



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

SPRING 2026

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WELCOME VOLUNTEERS!

The Georgina Community Food Pantry provides dignified access to good food that nourishes our community and inspires change. We deliver programming in response to the needs of people who are food insecure, with a focus on providing good food.

The Pantry serves individuals and families living in Georgina - some have been long-term users of the Pantry facing chronic food insecurity, and others are occasional or one-time users, due to recent circumstance. As a designated Good Food Organization by Right to Food Canada, we offer the healthiest food choices we can and take a comprehensive approach to food (food access, food skills, and food advocacy) through our program delivery.

The Pantry values the diverse skills, experience, and insight our volunteers contribute and actively welcomes ongoing feedback and suggestions from our team. If you have ideas or observations, please share them!

The Pantry's success depends on the commitment and contributions of its dedicated volunteers. We are thrilled that you have joined our team!

OUR HISTORY AND FOUNDATIONS

Back in 1985, active members of the faith community were concerned about the growing level of poverty in Georgina and decided to help by establishing a food bank for Georgina residents. A committee was formed and the initial search for a location began.

In the Spring of 1986, an old, unused barn at the corner of Metro Rd and Dalton Rd (in Jackson's Point) was offered – rent-free. Although the building had no heat, that was not a concern in the spring/summer of 1986.

Local churches sent volunteers, and teams were created to prepare the building. Other teams collected and sorted food donations. Others stocked the newly created shelves in the barn. Donations came in from the churches and individuals, as well as the single grocery store in Sutton at the time, the IGA.

By opening day that spring, volunteers had prepared food boxes of various sizes: singles boxes; small boxes to feed a family of 2 or 3; medium boxes to feed 4 to 6 people; and larger boxes to feed 7 or more people.

On the first day, the Food Pantry was open (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.) there was a concern that they might run out of food. By 1 p.m., very little food was left. An older gentleman came in, well after closing time, looking for a box of food. The volunteers were able to find enough food to fill a box. When he left, the shelves were empty.

OUR STAFF

Kathryn Sim – Executive Director

Kim Kennedy – Volunteer & Client Services Coordinator

Natasha Harcharan – Food Programs Coordinator

Kaitlyn St. Pierre – Fundraising & Communications Specialist

OUR BOARD

Joy Hulton – Chair

Philip Decaire - Treasurer

Goodwin Gibson – Director

Harold Denov – Director

Kathy Steffan – Director

Cathy Tustin – Director

John Anderson – Director

Hugh Sibbald – Director

Elysa Parkinson – Director

Kaveeda Ramkissoon – Director

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND PROGRAMS

As a member of Food Banks Canada and Right to Food Canada, The Pantry is committed to upholding the Ethical Food Banking Code and the Good Food Principles. These can be found in Appendix A and B.

Our Mission

To provide dignified access to good food that nourishes our community and inspires change.

Our Vision

An inclusive and food secure community.

Our Values

- **Caring:** The primary mission is to relieve hunger, with a vision that no one in Canada should go hungry.
- **Dignity:** The GCFP operates under the belief that food is a human right and that everyone, regardless of background, deserves access to healthy and culturally appropriate food.
- **Inclusivity:** The GCFP is committed to serving diverse communities. This is reflected in our efforts to include and represent people of all races, ages, genders, abilities, and backgrounds.
- **Collaboration:** The food bank network emphasizes an "in it together" approach, and relies on collaboration with provincial associations, local community organizations, and supporters to achieve its goals.
- **Responsibility:** The GCFP is committed to being accountable and continuously improving operations in areas like food safety, governance, and client service.

In an effort to encourage individuals to access emergency food in ways that feel right and safe for them, the Pantry delivers a variety of food programs, including:

Emergency Groceries - Nutritionally balanced groceries, including non-perishables, perishables, and toiletries are distributed twice a week on-site, plus monthly home deliveries. Food distribution is based on a shopping model, encouraging clients to choose their own groceries based on personal preference and dietary restrictions.

Keswick Community Fridge – Free food-skills workshops are hosted in The Link’s commercial kitchen, featuring useful meal ideas to save money or reflect restricted diets. Participants bring their own containers and each take home prepared meals. This is a collaboration with Vaughan CHC.

Children’s Breakfast Club - A supplemental hamper designed to support children’s nutritional needs, available to households with children under 17 years of age that are receiving emergency groceries from the Pantry. This program complements our Emergency Food Hampers, adding extra eggs, milk, cereal, granola bars, peanut butter, fruit cups, breakfast breads (such as English muffins), breakfast protein, and fresh apples.

Special Diet Hampers – Clients with diet restrictions have the option of joining this program. Each Special Diet Hamper is built with a specific client in mind. The client can still shop our regular Emergency Grocery shelves for the other members of their household.

Nourishing Packs – These hampers are designed for clients experiencing homelessness. This is a smaller quantity of food, to address the obvious lack of storage facilities, and all items can be opened and consumed without any utensils or appliances. This program is delivered in partnership with the Region’s Homelessness Community Programs team.

Resource Navigation – Non-food resources are also made available to on-site clients to help them access additional community services, such as housing, legal aid, parenting programs, cooking workshops, and more. Print and digital materials are available in the Client Resource Area of our waiting room, Intake volunteers make one-to-one referrals during intake, and representatives from local services providers are on site several times a month for in-person connections.

Good Food Collective Community Lunches – Pay-what-you-can, tasty, nutritious and culturally diverse meals, made in-house by Chef Cori and a team of volunteers. Meals are offered every Wednesday at The Link. Once a month, the York Region Food Network’s Fresh Food Market is hosted in conjunction with the lunch. The Good Food Collective is a partnership between the Georgina Food Pantry, Routes, and Community Living Georgina.

Nourishing Possibilities Cooking Workshops – Free food-skills workshops are hosted in The Link’s commercial kitchen, featuring useful meal ideas to save money or reflect restricted diets. Participants bring their own containers and each take home prepared meals. This is a collaboration with Vaughan CHC.

The Link Community Garden – Residents of Georgina can join our community garden, located in the rear field of The Link. Sign up starts in March each year and the garden generally operates from May through October. Each participant has access to one of 31 garden plots, workshops, and support from other gardeners. Participants grow fresh food, learn and share skills, stay physically active, and develop friendships.

VOLUNTEERING AT THE GEORGINA FOOD PANTRY

Volunteer Schedules

Volunteers must sign in and out when performing duties on behalf of the organization, regardless of location, with the exception of Board members who submit their hours monthly by email. All volunteer shifts are scheduled in advance by our Volunteer Coordinator (or designate in their absence). Volunteers sign up for shifts using the SignUp app, by email, or in person. An accurate tally of our volunteer hours is crucial in supporting our grant applications and communications. Please remember to sign in... and out!

Volunteer Requirements

- A Volunteer Application must be fully completed and submitted.
- A Vulnerable Sector Check may be required. This cost will be covered by the Pantry.
- Training, as identified by the Volunteer Coordinator, and/or as per Food Banks Canada’s Standards of Excellence, is to be completed in a timely manner (costs associated with any mandatory training will be paid for by the Pantry).
- Prior to their first shift, volunteers must sign both a Confidentiality Agreement and Food Banks Canada’s Ethical Food Banking Code.
- Volunteers must provide timely notice to the Volunteer Coordinator if unable to honour a shift or schedule that has already been agreed upon.
- Volunteers must immediately disclose to the Volunteer Coordinator (or designated alternate) any potentially contagious symptoms.
- Volunteers may not report for a shift under the influence of alcohol and/or other substances that may affect their ability to complete tasks and responsibilities safely.

- Volunteers may not commit the Pantry to any obligation without the express approval of Pantry staff or a member of the Board of Directors.
- Volunteers must wear their Pantry-provided ID tags while representing the Pantry, on-site or in the community.
- Volunteers who present an issue that limits or restricts their participation in a specific way (i.e., allergies, restricted movement, etc.) may be reassigned to a more suitable role within the Pantry. This is necessary to avoid compromising the provision of services for our clients and to prioritize the safety of our volunteers.
- Volunteers younger than 16 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian, unless otherwise agreed upon in advance with the Volunteer Program Coordinator.

Volunteer Rights and Privileges

- Volunteers have the right to privacy of information as per provincial and federal legislation. To support this, volunteer records containing personal information are securely stored and Volunteer ID tags reflect a volunteer's first name and initial of last name only.
- Upon request, the Pantry will provide a letter of reference that will include the number of hours volunteered, the role(s) fulfilled, any training completed, and the ways in which the Pantry benefitted from the volunteer's participation.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is important when working with clients, directly or indirectly. When you completed your application, you signed a Confidentiality Agreement. We take that seriously. All Pantry team members are expected to refrain from sharing any personal information they may become privy to as a result of their work with the Pantry.

Communication of Issues

If you encounter a problem - with a new procedure, a staff or Board member, another volunteer, or a client - please discuss this directly with the Volunteer Coordinator (or Executive Director in their absence).

Dress Code

The dress code is casual/comfortable. You will be on your feet for much of your shift, please be sure to wear comfortable, closed-toe footwear. We encourage those of you with long hair to tie your hair back while working in our warehouse. Your safety is important to us! Please refrain from wearing dangling jewelry or clothing that you do not want to risk damaging.

Volunteer Additional Notes

If you have any questions or require clarification, please speak with our Volunteer Coordinator (or any other Pantry staff in their absence). Feedback is important and necessary to improve the work of our organization. There are two comment boxes on-site. If you are not comfortable speaking with a staff member in person, please drop your comment or concern in one of the comment boxes.

Volunteers have no obligation whatsoever to respond to any community concerns or complaints regarding the Pantry. You can share staff contact information (not personal cell phone numbers, please) with anyone who is seeking further information or has concerns about our service.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AND SCHEDULES

Regular Shifts

Morning (AM)	8:30 am to 12:30 pm
Afternoon (PM)	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm
Evening (EV)	Thursdays: 2:30 pm to 6:30 pm

GREETER: The first point of contact for all Pantry clients. This role ensures that every client feels welcomed, informed, supported, and guided throughout their visit. **(THURS EV; FRI AM)**

INTAKE: Collects accurate household information from clients during appointment times to ensure services meet clients' needs. This role requires empathy, attention to detail, and professionalism. **(THURS EV; FRI AM)**

SHOPPING ASSISTANT: Guides clients, one-on-one, through their Pantry shopping experience in a caring, friendly, and judgment-free environment. **(THURS EV; FRI AM)**

WAREHOUSE CREW: Ensures shelves remain stocked and organized during client shopping hours and prepares the space for the next service shift. This role helps maintain a clean, efficient, and well-supplied warehouse environment. **(THURS AM, PM, EV; FRI AM)**

PACKING TEAM: Selects and packs groceries in our warehouse for clients on our delivery schedule. Stocks the Pantry's Shopping Aisles for distribution days. This role ensures food is safely packed, labeled, organized, and ready for distribution to clients. **(MONTHLY - THIRD & FOURTH MON AM; THURS AM)**

PACKING TEAM – BREAKFAST CLUB: Packs the additional grocery items assigned to households with children under 17 years of age in preparation for monthly deliveries. **(MONTHLY - THIRD WED AM)**

SORTING CREW: Processes all incoming food to ensure all items are safe, organized, and ready for distribution. **(MON AM; THURS AM)**

RECEIVING CREW: Assists with the transfer of larger scale deliveries, from loading dock to warehouse storage. **(WED AM)**

DRIVER – DELIVERY (PERSONAL VEHICLE): Use your personal vehicle to deliver food directly to clients following an assigned route. **(THIRD THURS AM, PM)**

DRIVER – PICK UPS (PERSONAL VEHICLE): Use your personal vehicle to collect donations from partner organizations. **(MON AM; TUES AM)**

DRIVER – PICK UPS (VEHICLE PROVIDED): Use a Pantry vehicle to collect food from partner organizations, food drives and events. **(VARIABLE - INCLUDING WEEKENDS)**

PROJECT ASSISTANT: Supports administrative operations and seasonal projects, on and off the computer. This role has the potential to be performed from home. **(VARIABLE - WEEKDAYS)**

COMMUNITY GARDEN – CO-LEAD: Serves as the primary liaison between gardeners and the Pantry. Guides garden operations and fosters community engagement. **(FLEXIBLE - INCLUDING WEEKENDS)**

FOOD DRIVES & EVENTS AMBASSADOR: Great for those with less predictable schedules. Dates are communicated with volunteers as events are planned. Shifts are as short as 2 hours. Ambassadors can choose to participate in the activities that fit their schedule. **(VARIABLE - INCLUDING WEEKENDS)**

CLEANING CREW: Helps maintain a safe, sanitary, and welcoming environment for clients, volunteers, and staff. This role supports our food safety and operational standards. **(TUES AM; WED PM; FRI PM)**

CLIENT RESOURCES LEAD: Supports clients by maintaining the Pantry's Client Information Area, including paper and digital resources. This role connects clients with programs and resources beyond emergency groceries. This role is flexible in its time commitment, making it great for individuals with irregular availability. This role has the potential to be performed from home, depending on the project. **(FLEXIBLE)**

COMMUNITY LUNCH CREW: Community Lunch Volunteers help serve and support the weekly Good Food Collective community meal. **(WED AM/PM)**

APPENDIX A

The Ethical Food Banking Code

Food Banks Canada, the provincial associations, and affiliate food banks/programs will:

1. Provide food and other assistance to those needing help regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, citizenship, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, income source, age, and mental or physical ability.
2. Treat all those who access services with the utmost dignity and respect.
3. Implement best practices in the proper and safe storage and handling of food.
4. Respect the privacy of those served and will maintain the confidentiality of personal information.
5. Not sell donated food.
6. Acquire and share food in a spirit of cooperation with other food banks and food programs.
7. Strive to make the public aware of the existence of hunger and of the factors that contribute to it.
8. Recognize that food banks are not a viable long-term response to hunger and devote part of their activities to reducing the need for food assistance.
9. Represent accurately, honestly, and completely their respective mission and activities to the larger community.



APPENDIX B

Good Food Principles

When organizations apply to the Good Food Organization program, they are asked to reflect on their alignment with the Good Food Principles. The Good Food Principles are meant to be read and understood as a set of commitments that organizations are working towards.

1. Take action from the individual to the systemic level.

We work to create many entry points for community members: from meeting basic needs to empowering people to choose, grow, and cook good food, to creating opportunities to get involved with the big-picture issues that affect our community.

2. Invest in the power of good food.

We strive to make good food a priority and to provide food through our programs that is delicious, healthy, sustainably produced, and pleasurable to eat.

3. Create an environment of respect and community leadership.

We provide opportunities for community members to use their strengths and contribute as volunteers and leaders.

4. Meet people where they're at.

We avoid making assumptions about community members' skills and goals. And we work with them toward the changes that they want to make, focusing on celebrating achievements big and small along the way.

5. Aim high for our organization and our community.

Our programs are designed based on current research and the growing body of knowledge from the community food sector. And we make sure that our partners have enough resources to create a positive impact. To stay accountable to our community, we are committed to measuring and communicating the impact of our work.

APPENDIX C

Conflict of Interest – Policies for Non-Board Volunteers (SoE Policy 1.11c)

A conflict of interest for a non-Board volunteer arises when their personal interests, or those of a person close to them, could compromise their ability to act in the best interest of the GCFP. This can be a real, apparent, or potential conflict and require the volunteers to disclose the situation and recuse themselves from related decisions or discussions to maintain objectivity.

Examples of conflict of interest for volunteers

- **Financial:** A volunteer has a personal financial stake in a company that is a vendor or supplier to the GCFP.
- **Family/Friends:** A volunteer's spouse or close family member is being considered for a paid position or contract with the GCFP.
- **Dual Roles:** A volunteer is also serving on the Board or is an employee of another organization that competes with or has a competing interest with the GCFP (i.e. local fundraising).
- **Gifts and Hospitality:** A volunteer receives a gift or hospitality that could create a perception of influence, or that could be foreseen as leading to a conflict (i.e. gift from served client).

What to do if a conflict arises

1. **Disclose:** Inform the appropriate person (e.g., a manager, or the Board) of the potential or actual conflict as soon as possible.
2. **Recuse:** Do not participate in any discussions, decisions, or votes where there is a conflict of interest. This includes actions taken both inside and outside of meetings.
3. **Document:** Ensure the disclosure and the volunteer's recusal from a decision are formally recorded in meeting minutes or other relevant documents.
4. **Follow Policy:** Adhere to the GCFP's conflict of interest policy, which should outline the procedures for managing these situations (see Employee Conflict of Interest Policy).

Adopted on the 21st day of January 2026

APPENDIX D

Prevention of Harassment, Discrimination and Workplace Violence Policy (SoE Policy 2.02)

Policy

The Georgina Community Food Pantry (GCFP) is committed to providing a work environment that is free of harassment, discrimination, and workplace violence and one that is supportive of the self-esteem and dignity of every person within the GCFP. GCFP's intent is to ensure there is a climate of safety, understanding, cooperation, and mutual respect. To be successful in this objective, it is incumbent upon all members of the GCFP to not condone or tolerate behaviour that constitutes harassment, sexual harassment, or discrimination and to work to prevent such behaviour. This Policy provides for prevention of this behaviour and a fair, prompt response to any complaint or concern about workplace behaviour, as appropriate in the circumstance without fear of reprisal. This Policy also provides for the prevention of workplace violence.

Scope

This policy applies to complaints of harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, and/or workplace violence that involve employees, volunteers, and members of the GCFP.

Definitions

Workplace Harassment: Workplace harassment is defined under the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and the Ontario Human Rights Code as: engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Some examples include:

- Verbally abusive behaviour such as yelling, insults, ridicule, jokes that demean, intimidate, or offend;
- Gossiping or spreading rumours; or
- Offensive or intimidating calls or emails.

Workplace harassment should not be confused with legitimate, reasonable management actions that are part of normal management functions, including:

- Measures to correct performance deficiencies, including performance monitoring;
- Correcting behaviour; and
- Disciplinary actions;

Harassment does not include differences of opinion, minor disagreements between employees, or isolated incidents of rudeness.

Sexual harassment: Sexual harassment is one form of workplace harassment which includes conduct or comments of a sexual nature that the recipient does not welcome or that the recipient finds offensive. Sexual harassment is defined as engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, whether the course of comment or conduct is known or ought

reasonably to be known to be unwelcome; or making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker and the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to: remarks, jokes, innuendoes or other comments regarding someone's body, appearance, physical or sexual characteristics or clothing; sexual advances or demands; offering a benefit in exchange for a sexual act; displaying sexual offensive material such as posters, pictures; making sexually suggestive or obscene comments or gestures; persistent, unwanted attention after consensual relationship ends.

Bullying: Bullying is offensive, cruel, intimidating, insulting or humiliating behavior which includes physical violence or the threat of physical violence. It can be physical or verbal, direct, or indirect, such as gossip. Bullying is considered harassment in general, unless there is physical contact or a threat of violence, where it is considered violence.

Workplace Violence: Workplace violence is defined under the OHS Act as:

- The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker in a workplace that causes physical injury to a worker;
- An attempt to exercise physical force against a worker in a workplace that could cause physical injury to the worker; or
- A statement or behaviour that is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker that could cause injury to the worker. Some examples of workplace violence include:
 - Verbal or written threats to physically harm the worker;
 - Physically threatening behaviour such as shaking a fist, finger pointing, destroying property or throwing objects;
 - Wielding a weapon or object that could be used as a weapon at work;
 - Stalking;
 - Physically aggressive behaviour such as hitting, punching, kicking, and throwing objects at a worker.

Workplace: For the purposes of this policy, workplace includes any location in which employees and/or volunteers are engaged in GCFP business activities necessary to perform their assignments. This includes, but is not limited to, GCFP buildings, employee/volunteer parking lots, employee/member organized social events, field locations, and during business related travel.

POLICY APPLICATION

Prevention

Prevention is always the first line of defense against occurrences of harassment. All employees and volunteers are reminded of their obligation to follow the GCFP's Code of Conduct, and to adhere to policies and procedures aimed at ensuring a positive work environment and the highest level of care for members. Beyond this, there is a duty upon all to prevent harassment, bullying, discrimination, and violence by discouraging inappropriate activities and by reporting incidents, in accordance with this policy.

Rights

Everyone has the right to:

- An environment that is free from harassment, discrimination, and violence.
- File a complaint when the environment is not free from harassment.
- Be informed of complaints made against them.
- Have their complaint investigated as appropriate in the circumstances without fear of embarrassment or reprisal.
- Procedural fairness. Be kept informed throughout the process and of remedial action taken.
- Confidentiality to the degree possible under the circumstances.

Obligations

GCFP has the responsibility to ensure the safety and health of all members, volunteers, or employees. As an employer, GCFP has an obligation to provide a workplace that is free of harassment, discrimination, and violence and to respond to complaints in an appropriate, timely manner, in accordance with the OHSA and Ontario Human Rights Code.

Employee and Volunteer responsibilities:

All employees and volunteers are responsible for contributing to a positive work environment and for identifying and discouraging comments or activities that are contrary to this policy. This includes advising people or the alleged harasser that their behavior is unwelcome if the person feels it is safe to do so.

Where a situation occurs or where an employee or volunteer believes a situation has occurred, they are obligated to report to the Manager or Chair of the Human Resources Committee. If a situation occurs which involves their supervisor/manager, or if their supervisor/manager does not intervene appropriately, the employee/ volunteer may report the situation to another member of the Human Resources Committee of the GCFP Board of Directors.

Manager's responsibilities:

The Manager (OM) is expected to take all reasonable steps to provide employees, volunteers and members with a safe work environment, free from violence or threats of violence, harassment, discrimination, or other disruptive behaviour, by:

- Taking steps to ensure that discrimination, workplace violence and harassment are not tolerated, ignored, or condoned;
- Implementing and maintaining this Policy and supporting procedures;
- Providing members, volunteers, and employees with access to the procedures under this Policy to report harassment, violence or discrimination; and
- Maintaining compliance with OHSA requirements in respect of this Policy, including training.

The Chair of Human Resources Committee shall:

- Ensure the safekeeping of a confidential record of the complaints filed the nature of these complaints, the outcome of the investigation and the type of corrective action taken

Process: Situations where there has been an accusation of harassment are extremely sensitive and often complex. At all times, the emotional and physical safety of the complainant is paramount, and this may involve taking steps that are not outlined herein. In general, however, the following process should be taken:

- Complaint Received
- Informal Resolution and/or Investigation as appropriate. Follow up action within 30 days of completion of resolution or investigation.

Complaint: To make an official complaint, a complainant should advise their supervisor/manager or if the person is not comfortable doing so, the applicable Board of Directors' HR representative. Any individual who receives any complaint against an employee, member or volunteer must refer it to the Manager and/or HR representative. From here, there are three (3) possible actions:

1. **No Formal Action:** The behaviour is not found to be harassment, and the complainant agrees.
2. **Resolve:** If the complainant agrees, attempt to resolve the matter through informal resolution.
3. **Refer:** If warranted, refer the complaint to investigation or, in potentially criminal circumstances, the police.

In response to complaints, the Manager and/or HR Committee Chair, as appropriate in the circumstances, will:

1. Advise parties of the process including their rights and obligations.
2. Facilitate communication between parties with a view to resolving conflict
3. Ensure that the process is followed within the prescribed time frame
4. Arrange for investigation, mediation, or expertise, as required
5. Coordinate the follow up actions
6. Maintain original copies of all documentation pertaining to the resolution of differences

Early or informal resolution: Where attempts to address harassment, discrimination or other workplace conflict have not been successful, the matter may be addressed through informal resolution such as mediation. Once a matter has been reported to the Manager or HR Committee Chair and is deemed suitable for informal resolution, the Manager or HR Committee Chair may, with the consent of the parties, attempt to mediate a resolution or appoint a third party to do so. If the matter is successfully resolved, the resolution will be documented.

Investigate: Where attempts to resolve a matter through early or informal resolution have been unsuccessful or are deemed inappropriate, the Manager or HR Committee Chair, in consultation with the Board Chair, will appoint an investigator. The investigator will conduct a thorough and unbiased investigation and provide a written report within ninety (90) days of referral to the investigator.

Action: The Manager and/or HR Committee Chair, in consultation with the Board Chair, will determine what if any action will be taken following the investigation and advise the parties of the findings of the Investigation and actions to be taken. Action may include discipline, where appropriate, training or coaching, and restorative measures to support a return to a safe, healthy workplace environment. At the conclusion of the investigation, the complainant and respondent(s) will be advised of the finding(s) and any follow-up actions, as appropriate.

Confidentiality

Complaints of harassment will be received and investigated in a confidential manner in accordance with the procedures, including prescribing corrective action. Information will be disclosed on a need-to-know basis.

Any allegation or complaint of discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment will be considered personal information 'supplied in confidence.' The name of the complainant or the circumstances of the complaint will not be disclosed to any person except where disclosure is necessary for the purpose of investigating the complaint. The substance of investigative reports and the substance of meetings held by those in authority regardless of whether it is substantiated will be protected from disclosure to third parties, except where required for legal reasons.

Strict confidentiality cannot be guaranteed to anyone who wants to make a complaint of harassment. If a complaint goes through an investigation, the respondent and other people involved will have to learn about the complaint. The complainant can be assured that only people who 'need-to-know' will be told of the complaint. No investigation information is to be kept on the employee/volunteer's personnel file with the exception of official disciplinary/termination papers. Similar to problem resolution cases, harassment investigation information should be kept indefinitely in a separate file. Proven allegations of harassment or sexual harassment, including disciplinary action taken shall be documented and form part of the employee/volunteer's permanent record.

Special Circumstances

In the event that any of the parties to an allegation is a member of the HR Committee or the Manager, the complainant may, in their choice, elect to have a member of the Board to fulfill the role contemplated in these procedures for the Chair, HR or Manager. All of the other provisions of these procedures shall remain in effect.

Workplace Violence

GCFP will comply with all requirements set out in section 32 of the OHSA for the prevention of workplace violence. GCFP will work to prevent workplace violence by developing and maintaining policies and procedures to:

- Assess the risks of violence and reassess as appropriate
- Take measures to mitigate identified risks
- Provide all employees, volunteers and members with information and instruction on the workplace policy and procedures; and
- Respond effectively to complaints and incidents of workplace violence.
- All reports of incidents or threats of violence will be investigated in a timely and fair manner. Where appropriate, incidents will be reported to York Regional Police.

GCFP will ensure that no one who reports incidents or threats of workplace violence faces any negative consequence for reporting such matters in good faith.

RESPONSIBILITY

GCFP's HR Committee of the Board of Directors is responsible for advising stakeholders, maintaining, monitoring, and revising this policy from time to time for approval from board, and for authorizing exceptions.

Adopted on the 18th day of February 2026

APPENDIX E

Conflict Resolution Policy (SoE Policy 2.03)

This policy provides a formal complaint procedure as part of a broader approach to conflict resolution.

Conflict and Complaint Resolution Policy

The GCFP is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment characterized by constructive, productive, and supportive relationships. Such relationships are often subject to contrasting styles of understanding and acting, and to different points of view. It is essential that we all recognize that human interactions are complex, often difficult, and that we all can contribute to their success.

All individuals involved with the GCFP have an obligation to communicate openly and respectfully with one another and to provide reasons for decisions or actions. When disagreements arise, greater understanding by all is needed. The presence of conflict, if dealt with effectively, offers an opportunity for individual and organizational learning, including the identification of policies and practices that need to be improved.

The Operations Manager is ultimately responsible for ensuring that conflicts involving staff and volunteers are resolved in a satisfactory manner. They have a duty to inform the Board (i.e., HR Chair) of any conflicts that impinge on the organization's ability to function or may damage its reputation.

Conflicts should be addressed at the earliest possible opportunity as unresolved conflict can lead to a stressful, and in the worst cases, a poisoned work environment.

In the event that any individual or group is experiencing a work-related conflict or has a complaint about the actions of another individual, the following guidelines will apply.

1. Communicate directly with the person or persons whose actions are the cause of the complaint. People should reasonably expect to know if their behaviour is a problem for another person or group.
2. If the circumstances are such that the person with a complaint is unable or unwilling to communicate directly with the person or persons whose actions are the cause of their complaint, either for fear of it going badly, or of reprisal, the help of one other trusted person in the organization should be sought.
3. The Operation Manager will resolve complaints and conflicts that cannot be resolved by those directly involved or their supervisor (i.e., staff supervising volunteers).
4. In circumstances where the action of the Operation Manager is reason for the conflict, the Board may address the complaint as indicated below.
5. Communication of the complaint or conflict shall first be made verbally to the respondent or supervisor. If this does not lead to a resolution that is satisfactory to the complainant, the nature of the complaint should then be communicated in writing. If this fails to result in a resolution, the written complaint should be sent to the Operation Manager.

6. Third parties, acceptable to all those involved, may be of assistance in helping resolve the conflict in a
 - 1) facilitation or mediation role where the goal is to help the parties restore a positive working relationship in the future, or
 - 2) a decision-making /arbitration role where they investigate what happened and make a determination of who is responsible for the situation and what the consequences for the parties should be.

The choice of these two approaches should be offered to the parties. If a mediated approach fails to resolve the matter, an arbitrated approach can be undertaken.

7. The parties will refrain from drawing others not involved directly into the process as a way of garnering support or gaining attention. Such actions include “copying” the written complaint by email to others.
8. Complaints and conflicts shall be dealt with in a confidential manner. Meetings to resolve a complaint shall be open only to the parties and those attempting to resolve the complaint. The parties may have an advocate or supporter present. Meetings may be with the different parties individually, together, or both. In the interest of openness, no minutes or written record of what is said in these meetings shall be recorded although, if the parties agree, the outcome of the meetings or a resulting agreement may be documented.
9. Where the Board participates in a conflict resolution role, communication with it by an aggrieved employee, volunteer or group should be directly with the Chair not with the whole Board. It is the Chair’s duty to inform the entire Board of the existence of the conflict, but the Board may appoint one of their members, or an impartial party to help resolve the matter.
10. The parties, and those helping to resolve the conflict, should avoid communicating the details of a complaint, making, or responding to allegations or giving advice by e-mail. Face-to-face communication, as difficult as it is, should be relied upon. E-mail messages can be used for arranging meetings or communicating details of the resolution process.
11. Either the Operation Manager or the Chair of the Board have an obligation to act immediately, as appropriate in the circumstance, in addressing a complaint if the physical and mental health and safety of any of the parties is perceived to be at risk. In doing so one of the parties may be granted a temporary leave of absence with pay until the issue has been satisfactorily resolved or for up to two weeks, whichever is shorter
12. If threats to individuals are made, or Operation Manager or Chair of the Board perceives a possible danger to a party or to other employees, including the possibility of one party being a danger to themselves, external professional assistance must be sought immediately.

Adopted on the 21st day of January 2026.

APPENDIX F

Volunteer Management – Orientation (SoE Policy 2.07c)

The GCFP will orient volunteers on policies and procedures by creating a structured orientation program, covering mission, role specifics, safety, boundaries (e.g. Code of Conduct), and legalities (e.g. Privacy/PIPEDA). GCFP will employ tools like checklists and handbooks, led consistently by the Volunteer Coordinator, ensuring clear communication of expectations, risk management, and feedback for a welcoming, compliant, and effective experience, guided by principles from Volunteer Canada (<https://volunteer.ca/>) and [Public Safety Canada](#).

Steps for GCFP Volunteer Orientation Process

1. Core Volunteer Materials:

- a. **Volunteer Manual:** A central document with mission, values, policies, procedures, and contact information for the Volunteer Coordinator.
- b. **Role-Specific Instructions:** Volunteer role descriptions include expected tasks, time commitment, reporting lines, boundaries, and risks and expectations for each role.
- c. **Checklists:** A Volunteer Training Checklist ensures all topics including applicable policies and procedures are covered.

2. Orientation Session:

- a. **Organizational Overview:** Introduce key staff, and volunteers, and tour the site.
- b. **Policies & Procedures Deep Dive:** Cover our guiding principles, including Food Banks Canada's Ethical Food Banking Code of Conduct, safety protocols, emergency plan, right to privacy review, and lines of reporting.
- c. **Role Clarity:** Review role description, define expectations, boundaries, and supervision details.
- d. **Led by:** Volunteer Coordinator leads all orientations, for consistent delivery.
- e. **Consistency:** All new volunteers receive the same core information.

3. Ongoing Support:

- a. **Ongoing Training:** Training is provided as assigned tasks or policies evolve or new trainings become available.
- b. **Regular Feedback:** Informal reviews and anonymous comment boxes help us gauge volunteers' experience and performance.
- c. **Recognition:** informal and formal recognition is both planned and ad hoc throughout the year.

Adopted on the 16th day of March 2026.

APPENDIX G

Volunteer Management – Training

(SoE Policy 2.07d)

The GCFP will provide volunteers with role-based training, using tailored modules, shadowing and mentorship, and continuously evaluate training effectiveness.

1. Needs Assessment & Planning

- **Organizational Needs:** The Volunteer Coordinator identifies service needs and where volunteers fit in.
- **Role Definition:** Volunteer roles, responsibilities, required skills, and impact are clearly defined.
- **Volunteer Skills Audit:** Skills and interests of the existing volunteer pool are assessed prior to recruitment.

2. Core Training (Orientation, as per Orientation Guide)

- **Mission & Values:** Reviewed and discussed with Volunteer Coordinator.
- **Food Handling:** Essential food safety protocols and food management procedures are reviewed.
- **Client Service:** Client services, expectations, and service protocols are clarified.
- **Policies:** Relevant policies (e.g., confidentiality, code of conduct) are identified and reviewed.

3. Role-Specific Training

- **Hands-On Skills:** Training is provided as appropriate for the volunteer role (e.g., food safety, client communications, pallet jack handling).
- **Mentorship & Buddy Systems:** New volunteers shadow more experienced ones for practical guidance.

4. Ongoing Development

- **Continuous Learning:** Workshop opportunities are offered when available (or planned in-house) to build advanced skills.
- **Feedback & Goal Setting:** The Volunteer Coordinator regularly checks in to discuss volunteers' goals (planned or emerging) and address needs as they arise.
- **Regular Meeting:** A Volunteer Advisory Committee is being considered to help identify volunteer interests/concerns and gather necessary feedback to improve volunteer program coordination.

5. Evaluation & Resources

- **Volunteer Progress:** Staff and Lead volunteers monitor volunteer skills (to determine training effectiveness) and volunteer engagement.
- **Surveys:** The Volunteer Coordinator will implement a bi-annual survey of volunteers to identify existing needs, emerging interests, and feedback.

Adopted on the 16th day of March 2026.

APPENDIX H

Volunteer Management – Feedback (SoE Policy 2.07e)

The GCFP will gather volunteer feedback, using a mix of methods like surveys, interviews, and group discussions, asking targeted questions about motivation and role fit, soliciting suggestions, and ensuring methods are accessible and feedback is analyzed for actionable improvements.

Approaches for Gathering Volunteer Feedback

1. Surveys (Quick & Broad Data):

- **Tools:** Email, online, or paper copies for accessibility.
- **Content:** Ask about favourite interactions, suggestions for change, communication preferences, schedule alignment, and willingness to recommend the GCFP. Include open-ended questions for deeper insights.
- **Timing:** During onboarding, after specific assignments, exit surveys, annually.

2. Interviews (In-Depth Insights):

- **Format:** One-on-one conversations, either in-person or virtual, focusing on performance, enjoyment, and concerns.
- **Process:** Review volunteer job descriptions, provide feedback on performance, document, and get signatures if appropriate (i.e. Code of Conduct).

3. Group Discussions:

- Small groups of volunteers gather with the Volunteer Coordinator to discuss specific program aspects, fostering discussion and shared ideas. Share topics of discussion at scheduled volunteer meetings or through the volunteer newsletter.

4. Informal Check-ins & Suggestion Boxes:

- Ongoing feedback is encouraged through casual conversations.
- Physical suggestion boxes offer an anonymous option for ideas and feedback.

Key Principles for Success

- **Asking the Right Questions:** We focus on motivation, alignment, communication, and improvement areas.
- **Being Concise & Accessible:** We keep surveys short and offer multiple ways to respond (online/paper).
- **Acting on Feedback:** We analyze gathered data to understand what works and make tangible improvements wherever possible.
- **Following Canadian Standards:** We refer to resources from Volunteer Canada for best practices on managing volunteer programs effectively.

Adopted on the 16th day of March 2026.

APPENDIX I

Volunteer Recruitment

(SoE Policy 2.08)

The GCFP will implement clear **internal volunteer engagement** strategies like skill-based roles, leadership opportunities, a strong onboarding process, data-driven planning, and diverse recruitment, while also engaging in **external volunteer outreach** via corporate partnerships, digital platforms (such as Volunteer Connector at <https://www.volunteerconnector.org/>), and a strong local community presence, all while focusing on inclusivity, recognition, and leveraging diverse motivations to build strong, sustainable volunteer engagement.

Internal Strategies (Board & Non-Board Volunteer)

1. **Clear Role Definition & Alignment:** Develop Board skills matrices, vacancy profiles, and clear job descriptions for all roles (leadership, direct service, virtual) so volunteers know exactly what's expected, as noted in the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement (CCVI).
2. **Inclusivity & Diversity:** Actively recruit for diverse backgrounds, reflecting Canada's changing population and following GCFP's EDI policy, ensuring inclusive language and outreaching practices.
3. **Strategic and Work Planning:** Involve volunteers in data-driven planning, turning goals into action plans with defined owners, timelines, and metrics, ensuring everyone feels heard.
4. **Data & Infrastructure:** Consider investing in a robust CRM program to manage volunteer data, streamline outreach, and track engagement effectively.
5. **Recognition & Support:** Implement fair treatment, open communication, and recognize contributions to combat burnout or boredom.

External Strategies (Outreach & Engagement)

1. **Skills-Based Volunteering:** Offer volunteer roles requiring professional expertise, such as fundraising, event planning, and specific Board roles such as fundraising or human resource management.
2. **Micro-Volunteering:** Provide short, task-based opportunities for quick engagement.
3. **Digital Platforms:** Use sites like VolunteerConnector - <https://www.volunteerconnector.org/> - for broad outreach, posting detailed opportunities to attract the right fit.
4. **Community Presence:** Build awareness through regular presence at local events and in local print and online media.
5. **Targeted Messaging:** Highlight the impact and direction-setting opportunities (for Boards) or flexible options (for general volunteers) to attract motivated individuals.

Adopted on the 16th day of March 2026.

APPENDIX J

Volunteer Screening

(SoE Policy 2.09)

The GCFP volunteer screening process for both Board and non-Board volunteers involves a structured approach that moves from identifying needs to formal onboarding, with varying levels of scrutiny based on the volunteer roles and responsibilities.

General Volunteer Screening Process

The primary goal of screening volunteers is to ensure they pose no risk to the community, staff, or organization's reputation, and that their skills and motivations align with the GCFP's needs.

1. **Defined Volunteer Positions:** Clear job descriptions for all volunteer roles are available, outlining tasks, duties, expectations, and required skills.
2. **Application Process:** Both online and paper application forms collect basic information, availability, interests, and relevant experience.
3. **Thoughtful Interview:** Interviews are conducted by phone or in-person to assess motivation, reliability, and fit. This is our opportunity to set expectations and answer questions.
4. **Background Checks:** For roles involving direct contact with clients, a Vulnerable Sector Check may be requested, at the GCFP's expense.
5. **Onboarding & Training:** Once cleared, orientation and volunteer manual are provided. New volunteers shadow more experienced volunteers and are trained on their specific duties, relevant policies (e.g., privacy, consent, grievance), and how to interact with donors and clients.
6. **Signed Agreements:** Active volunteers sign the Ethical Food Banking Code and a Confidentiality Agreement at the time of application. These documents are reviewed with the Volunteer Coordinator for clarity.

Board Member Screening Process

The GCFP's screening of potential Board members is a more intensive, formal process focused on governance, fiduciary responsibility, and strategic skills necessary to advance the GCFP's mission.

1. **Identification of Needs and Gaps:** The Human Resources Committee performs a skills-gap analysis to determine what expertise is needed on the Board. Also, an annual Board performance review is conducted, which helps to identify needs.
2. **Candidate Recruitment:** A diverse pool of candidates is actively recruited for each open position. Personal outreach, current member recommendations, social media, LinkedIn, and job posting sites may be used.
3. **Vetting and Interviewing:**
 - **Initial Discussion:** Assessment of the candidate's motivation, alignment with the GCFP's mission, and their availability.

- **Due Diligence:** Share financial reports, bylaws, conflict of interest policies, Directors and Officers (D&O) insurance information, and strategic plans.
- **Mutual Fit:** Determine if the individual is a good fit for the organization and vice versa. Candidates could serve on a working committee first as a trial and later become Board members, if desired. This strategy also helps to progressively involve and recruit new Board members.

Board Member Acceptance and Onboarding

1. **Formal Nomination and Election:** The Human Resources Committee presents qualified candidates for nomination and formal election (i.e. at Board meetings or AGM) by existing Board members.
2. **Formal Onboarding & Orientation:** Once elected, new members are provided a thorough orientation.
3. **Ongoing Engagement:** New members are offered opportunities for ongoing training and involvement in committees and strategic discussions to ensure continuous engagement and effectiveness.

Adopted on the 16th day of March 2026.

APPENDIX K

Volunteer Recognition

(SoE Policy 2.10)

GCFP volunteers play a very important role in the success of our organization, and acknowledging their dedication and hard work not only elevates their spirits but is essential for their motivation and retention within the organization. The GCFP's volunteer appreciation strategies can be divided into two groups:

- A. **Ongoing appreciation and recognition strategies**, which are embedded in the organization's culture and are part of the day-to-day operations.
- B. **Periodic appreciation and recognition strategies**, which are special gestures that celebrate and thank volunteers.

A. Ongoing appreciation and retention strategies for GCFP's volunteers

1. Leadership support and recognition

The GCFP senior leadership (Board and Senior Manager) set an example by demonstrating their support for the role of volunteers within the organization. They do this by speaking positively about volunteer efforts to achieve the organization's goals. When volunteer contributions are acknowledged at the highest levels of the organization, it increases volunteer dedication and productivity and creates a culture of appreciation and respect for volunteer efforts throughout the organization.

2. Clear vision of volunteer roles and responsibilities

Developing a vision that clearly outlines the role of volunteers within the organization will ensure that the work done by volunteers aligns with the GCFP's goals. It is important for volunteers to see that the impact of their work is within the framework of the overall vision of the organization. Volunteers who have clear roles and responsibilities are more empowered and have more ownership of their tasks and initiatives, and this has a direct impact on volunteer retention.

3. Feedback and involvement in decision-making

Giving volunteers the opportunity to share their feedback and involving them in some of the decision-making processes that directly involve their work demonstrates the value the GCFP places on their insights and enhances their sense of belonging and value. This could include feedback on the design and improvement of programs and services based on their frontline experience with clients or participating in the recruitment of new volunteers.

4. Opportunities for leadership roles

Opportunities to take on leadership roles show volunteers that the organization trusts in their capabilities. This strategy will not only help with volunteer retention but will make the organization more attractive to prospective individuals who seek more meaningful volunteer opportunities. Possible volunteer leadership roles include:

- Facilitator - lead training sessions for other volunteers or clients
- Team Lead - lead shifts (crews) of volunteers ie: Monday Sorting Crew
- Warehouse Lead - supports the Food Programs Coordinator with warehouse oversight
- Community Liaison - represents the GCFP at community events.
- Food Drive Coordinator - oversees all in-house food drives
- Client Resource Lead – supports the Client Services Coordinator in managing and maintain the Client Resource Area

- Health & Safety Committee – provide a second layer of warehouse safety oversight, helping identify training requirements or potential safety issues

5. Opportunities for professional development

The GCFP will provide ongoing opportunities for volunteers to learn and grow professionally through workshops, training sessions and mentorship, to ensure all GCFP volunteer experiences are fulfilling and engaging. Volunteers are more likely to stay with an organization that offers a pathway for growth and learning.

6. Regular communication on volunteer recognition

Maintaining regular internal communication about volunteer efforts ensures that their contributions are visible to everyone within the organization. This promotes a culture of appreciation of the role volunteers play to achieve the organization's goals and also increases volunteer support and acknowledgment from all levels of the organization.

7. Equipping volunteers for excellence

Providing volunteers with adequate resources needed for them to excel in their duties enhances their effectiveness and efficiency. Access to supplies, equipment, attire, and adequate working space shows that the organization is committed to their success and satisfaction. Volunteers are more likely to continue with an organization that ensures they have everything they need to perform their duties well.

These ongoing strategies ensure a steady stream of volunteer appreciation, but to create a more fulsome volunteer experience, the GCFP also implements periodic appreciation strategies, to celebrate special milestones and achievements.

B. Periodic volunteer appreciation strategies to implement

1. Host a volunteer appreciation event

The GCFP hosts an annual dinner and awards ceremony and co-hosts an annual volunteer appreciation brunch, bringing all volunteers and staff together in a formal setting to recognize and celebrate the hard work and dedication of our volunteer team. Bringing staff and volunteers together reinforces the idea that volunteers are an important part of the GCFP's family.

2. Spotlight achievements

Using the organization's communication channels including the GCFP's revived volunteer newsletter, the volunteer communications board, and our social media pages, the Volunteer Coordinator shines a spotlight on a specific volunteer every month with our "Volunteer Spotlight". While this can encourage volunteers to continue their involvement with the GCFP, it also serves as a recruitment tool for prospective volunteers because it shows a supportive environment where achievements are recognized and valued.

3. Milestone awards/tokens of gratitude

Using this timeless principle of gift giving to recognize volunteer milestones is a tangible expression of gratitude. Tokens of gratitude may include years-of-service pins, gift cards, door prizes, and birthday cards signed by the whole team remind volunteers of their role in the organization's success.

This dual approach of periodic and ongoing volunteer appreciation and recognition strategies enhances volunteers' experiences and creates an environment that encourages continued engagement and dedication.

Adopted on the 16th day of March 2026.

APPENDIX L

Client Service & Care – Complaints Policy & Procedure

(SoE Policy 4.02; Version 2.0)

The Georgina Community Food Pantry is committed to providing excellent service. We recognize that questions, concerns, or complaints may arise from time to time, and we are committed to ensuring the process for raising them is clear, accessible, and easy to use for everyone.

This policy applies to complaints received from interested parties about our activities, programs, services, staff, or volunteers. Interested parties may include clients, donors, customers, suppliers, external stakeholders, and any other parties that have dealings with The Georgina Food Pantry.

Guiding Principles

- It is in the interest of all parties that complaints are dealt with promptly and resolved as quickly as possible.
- Review of complaints will be fair, impartial, and respectful to all parties.
- Complainants will be provided with updates.
- Complainants will be provided with clear and understandable reasons for decisions relating to complaints.
- Complainants will be advised of their right to escalate their complaint to a more senior staff person if they are dissatisfied with treatment or outcome.
- The history of written complaints escalated to the Executive Director will be used to assist the GCFP in improving its services, policies, and procedures.

Complaint Receipt and Handling

A complaint may be received verbally (by phone or in person) or in writing (in person, by mail, email, or anonymously in an onsite feedback box). The receiving personnel will address the initial complaint, and if required, will direct the complainant to the appropriate staff member and escalate to the Executive Director if needed. Escalated complaints received in writing will be logged and the complainant will receive confirmation that the issue will be dealt with within a given timeframe.

Complaint Resolution

Every effort will be made to resolve complaints received in a timely fashion.

Verbal Complaints

When receiving a verbal complaint, staff will listen and seek to fully understand the complaint and, if practical, immediately address the issue.

Written Complaints

We will make every attempt to acknowledge escalated complaints received in writing within 2 business days. The Executive Director will attempt to resolve the matter and respond to the complainant within 10 business days.

Escalation of a Complaint

Where complaints or concerns cannot be resolved at the local level, individuals are encouraged to contact Food Banks Canada.

Food Banks Canada can be reached for concerns or complaints through their Customer Experience Hotline at 1.877.280.0329 or complaints@foodbankscanada.ca.

Communication with Complainant

Complainants will be kept informed of the status of their complaint. Every attempt will be made to resolve escalated complaints within an additional 10 business days.

Documenting the Complaint

It is necessary to keep a record of any escalated, written complaints. Information about such complaints will be recorded on a complaint tracking worksheet, including the reason for complaint, the name of the team member who handled it, what was done to resolve the complaint, timeframe, and details of the resolution.

Reporting Complaints to the Board of Directors

The Executive Director will prepare an annual summary of the escalated, written complaints received, including number and type, and report their conclusions to the Board of Directors in sufficient detail for Board members to understand the overall nature and impact of complaints received.

Adopted on the 15th day of April 2026.

APPENDIX M

Records on Informed Consent – Maintenance Procedure

(SoE Policy 4.03a)

The GCFP process to collect and maintain records of informed client consent involves obtaining explicit, voluntary, and informed consent for specific data uses, maintaining robust security safeguards, and adhering to retention guidelines.

1. Process for Collecting Informed Consent

The consent process must be clear, user-friendly, and respectful of the client's vulnerability. GCFP uses a standard form to collect clients' consent, and all Intake volunteers receive training to ensure clarity and consistency.

At time of adoption of this procedure, the training outline is stored here: "C:\Users\Manager\Georgina Community Food Pantry\Shared - Documents\Volunteer Program\TRAINING\Informed Consent Volunteer Training outline Dec 2025 - proposed.docx"

At the time of adoption of this procedure, the explanation for clients (English) is stored here: "C:\Users\Manager\Georgina Community Food Pantry\Shared - Documents\Client Services\Informed Consent flyer for client distribution.docx"

- **Provide clear information:** GCFP Verbally explains and provides written information, which can include brochures or fact sheets, to clients about the necessity and purpose of collecting their information. This information will be translated into languages represented amongst the client base. The explanation is written in simple language and printed as a leaflet for distribution, for clients who would like to get a second opinion (ie: a senior who wants their grandson to confirm they are making the right choice, or a Spanish-speaking mom who wants their adult daughter to review the information at home).
- **Specify data use and disclosure:** Clearly explain what personal information is being collected, why it is needed (e.g., for program delivery, for statistical reporting to Food Banks Canada in an anonymized format), and which third parties it might be shared with.
- **Emphasize voluntariness:** Explicitly state that providing consent is voluntary and that clients have the right to refuse to answer questions or withhold consent without affecting their ability to receive food or services.
- **Obtain express consent:** For sensitive information (which can include details about health or finances) or for use outside of the client's reasonable expectations, obtain explicit (written or verbal with documentation) consent. A signed consent form is a primary way to document this.
- **Ensure understanding:** The staff or volunteers obtaining consent should be trained to ensure the client understands the implications of providing their information. A "teach back" method, where the client repeats their understanding, can be used as best practice.

- **Designate a Privacy Officer:** If it becomes necessary, appoint a specific person to be accountable for the GCFP's compliance with privacy principles and to whom clients can direct questions or complaints.
 - **The GCFP has designated** the Manager of Operations in this role, and the Governance Committee Chair in their absence.

2. Process for Maintaining Clients Records

Maintaining records involves secure storage, limited access, and proper disposal, adhering to the principles of Canada's privacy laws, such as PIPEDA (if applicable) and provincial laws.

- **Security Safeguards:**
 - **Physical Records:** Store paper consent forms and records in a secure, locked location (e.g., a locked cabinet) with access limited to authorized personnel only.
 - **Digital Records:** All data in Link2Feed is password-protected and only accessible by the organization(s) providing service to the client. Antivirus software is updated regularly.
- **Limit Use and Disclosure:** Use the information only for the specific purposes for which consent was given. Any new purpose requires new consent.
- **Accuracy:** Take reasonable steps to ensure client personal information is accurate, complete, and up to date. Clients have the right to request corrections.
- **Retention Limits:** Retain records only as long as necessary to fulfill the stated purposes, or as required by law. Develop clear guidelines and procedures for the secure disposal or anonymization of information once it is no longer needed.
- **Withdrawal of Consent:** Establish a clear process for clients to withdraw their consent at any time. In the Informed Consent explanation read to all clients, the Pantry informs clients of any consequences of withdrawal.
- **Accountability and Auditing:** Be prepared to demonstrate compliance with privacy policies. Periodically audit information management practices to ensure adherence to established policies.

Adopted on the 16th day of March 2026.

APPENDIX N

Records on Informed Consent – Guaranteed Service Procedure

(SoE Policy 4.03b)

GCFP follows specific processes to ensure that clients are **not denied services for refusing to share personal information** not required for program eligibility, prioritizing access to food with dignity and respect.

Key Policies and Processes

- **Service is Guaranteed, Not Conditional:** The GCFP, as an affiliate of Food Banks Canada, has policies that explicitly state service will not be denied to any client who refuses to provide non-essential data. The primary goal is to remove barriers to service, not create them.
- **Voluntary Information Sharing:** GCFP clients are informed that while some information (like household size or general demographics) helps the food bank secure funding and report on community needs, providing this data is voluntary and not a condition of receiving food.
- **"Bill of Rights" for Clients:** GCFP adopted and posted a "Bill of Client Rights" that outlines a client's right to confidentiality and the right to receive services without needing to provide documentation like a Social Insurance Number, proof of income, or citizenship.
- **Privacy and Confidentiality:** All GCFP staff and volunteers are expected to be familiar with and understand GCFP's strict data protection statement and confidentiality agreement. These statements are shared with all GCFP clients, who are clearly informed that any identifying information collected in the course of our Intake process is saved in the secure Link2Feed database, and only accessible by organizations providing services to that client.
- **Anonymity Options:** GCFP allows clients to remain anonymous when possible. For programs that require some level of tracking for reporting, non-identifying methods such as unique IDs or a pseudonym or alias may be used to collect unduplicated data.
- **Clear Communication:** Staff and volunteers are trained to explain to clients why certain data is collected (e.g., for grant reporting or connecting to other resources like Hunger Count) and how it will be protected, building trust and transparency.
- **Grievance Procedures:** If a client believes their rights have been violated or they have been denied service unfairly, formal complaint procedures are in place. Clients may file a complaint with GCFP's Client Services Coordinator. If they feel the situation is not resolved satisfactorily, they may escalate their complaint to GCFP's Operations Manager or the Food Banks Canada Customer Experience Hotline, linked on the GCFP website.
- **Minimize Data Collection:** GCFP collects the minimum information necessary for essential services and reporting, reducing the potential for client anxiety or data breaches.

By adhering to these policies, the GCFP ensures that the most vulnerable populations, including individuals who may lack documentation, can access necessary food assistance without fear of repercussion or judgment.

Adopted on the 16th day of March 2026.

APPENDIX O

Records on Informed Consent – Training Procedure

(SoE Policy 4.03b)

The GCFP training for staff and volunteers on client informed consent involves a structured program that emphasizes dignity, respect, and clear communication, supported by formal policies and practical training methods.

The Training Process

1. Clear Policies and Materials:

- GCFP has a clear Privacy Policy and Guaranteed Service procedures that outline what data is collected, why, how it is used, with whom it might be shared, and a client's right to refuse to disclose.
- GCFP has a standardized Informed Consent statement to which clients may provide verbal consent (documented in L2F), written in plain, non-jargon language, read aloud in English, and translated into common local languages where possible. GCFP is in a geographic area which attracts a large number of diverse language speakers. GCFP uses free virtual translation services during verbal intake, produces written forms in the preferred language where possible, and regularly polls clients on language preferences to keep written materials as current as possible.
- GCFP has prepared training materials that cover the importance of empathy, non-judgmental language, and trauma-informed care.

2. GCFP Conducts Comprehensive Orientation and Training Sessions:

- **Initial Training:** Informed consent training is integrated into the initial onboarding process for new staff and volunteers, where applicable.
- **Delivery Methods:** Training is delivered in person (which allows questions and role-playing), and in written form. Video training modules are planned for completion within the year.
- **Key Topics:**
 - **Purpose of Data Collection:** ie. data collection is for internal use (e.g., tracking visits, ensuring fair distribution) and for advocacy (e.g., demonstrating community need), not to deny services.
 - **Confidentiality:** Emphasis on client information is highly sensitive and must be protected, similar to banking information.
 - **Voluntary Participation:** Stress that clients have the right to refuse to answer any questions or provide information without penalty.

- **Client Autonomy:** Staff are trained to recognize clients as "experts of their own lives", focusing on active listening and avoiding assumptions or unsolicited opinions.

3. GCFP Implements Practical Application and Assessment:

- **Role-Playing Scenarios:** Training may include mock intake scenarios to practice sensitive interactions, obtaining consent, and handling refusals respectfully.
- **"Teach-Back" Method:** Trainees are encouraged to explain the informed consent process in their own words to ensure comprehension.
- **Documentation Review:** Procedures for securing physical and digital records are reviewed (e.g., using password-protected computers, locking cabinets, keeping papers face down when not in use).

4. GCFP Ensures Ongoing Support and Review:

- **Point of Contact:** Clients and volunteers are directed to the Volunteer Coordinator as point of contact for questions and clarifications. This is noted in both Informed Consent documents found here at time of approval: "C:\Users\Manager\Georgina Community Food Pantry\Shared - Documents\Volunteer Program\TRAINING\Informed Consent Volunteer Training outline Dec 2025 - proposed.docx" and "C:\Users\Manager\Georgina Community Food Pantry\Shared - Documents\Client Services\Informed Consent flyer for client distribution.docx".
- **Regular Refreshers:** Periodic refresher training sessions will be offered to reinforce policies and address new challenges or changes in procedure.
- **Feedback Loops:** Clients and volunteers are encouraged to offer feedback on the intake and consent process to ensure it remains respectful and effective. Comment boxes are available in multiple location onsite, for anonymous feedback, and/or feedback may be shared with the Volunteer Coordinator.

By following this process, the GCFP can ensure that all personnel are well-equipped to handle client information ethically, respectfully, and in compliance with privacy standards.

Adopted on the 16th day of March 2026.

APPENDIX P

Volunteer Quick Guide: Allergen Safety

(SoE Policy 6.11a (Appendix only))

Purpose: Protect our clients from allergen exposure and ensure safe food handling.

1. Know the Common Allergens

- Peanuts & tree nuts
- Eggs
- Soy
- Milk & dairy
- Wheat/gluten
- Fish & shellfish

Tip: If you're unsure about ingredients, treat the food as potentially allergenic.

2. Hand Hygiene

- Wash hands **before and after** handling food.
- Avoid touching your face or personal items while handling food.

3. Food Storage

- **Separate allergen-containing foods** from allergen-free foods.
- Label clearly and use designated shelves or bins.
- Follow **temperature guidelines**:
 - Refrigerated: $\leq 4^{\circ}\text{C}$
 - Frozen: $\leq -18^{\circ}\text{C}$

4. Handling & Serving

- Use **separate utensils, cutting boards, and containers** for allergen foods.
- Clean and sanitize equipment immediately after contact with allergens.
- Prevent **cross-contact** during packaging and distribution.
- Clearly **inform clients** about potential allergens.

5. Emergency Response

- Recognize allergic reactions: hives, swelling, difficulty breathing, anaphylaxis.
- Call **911** immediately for severe reactions.
- Follow first-aid protocols and use **epinephrine** if available.
- Report all incidents to a supervisor.

6. Quick Tips

- ✓ Read all labels carefully.
- ✓ Wash hands and utensils thoroughly.
- ✓ Ask if unsure about ingredients.
- ✓ Always inform clients about allergens.
- ✓ Keep allergen foods clearly separated.

Remember: Safety first – it only takes one cross-contact to cause a serious reaction!

APPENDIX Q

Fair Distribution of Food (Volunteers)

Purpose: The Georgina Food Pantry is committed to creating a respectful, inclusive, and dignified environment for all individuals. This policy outlines guidelines for volunteers who also access services as clients, ensuring confidentiality, fairness, and equitable food distribution.

Policy Statement

Volunteers who are also clients of the Georgina Food Pantry are valued members of our community. We recognize the importance of maintaining their dignity and privacy while ensuring equitable access to food in alignment with organizational guidelines.

Confidentiality & Privacy

- Volunteers who are also clients have the right to confidentiality regarding their client status.
- To protect privacy, these individuals will be supported in completing their food shop at a time separate from their volunteer shift whenever possible.
- Shopping appointments may be coordinated with designated staff (e.g., Volunteer & Client Services Coordinator or Executive Director) to ensure discretion.
- Volunteers are not required to disclose their client status to other volunteers or team members.

Access to Food & Fair Distribution

- All clients, including those who volunteer, will receive food support based on household size and in accordance with Feed Ontario guidelines and Pantry policies.
- Volunteers who are also clients will not receive preferential treatment during regular food distribution.
- Volunteers who are also clients have the choice of the following shopping options:
 1. Shop 30 minutes before their shift with an available staff member of their choice.
 2. Make an appointment during regular client service hours.
 3. Schedule a shop with a designated staff member on a non-service day.

Access to Surplus or Perishable Items

- In situations where the Pantry has an excess of perishable or short-dated items that may expire before the next scheduled client service day, volunteers may be offered these items.
- Distribution of surplus items will:
 - Be offered equitably to volunteers present at the time.
 - Occur only after core client needs have been met or when items cannot reasonably be distributed otherwise.
 - Be monitored by staff or designated leadership to ensure fairness and transparency.

Guidelines During Volunteer Shifts

- Volunteers are expected to focus on their assigned duties during their shift.
- Shopping for personal groceries may not take place during active volunteer hours. Please see shopping options under *Access to Food & Fair Distribution*.

Respect & Dignity

- All interactions will be handled with respect, empathy, and without judgment.
- The Georgina Food Pantry maintains a zero-tolerance approach to stigma or discrimination toward any individual accessing services.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed to ensure alignment with best practices and organizational values.