exception of space-wide maintenance such as electrical wiring, pest control, etc.
- Hosting open gym hours each week to ensure reliable access for community members.
- Onboarding new lifters and collective members through coached sessions, informal orientations, and peer-to-peer support.
- Participating in monthly Spokescouncil meetings.
- Maintaining active communication and collaborative norms with other Ridgewood Commons working groups, especially when sharing the space with other activities or events.
- Coordinating with the Planning Working Group to avoid scheduling gym hours during film screenings, etc., and collaborating around other quiet or high-impact events.
- Collaborating with the Finance Working Group to review financial contributions, assess sustainability, and evaluate the gym’s proposed monthly rent and related expenses.

Gym hosts are responsible for stewarding the space during their shifts, but responsibility for the gym is shared across the collective. All members are expected to uphold the gym’s internal, collectively developed Points of Unity and Community Agreements.

Ratified: XX/XX/2025

READgewood Tutoring Charter

Working Group / Admin Committee Name: READgewood Tutoring
Contact Information: [phone number redacted]

Date Charter Ratified:

Connection Statement:

READgewood Tutoring is dedicated to offering free tutoring to children in the Ridgewood community. While we began with a focus on reading skills, we have since expanded to include sessions in math, science, and life skills.

Powers & Rights:

- READgewood Tutoring is entitled to schedule a weekly two-hour tutoring class at Ridgewood Commons, coordinated in advance with the Programming Committee.
- We may store class materials and supplies on-site, in a location arranged in collaboration with the Facilities Committee.

Responsibilities & Liability:

- Tutors are responsible for maintaining a safe and welcoming environment for all students during sessions.
- We are also accountable for ensuring that students respect the space and do not cause damage.
- Each session will conclude with a full cleanup of the area used.
- We will work with the fundraising committee to find ways to support the space.
- All our adult tutors will sign MOUs to wave RC's responsiblity.

Spokescouncil Planning Group (SPG) Charter

Working Group / Admin Committee Name: Spokescouncil Planning Group (SPG)
Contact Information: rcspokescouncilplanningwg@proton.me
Date Charter Ratified:

Connection Statement:

The Spokescouncil Planning Group (SPG) is dedicated to critically evaluating and supporting the ongoing evolution of Ridgewood Commons's governance model. Our aim is to help foster more democratic processes and deepen participation across the space. We do this through internal evaluation, research into governance models used by similar spaces, and by drafting proposals for the RC Spokescouncil when we identify opportunities for improvement.

Powers & Rights:

- The SPG is entitled to schedule a monthly two-hour meeting at Ridgewood Commons, coordinated with the Programming Committee.
- We claim a dedicated section of wall, sufficient to display the proposal board and adjacent explanatory materials.
- The SPG has the authority to manage the proposal board, including:
  - Removing expired or non-proposal items
  - Replacing the board if needed (with reimbursement for material costs)

Responsibilities & Liability:

- The SPG is responsible for removing proposals that:
  - Have been on the board for over three months
  - Have been blocked by the Spokescouncil
  - Have been approved (after uploading them to the RC wiki and sharing the link in the Spokescouncil Announcements Signal chat)
- SPG meetings are open to all members of RC working groups.
  - Meeting details (time and location) will be announced in the Spokescouncil Announcements Signal chat.
  - First-time attendees are invited to observe and may participate fully in subsequent meetings.
- To maintain membership in the SPG, participants must:
  - Attend most meetings. Members who miss more than two in a row without a clear reason will be removed.

    - Contribute actively: either by taking on action items and making a good-faith effort to complete them, or by performing key meeting roles (e.g., facilitating, note-taking).
    - If removed, members can rejoin by attending a meeting in observation-mode, following the same process as anyone else at RC.
- The SPG is responsible for cleaning up after meetings.
- The SPG will work with the fundraising committee to find ways to support the space.

Sunday Dinners Charter

Ridgewood Commons Sunday Dinners Working Group Charter

Working group name: Sunday Dinners
Contact info: [phone number redacted]

Date ratified:

Connection statement. The Sunday Dinners Working Group (SD) aims to prepare and serve communal, donation-based dinners at Ridgewood Commons (RC) every Sunday. We prioritize serving healthy meals and fostering community. We serve RC and the greater Ridgewood community by facilitating a welcoming environment, maintaining the kitchen and appliances, and upholding kitchen safety and organization standards.

Powers and rights. In order to operate as intended, SD must be granted primary access to the kitchen beginning at 4:00 p.m. and to the seating area including all tables and chairs beginning at 7:00 p.m. We may require access to these spaces until after other working groups have left, in which case we will assume responsibility for closing protocols. We reserve the right to use the loudspeakers to play music and make announcements so long as we do not interrupt other events in doing so. We maintain accountability by ensuring proper use and care of all required spaces and equipment, and striving to maintain a welcoming social environment.
In addition to our usual operations, we may occasionally hold other large events. We may also use dinners to fundraise for specific causes. We will coordinate with the Spokes Council and greater RC community in order to plan such initiatives and assure they align with the RC Points of Unity.

Responsibilities and liability. SD is responsible for:

- preparing and serving dinners in a timely and organized manner;
- establishing and uphold safety protocols for kitchen equipment use;
- facilitating timely and thorough breakdown and cleaning of spaces and equipment used during our events;
- closing RC according to established protocol when required;
- facilitating participation of other working groups (or outside groups) who wish to assist with or host dinners;
- providing financial support to RC when possible and in a manner approved by RC Finance Committee; and
- ensuring accessibility, inclusivity, and civility at our events, within reason.

Technical Collective fka Basement

Working Group Name
Technical Collective fka Basement

Contact Information
[signal group link redacted]

Date Charter Ratified
XX/XX/2025

Connection Statement
The Technical Collective aims to explore the practice of autonomy specifically as it relates to technology within the framework of Ridgewood Commons. We hope to provide a space for learning & exploration in the building of self-sustaining practices for the greater community at-large as well as within our own group. Relevant pursuits include digital security practice and training, physical repair, personal making and manufacturing, alternatives to big tech, and general anti-commercial community software.

Our priorities are physical safety of anyone using shared tools, general accessibility of the space to the community at large, and safety of communal tools.

Powers & Rights
We are largely based in the back section of the basement at 585 Woodward, with some infrastructure on the first floor wall and rooftop. We have conducted meetings in the main space, offsite, and in the basement.

We require stable electricity, good ventilation, and adequate lighting to conduct personal manufacturing workshops and trainings. We need some personal storage space for medium/long-term projects, and at least 3 benchtops for personal manufacturing tools. We need some wall space upstairs to help share events, trainings, and how to get and stay in touch. We need roof access to maintain the radio infrastructure. We also require safe pathways for moving through the basement space, which means that groups using other parts of the basement must not block or clutter important walkways.

We are empowered to aquire and remove communal tools, to use the space at large for workshops, to layout and rearrage the tech collective sections of the basement space, to decide on internal knowledge sharing process and tools, and to propose decisions on the usage structure of the collective space.

Responsibilities & Liability
We are responsible for keeping the basement space clean and functional, and informing the users of the space the danger of the tools in the space.

We are responsible for oversight, maintenance, and skillshare for use of communal tools, as well as organizing and hosting public workshops.

We are responsible for steering the community on technical topics towards autonomy and self-actualization. There is a potential liability here in making harmful recommendations, or outdated recommendations becoming harmful.

Our liability also includes the safety of people in the space, including air quality, and collective tool safety.

Everyone who uses the space must understand that certain tools (power saws, wood burning, etc.) pose potential safety hazards, and these tools must not be operated by anyone who hasn't been trained or otherwise met the requirements (ie. signing waivers, etc.) for using them. It is our responsibility to communicate with other working groups so that everyone in the space can be informed about the procedures in place for regulating access to these tools and educating others about their risks. *Our exact procedure for regulating access and informing the broader Ridgewood Commons community about the safety risks associated with particular tools in the space is not yet fully specified. We will amend this charter with details on this point in the future.* For the time being, we request that nobody outside of our WG use any tools in the basement without consulting us first. This includes: table saw and other power tools, hand saws, soldering iron, wood burner, laser cutter, coffee roaster, 3D printers, etc..

When proposing a decision that merits outside deliberation, we consider the health or safety risk of people using it, whether it poses a significant personal liability to leaseholders, if it conflicts with landlord requests, impedes a working group from advancing its goals, or violates core moral principles of ridgewood commons.

We share basement space with woodworkers, coffee roasters, and screen printers. We share wall space with food distribution. We share the floor/ceiling and ventilation with the gym. As such, we need to make sure we have good communications with all those mentioned to avoid conflicts of usage, and uphold expectations of cleanliness.

Tuesday Reading Group Charter

Tuesday Reading Group Ridgewood Commons Charter

Contact Information: [signal group link redacted]

Connection Statement:

Tuesday Reading Group aims to provide a venue for community members to read and discuss books and other texts together. Often the texts chosen are of a political nature with the aim of discussion being to work through and understand the theoretical and practical lessons presented by the material.

Powers and Rights:

Tuesday Reading Group will continue meeting in person every other week at Ridgewood Commons from around 6:30p to 8:30p as coordinated with the programming committee, and should be provided the ability to advertise on RC social media accounts in coordination with the social media team.

Responsibilities and Liabilities:

The Tuesday Reading Group will be responsible and courteous in its stewardship of the 585 space, taking into consideration the security, welfare and cleanliness of the space and its visitors.

Date Charter Ratified: XX/XX/2025 (to be filled in once charter is ratified)

Writing Group Charter

Ridgewood Commons Writing Group Charter

Working Group / Admin Committee Name: Ridgewood Commons Writing Workshop
Contact Information: [signal group redacted]

Date Charter Ratified: XX/XX/2025 (to be filled in once charter is ratified)

Connection Statement:
The Ridgewood Commons Writing Workshop (RCWW) aims to provide a community surrounding the craft of writing for Ridgewood Commons. The Workshop attracts and inspires writers to hone their voice and share their skills with the wider community. The priorities of RCWW is to foster a creative and educational space for all interested in writing with no barriers to entry.

Powers & Rights:
Ridgewood Commons Writing Workshop is empowered to:

- Utilize the 585 Woodward main space on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month.
- Maintain access to door codes
- Represent ourselves within the Spokescouncil

Responsibilities & Liability

- *The RCWW utilized the tables and chairs in the main space, as well as the kitchen and PA system for certain events*
  - *We clean up after ourselves and lock up the space once we leave*
- *We will participate in the Spokescouncil and submit proposals through the proper channels when applicable.*
- *The Workshop will continue its culture of caring for the space at the end of meetings as a collective, including taking out the trash*
- *RCWW brings new members into Ridgewood Commons*

Yoga and Meditation Charter

Ridgewood Commons Group Charter

Working Group Name: Yoga and Meditation

Contact Information: Yoga Community: [signal group link redacted]

Meditation Community: [signal group link redacted]

Date Charter Ratified: XX/XX/2025 (to be filled in once charter is ratified)

Connection Statement:
Yoga and mediation are offered as wellness practices done in community rather than purely individualized self-care.

Powers & Rights:
We self organize facilitators and instructors to weekly hold Yoga within the main space, without other working groups making use of the space from 6:15 - 8:15pm every Monday. 45 minutes before the start of class (7pm) we need time to clear furniture and sweep the floor, so having the main space clear at this time is essential. We hold group meditations in the gym from 8-9pm every Monday night and 9-10am every Friday morning. 15 minutes before each meditation session, we need time to lay down mats and cushions and adjust the lighting and temperature, so having the gym empty by 8pm on Mondays and 9am on Fridays is essential. We ask others to refrain from being excessively noisy in the main space. As is traditional, these services are offered to the community on a donation basis/NOTAFLOF. We will share the door code with the small crew of bottom-liners, which fluctuates between 5-10 people usually.

Responsibilities & Liability
We clean up after ourselves and leave the space looking as good or better than we found it. We lock up after ourselves if we leave the space empty.

Ratified: XX/XX/2025