

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).

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