

Encouraging Wellness with the ATCAA Food Bank

SUMMARY

The Amador Tuolumne Community Action Agency Food Bank is Tuolumne County's only food bank, overseeing several distributions, household deliveries, and partner pantry programs. In conjunction with the UCCE CalFresh Healthy Living program, a Wellness Policy was written and adopted by the agency's board in early 2019. The wellness policy is used to inform procurement policy and donation solicitation guidelines for all programs housed under the ATCAA Food Bank. The adoption of this policy will influence the food received by clients, who cumulatively accessed food bank resources 129,940 times last year.

BACKGROUND

The ATCAA Food Bank served 14,783 individuals from 6,142 households in Tuolumne County in 2018 alone. With a mission to solicit, transport, store, and distribute food, they are an integral part of the food safety network here in Tuolumne County. Last year 960,432 pounds of food were distributed to those facing food insecurity. The adoption of a wellness policy marks how ATCAA's vision has moved beyond caloric fundamentalism (the belief that those needing food simply need calories) and towards the importance of giving foods that are both nutritious and appealing to clients.

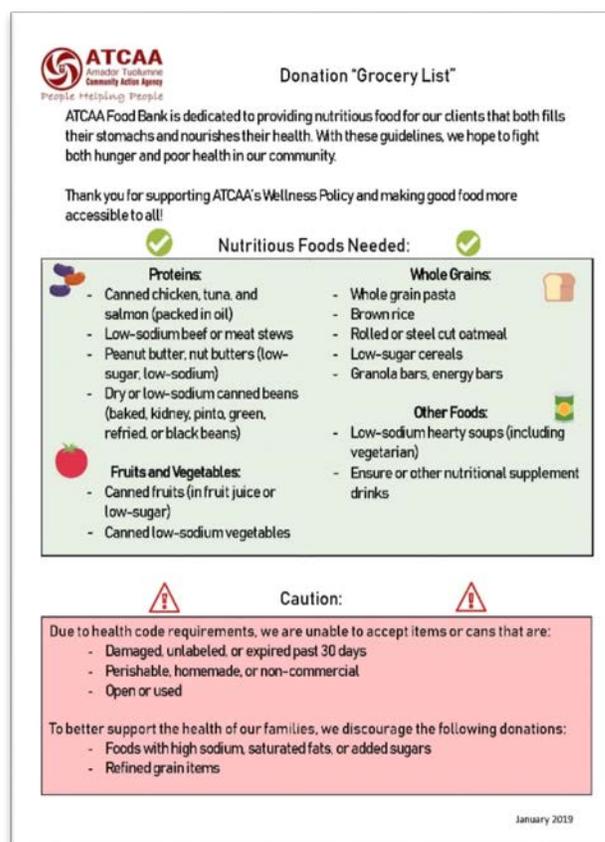
SOLUTION

The ATCAA Food Bank Director met with the UCCE CalFresh Healthy Living Nutrition Educator and Nutrition Advisor to help prioritize which foods should be purchased with the food bank's discretionary funds. Priority was given to nutrient dense foods while limiting foods high in sodium, added sugars, or saturated fats. A need for a donation policy was also noted, and written to assure best food safety practices and the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans were being promoted. The donation "grocery list" follows the Wellness Policy and aims to be clear and concise, focusing on soliciting healthy foods from local community donations.

"This wellness policy is the first step towards changing the culture surrounding food insecurity. We recognize that health and nutrition go hand in hand."

-Joe Tobin, Food Bank Director

For more information or to get involved, contact Katie Johnson, Nutrition Family and Consumer Sciences Advisor for the University of California Cooperative Extension in the Central Sierra at ckjohnson@ucanr.edu.



The poster is titled "ATCAA Donation 'Grocery List'" and features the ATCAA logo (Amador Tuolumne Community Action Agency, People Helping People). It states that ATCAA is dedicated to providing nutritious food and that the list is intended to help fight hunger and poor health. It thanks supporters for making good food more accessible. The list is divided into three sections: "Nutritious Foods Needed" (with green checkmarks), "Caution" (with red warning triangles), and "Discouraged Donations" (with red warning triangles). The "Nutritious Foods Needed" section includes Proteins (canned chicken, low-sodium beef, peanut butter, dry beans), Fruits and Vegetables (canned fruits, low-sodium vegetables), and Whole Grains (whole grain pasta, brown rice, rolled oats, low-sugar cereals, granola bars). The "Other Foods" section includes low-sodium hearty soups and nutritional supplements. The "Caution" section lists damaged, unlabeled, expired, perishable, homemade, non-commercial, or open items. The "Discouraged Donations" section lists high sodium/saturated fat/sugar items and refined grains. The date "January 2019" is at the bottom right.

ATCAA
Amador Tuolumne
Community Action Agency
People Helping People

Donation "Grocery List"

ATCAA Food Bank is dedicated to providing nutritious food for our clients that both fills their stomachs and nourishes their health. With these guidelines, we hope to fight both hunger and poor health in our community.

Thank you for supporting ATCAA's Wellness Policy and making good food more accessible to all!

Nutritious Foods Needed:

Proteins: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Canned chicken, tuna, and salmon (packed in oil)- Low-sodium beef or meat stews- Peanut butter, nut butters (low-sugar, low-sodium)- Dry or low-sodium canned beans (baked, kidney, pinto, green, refried, or black beans)	Whole Grains: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Whole grain pasta- Brown rice- Rolled or steel cut oatmeal- Low-sugar cereals- Granola bars, energy bars
Fruits and Vegetables: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Canned fruits (in fruit juice or low-sugar)- Canned low-sodium vegetables	Other Foods: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Low-sodium hearty soups (including vegetarian)- Ensure or other nutritional supplement drinks

Caution:

Due to health code requirements, we are unable to accept items or cans that are:

- Damaged, unlabeled, or expired past 30 days
- Perishable, homemade, or non-commercial
- Open or used

To better support the health of our families, we discourage the following donations:

- Foods with high sodium, saturated fats, or added sugars
- Refined grain items

January 2019

OUTCOME

The Wellness Policy was adopted by ATCAA's Board of Directors in early 2019 and revised in August when a new Food Bank Director was hired. The Wellness Policy continues to be a living document, shared with community members and donors alike. The policy is expected to continue to support health in ATCAA's procurement and education efforts.