Foodbank Victoria

Guidance on Seeking Donations from Clients

As outlined in the Foodbank Victoria Charity Partner Terms and Conditions, food relief partners must not sell any food or products received from Foodbank Victoria to clients or other organisations. However, partners may seek financial donations from food relief clients, or apply an administration fee, membership fee or service fee, provided that:

- Any amounts sought are not itemised on individual food products provided by Foodbank Victoria.
- Any donations or fees are voluntary in nature.
- The voluntary nature of any request for a donation or fee is clearly communicated to clients.
- Clients who choose not to make a donation or pay a fee must be permitted to retain their access to food relief.
- There must be no difference in the treatment of clients or access to food, regardless of whether they make a donation or pay any suggested fees.

To support compliance with these requirements and to help ensure a positive and dignified experience for recipients, we strongly encourage organisations to display clear signage and messaging wherever donations or fees may be requested, such as at reception areas, food collection points, payment stations, or within food relief spaces.

In communicating the voluntary nature of any request for donations or fees, the signage should clearly communicate that:

- Donations are voluntary.
- Access to food relief is not dependent on making a donation.
- Clients who choose not to donate will continue to receive the same access to food relief and services.
- Any donations collected will help support the operation and sustainability of the food relief program.

Clear communication at the point where donations are requested helps ensure clients understand their rights and can access support without feeling obligated or pressured to contribute financially.

We also encourage partners to consider the circumstances of the individuals and families accessing their services. Food relief recipients are often experiencing significant financial hardship, and any suggested donation amount should remain reasonable and proportionate to the operational costs associated with delivering the program. As charitable organisations supporting some of the community's most vulnerable members, it is important that any suggested contribution helps sustain the service without creating a financial barrier to accessing food relief.

Foodbank Victoria greatly values the important role our partners play in supporting vulnerable members of the community. By ensuring food relief remains accessible, equitable and dignified for all recipients, we can continue working together to achieve the best possible outcomes for those who rely on these services.

If you have any questions regarding these requirements or would like to discuss your organisation's current practices, please don't hesitate to contact community@foodbankvictoria.org.au.