### Improving Your Partner Agency Relationships

Partner Agencies (PAs) are the local hunger-fighting organizations to which chapters donate food. They are pillars of support for our communities and the backbones of FRN programs. Through surveys, we’ve found that PAs would appreciate greater communication, consistency, and additional help from student volunteers. Here are some ways that you can improve your chapter’s relationship with your PA.

### Improving Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pertinent Questions</th>
<th>Suggested Goals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Does this partner agency know they’re partnered with FRN vs. just a group of college students?</td>
<td>• Introduce yourselves as “[name] from Food Recovery Network” each time. Ensure that all volunteers are introducing themselves as well. Consider wearing FRN gear!</td>
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<td>• Do you have an established primary contact? Have you established relationships with anyone else at the organization?</td>
<td>• Establish a primary contact and relationships with 2-3 more staff members and potentially some of the guests</td>
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<td>• How do you communicate with your PA? How often? Are there time constraints or other barriers to consider?</td>
<td>• Set up a meeting to discuss the partnership with the primary contact. Establish what’s working and what’s not, give feedback, and come up with a plan to address any needs/opportunities</td>
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<td>• Do you have a set drop-off schedule? Does the PA get a call/text when drop-offs are or aren’t happening?</td>
<td>• Discuss their comments from the partner agency survey. Ask your FRN National point of contact for your PA’s most recent survey feedback</td>
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<td>• Is your chapter donating? Consistently?</td>
<td>• Develop a plan to address the rough parts of the relationship. Set goals and a timeline</td>
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<td>• If your partnership is not thriving, why not? Is the organization requesting something and not getting it?</td>
<td>• Check in regularly (once a month or so) to ask for feedback on progress</td>
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<td>• Do you feel comfortable giving and receiving feedback, either positive or negative? Does your PA?</td>
<td>• Show gratitude! Consider giving thank you cards, certificates, or other demonstrations of appreciation annually</td>
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**VOLUNTEERING**

**PERTINENT QUESTIONS**

- Could your chapter begin donating more frequently, or donating a greater amount of food?
- Has your chapter volunteered outside of food donation? If so, have you volunteered at the PA’s events, hosted events for your PA, or hosted events together?
- Can your chapter help meet other needs for this partner agency (such as fundraising, tutoring, data collection, cleaning, job search assistance, etc.)?

**SUGGESTED GOALS**

- Try to plan additional volunteering initiatives this semester: serving a meal, cleaning up after a meal, attending one of their events, helping with administrative needs
- Consider hosting a drive for clothing, hygiene or other supplies (if applicable) or a fundraiser, especially around the holidays
- Consider taking on additional volunteering to fill their specific needs (e.g. tutoring or computer skills)
- Take pictures at events. See if there’s a place at your PA to hang a picture of your chapter volunteering
- See the [Events Catalog](#) for more ideas on events and collaborations

**SERVICE LEARNING: TAKING YOUR VOLUNTEERING TO THE NEXT LEVEL**

**PERTINENT QUESTIONS**

- Does your chapter do additional volunteering? Do you address the organizational needs of the PA?
- Have your chapter and partner agency put on an event together?
- Does your chapter prepare, debrief, and reflect on your service experiences together?
- Has FRN National featured this relationship in a newsletter or blog?
- Has FRN National highlighted this chapter as a leader for other chapters?
- Is your chapter open to being connected to chapters struggling with their partner agency relationships?
- Has your chapter used this relationship as a springboard to effect real, lasting change throughout the community? If not, what other organizations can the chapter and partner agency seek out to help?

**SUGGESTED GOALS**

- Try to plan two additional initiatives throughout the semester
- Expand to new recovery sites and bring in additional volunteers so you can increase the frequency/amount of recoveries
- Organize a chapter gleaning event so you can donate fresh produce
- Plant the seeds for annual events together
- Take the time to prepare as a group before service initiatives, and reflect on your experiences together afterwards
- Get some news features! (FRN and/or otherwise)
- Expand the scope of the partnership (start a garden, bring in another school org to do additional volunteering, plan a community-wide event together)
- Consider adding a new partner agency
- Connect with other local chapters and their partners to host a service event or support the improvement of their relationship
- **Think big.**