



Political Activity and Nonpartisanship Policy	Reviewed:
	Approved: 12/9/25
	Effective: 12/9/25
Policy Owner: Feeding South Dakota Development Committee	
Related Policies and/or Standard Operating Procedures:	

1. Scope:

1.1. This policy applies to all staff, board members, volunteers, and representatives of Feeding South Dakota. It governs the conduct of individuals and groups acting on behalf of the organization in relation to political activities, interactions with elected officials and candidates, and use of organizational resources. All departments and programs within Feeding South Dakota are required to comply with this policy to ensure strict nonpartisanship and adherence to federal regulations for 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations.

2. Purpose:

2.1. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Feeding South Dakota must remain strictly nonpartisan in all of its activities. This policy ensures compliance with federal law and protects the organization’s credibility, reputation, and mission. It provides guidance to staff, board members, and volunteers, and outlines how the organization interacts with elected officials, candidates for public office, and political campaigns.

3. Policy

- 3.1. Feeding South Dakota does not support or oppose any political party or candidate for elected office. Our focus is on hunger relief and food security - not politics. We engage in public policy education and advocacy only to advance our mission to end hunger and to serve the people of South Dakota.
- 3.2. Feeding South Dakota will exercise a voice of advocacy in relation to specific federal or state policies, bills, funding changes, or programs that will impact individuals facing hunger in South Dakota or the provision of food to South Dakotans.
- 3.3. All expenses related to formal lobbying of local, state or federal officials will be tracked and reported for inclusion on the organization’s Form 990. At no time will direct or indirect lobbying costs exceed 10% of the food bank’s operating budget.
- 3.4. If you are unsure whether an activity is appropriate under this policy, contact the CEO or Vice President of Public Relations before proceeding.

3.5. Prohibited Activities

- 3.5.1. To maintain compliance with IRS regulations, the following activities are not permitted by the organization, its staff, volunteers, or representatives acting on behalf of Feeding South Dakota:
 - 3.5.1.1. Endorsing or opposing candidates for public office.
 - 3.5.1.2. Donating funds or resources (such as food, staff time, equipment, or facilities) to a political campaign, party, or candidate. Food bank property may not be used for campaign events, press conferences, or partisan activities.
 - 3.5.1.3. Displaying political materials (signs, posters, buttons, flyers) on food bank property or during food bank programs.
 - 3.5.1.4. Organizing or participating in campaign events using Feeding South Dakota’s name, brand, or facilities.

- 3.5.1.5. Using organizational communication channels (email, newsletters, social media, etc.) to share partisan messages or promote a candidate or party.

3.6. Permitted Activities

- 3.6.1. Certain activities are allowed as long as they are strictly nonpartisan and serve an educational or mission-related purpose:
- 3.6.2. Issue Advocacy - Educating the public and policymakers about hunger and poverty-related issues, without favoring or opposing any candidate or party.
- 3.6.3. Elected Official Visits - Hosting sitting officials to learn about the food bank's work, provided the visit is nonpartisan and no campaign activity occurs.
- 3.6.4. Candidate Education - Sharing factual information with all candidates equally to inform them about hunger and community needs. Candidates may visit or volunteer as private individuals, but may not campaign, distribute materials, or make political statements while on site or at a Feeding South Dakota program.

3.7. Candidate Questionnaires or Forums

- 3.7.1. Permitted only if all candidates for the same office are invited, treated equally, and asked neutral, issue-based questions.
 - 3.7.1.1. If an elected official or candidate is invited to speak at a food bank event, the purpose must be clearly related to the food bank's mission (e.g., addressing hunger issues).
 - 3.7.1.2. The invitation and event must not suggest endorsement or opposition to the individual's candidacy.
 - 3.7.1.3. If one candidate is invited, all other candidates for the same office must be given an equal opportunity to attend or speak.
 - 3.7.1.4. No campaign materials or fundraising may be present.
 - 3.7.1.5. Nonpartisan Voter Engagement - Providing information about how, when, and where to vote, without reference to candidates or political parties.

3.8. Staff and Volunteer Conduct

- 3.8.1. Staff and volunteers may engage in political activities only in their personal capacity, on their own time, and not using food bank resources or affiliation.
- 3.8.2. When expressing personal political opinions, individuals should avoid any implication that they are speaking on behalf of Feeding South Dakota.
- 3.8.3. Supervisors should ensure that employees and volunteers understand this distinction and comply with the policy.
- 3.8.4. All staff, volunteers, and board members will receive a copy of this policy and are expected to abide by it. Candidates or campaign representatives requesting access to Feeding South Dakota facilities or events will also receive a copy.

4. Approval:

- 4.1. The Political Activity and Nonpartisanship Policy shall be reviewed every three (3) years to ensure it remains current and effective.
- 4.2. Responsible Parties
 - 4.2.1. The VP of Public Relations is responsible for conducting the initial review of the policy. This includes assessing the policy's effectiveness and identifying any necessary updates or changes.
- 4.3. Committee Review:
 - 4.3.1. Following the VP of Public Relation's review, the policy will be brought to the Development Committee for further review and input. This ensures that all aspects of the policy are thoroughly evaluated by subject matter experts.

4.4. Approval Process

- 4.4.1. Governance Committee: Any new policy or existing policy with substantive changes, as determined by the sponsoring committee, must be reviewed by the governance committee. The governance committee will ensure that the policy aligns with the organization's overall governance framework and strategic objectives.
- 4.4.2. Full Board Approval: After approval by the Development Committee and the Governance Committee's review, the policy will be presented to the full board for final approval. The board's approval is required before any policy changes are implemented.

5. Change Control:

- 5.1. Any team or board member can request an update to this policy.
- 5.2. The request will be reviewed, evaluated and approved by the team listed in Step 4.
- 5.3. If approved, a revised copy of this procedure will be created and saved with track changes and the prior version archived. The Leadership Team member is then responsible for updating the Master Standard Operating Procedure List and communicating the change appropriately.