

## **Nutrition Policy**

### **Purpose and Guidelines**

At New Day Ministry, we recognize the important role that food and nutrition play in our clients' health. In addition to breaking down barriers to food access, we are committed to offering our clients choices that enable positive health outcomes, help prevent diet-related chronic illnesses, and respect the cultural needs and dietary preferences of individuals and families in Kitsap County.

This Nutrition Policy demonstrates our commitment to the quality of food we offer our clients. We utilize the Healthy Eating Research (HER) Nutrition Guidelines as a framework to guide purchasing and distribution of food at New Day Ministry.

### **Overall Nutrition Commitments**

Our nutrition commitments are rooted in the belief that local, sustainable foods will provide our community with the best nutrition possible while supporting the local food ecosystem and reducing our carbon footprint. We commit to sourcing foods from local farms whenever possible. We will also seek out partnerships with growers and distributors of local foods for donations or reduced-cost items.

New Day Ministry is dedicated to prioritizing the health of our clients through its various food initiatives. In line with our mission, we commit to increasing the distribution of "choose often" food products set forth by HER to enhance the nutritional value of our offerings. These increases will be implemented and met by the end of 2024. To determine the increases for each food category beyond 2024, New Day Ministry will adjust the target distribution accordingly each year based on the previous year's distribution.

- Fruits and Vegetables: Increase "Choose Often" by 43.18%, with a target of 962.3 pounds.
- Grains: Increase "Choose Often" by 500%, with a target of 12 pounds.
- Dairy: Increase "Choose Often" by 10-20%, with a target of 25-30 pounds.
- Beverages: We will only serve water with our weekly meals and we will increase "Choose Often" beverages by 1-3 choices in our food pantry.
- Mixed Dishes: Increase "Choose Often" by 156.58%, with a target of 40 lbs.

We also strive to distribute items that are reduced sodium, lower fat, and higher fiber to meet the cultural and dietary needs and preferences of those living with chronic illness and preventable, diet-related diseases.

## **Food Selection and Procurement**

When making decisions regarding food procurement, New Day Ministry will prioritize whole, unprocessed foods over highly processed and sugary items whenever possible in addition to following the guidelines below:

### Food Safety

New Day Ministry will adhere to food safety regulations and guidelines to ensure the safety of all food items (See Food Safety Manual for more details.)

### Food Donations

As a guideline for donated food items, New Day Ministry's leaders will clearly communicate acceptable "choose often" category food items to donors by sharing a Donor Guide to ensure the pantry receives items that are nutrient-dense, popular in our programs or that participants request and prioritize, such as low-sodium and low-sugar options. New Day Ministry will follow all state and federal regulations for donated food items.

### Food Purchases

In alignment with our nutrition commitments, New Day Ministry will prioritize the use of agency funds to purchase foods that fall under the green "choose often" or yellow "choose sometimes" categories. This allows us to make the best use of our organizational resources by only purchasing the foods that are most nutrient dense.

We will only use funds to purchase beverages with "0 grams" of added sugars on the nutrition facts panel. We will not use funds to purchase dessert foods including candy, cakes, pies, or sweets other than during special holidays. We will not use funds to purchase pre-made frozen meals.

## **Special Programs**

### Meal Program

New Day Ministry will plan well-balanced meals that include a variety of food groups, aiming to meet daily nutritional requirements set forth by U.S. Departments of Agriculture (USDA) and Health and Human Services (HHS). We will offer vegetarian and vegan options to accommodate diverse dietary choices and we will serve appropriate portion sizes in response to the client's choice to prevent food waste.

### Food Pantry

New Day Ministry will use signage to guide and encourage pantry shoppers to make food selections from each food group so they are able to create balanced meals at home.

## **Broader Commitments**

### Nutritional Education

New Day Ministry works with the Washington Food Coalition and the American Heart Association's nutrition experts to review our nutrition guidelines on a regular basis and evaluate the nutritional offerings through our meal program and pantry. New Day

Ministry will review client feedback and provide relevant nutrition education and resources to educate clients about healthy food choices and portion control as needed.

### Social Engagement

New Day Ministry's meals are offered as a dine-in service to create a supportive and social environment during dinner to combat senior isolation. This environment will also be geared towards encouraging social engagement for people with disabilities, individuals, and families with children. We have speakers from other organizations and host a talk every two months. These speakers are from a variety of organizations including mental health, housing and others that help low-income people with services we do not provide.

### Mobility and Accessibility

New Day Ministry offers a home delivery service for seniors and disabled individuals with mobility and transportation limitations to ensure they have food.

### **Administration and Implementation**

This policy, approved by our Board of Directors on 3/20/2024, will take effect on 4/01/2024 at which time it will become part of the organizational policies and procedures. Our Board of Directors is responsible for an annual review of the guidelines with food pantry staff in order to keep it up to date with community needs. Our executive director will share our progress with stakeholders including donors and clients and evaluate our success in meeting our nutrition policy goals as part of our annual impact report. All new volunteers will be provided an orientation to our nutrition guidelines by the Food Safety Manager within one week of volunteering. New Day Ministry will assess the community impact of our food programs yearly and will modify our nutrition commitments as written in this policy.