

NEIGHBOR CARE FRAMEWORK

Shared commitments to neighbor wellbeing.

EQUITY

We meet neighbors where they are and work to reduce barriers for all.

HEALTH

We support the overall well-being of neighbors through nutritious and safe food.



ACCESS

We make it easier for neighbors to receive the support they need.

DIGNITY

We create a respectful, welcoming environment.

NEIGHBOR CENTERED PRACTICES CHECKLIST

Centering Neighbors in Every Interaction

This checklist is designed to support food pantries and nonprofit partners in creating a more equitable, healthy, dignified, and accessible experience for every neighbor served. Use it as a guide to assess current practices and identify opportunities for growth.

EQUITY

We meet neighbors where they are and work to reduce barriers for all.

- ☐ Invite and incorporate neighbor feedback into decision-making
- ☐ Use inclusive, culturally respectful signage and communication
- ☐ Offer services and materials in multiple languages relevant to the community
- ☐ Identify and address gaps in who is being reached
- ☐ Partner with organizations serving underrepresented populations
- ☐ Review demographic data to guide fair and equitable services
- ☐ Ensure policies do not unintentionally exclude people (ID or eligibility requirements, hours of operation)

HEALTH

We support the overall well-being of neighbors through nutritious and safe food.

- ☐ Prioritize nutritious options, fresh produce, whole grains, lean proteins
- ☐ Promote balanced choices using simple nutrition guidance
- ☐ Accommodate dietary needs (chronic conditions, allergies, cultural diets)
- ☐ Follow proper food safety, storage, and handling practices
- ☐ Provide recipes or cooking tips for commonly distributed foods
- ☐ Highlight seasonal produce and how to prepare it
- ☐ Partner with health or nutrition organizations, such as UT Extension
- ☐ Partner with healthcare providers for screenings, referrals, and wellness resources

DIGNITY

We create a respectful, welcoming environment.

- ☐ Greet neighbors warmly and foster a welcoming environment
- ☐ Design spaces to feel like a market rather than a line
- ☐ Offer a client choice model whenever possible
- ☐ Allow neighbors time and autonomy in making selections
- ☐ Communicate any rules or expectations clearly; utilize signage
- ☐ Actively seek and respond to feedback
- ☐ Protect privacy and confidentiality

ACCESS

We make it easier for neighbors to receive the support they need.

- ☐ Offer evening or weekend hours to accommodate working families
- ☐ Clearly communicate location, hours, and available services
- ☐ Communicate closures or changes in advance
- ☐ Connect neighbors to additional community resources
- ☐ Ensure physical accessibility (ADA compliance, easy navigation)
- ☐ Minimize requirements when possible

Commitment to Neighbor Care

By focusing on **equity**, **health**, **dignity**, and **access**, we strengthen not only our programs—but also the trust and well-being of the communities we serve.