



Social Work/Community Impact Internship

Program Overview

The South Portland Food Cupboard (SPFC) Social Work Internship is designed to provide students with hands-on experience in a community-based food pantry setting that emphasizes **dignity, relationship-building, and access to resources**.

This internship reflects a growing national model in which food pantries serve not only as sources of food, but as **connection points to broader community support**. Interns will be embedded directly within pantry operations to engage with recipients, identify needs, and expand access to services.

Internship Goals

Goals of this internship include:

- Strengthen connections between SPFC and the community we serve
- Increase awareness and utilization of local resources
- Identify unmet needs and service gaps
- Support a welcoming, respectful, and supportive distribution environment

Core Responsibilities

1. Recipient Engagement

- Engage with recipients during distribution
- Build rapport and trust through consistent presence
- Utilize strengths-based, trauma-informed communication

- Help create a welcoming and inclusive environment

2. Resource Navigation

- Provide information about community resources (e.g., SNAP, housing, healthcare, fuel assistance)
- Offer real-time, conversational guidance to recipients
- Assist with connecting individuals to appropriate services when needed
- Help develop and maintain clear, easy-to-understand resource materials

3. Resource Development & Community Outreach

- Research and update a comprehensive local resource guide
- Identify gaps in available services based on recipient interactions
- Support outreach to community partners and service providers
- Assist in coordinating occasional on-site partner visits during distributions

4. Data Collection & Program Feedback

- Track general trends and common needs (non-identifying data only)
- Document frequently requested resources and barriers to access
- Share observations and insights with SPFC staff
- Contribute to ongoing program improvement efforts

5. Intern Project (Optional/Required Depending on Placement)

Interns may complete a project aligned with their interests and SPFC needs, such as:

- Developing a “Resource Corner” for distributions
- Creating multilingual or accessible resource materials
- Organizing themed outreach (e.g., heating assistance, tax support)
- Designing a system for resource visibility during distributions

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the internship, students will:

- Gain experience in direct client engagement in a community setting
- Develop skills in resource navigation and referral support
- Apply trauma-informed and strengths-based practices
- Understand the role of food access within broader social systems
- Build experience in community outreach and partnership development
- Strengthen observational, communication, and professional skills

Schedule & Time Commitment

- Participation in 1–2 weekly distribution shifts (Tuesdays and/or Thursdays)
- Additional hours for resource development, meetings, and project work
- Schedule to be determined in coordination with SPFC staff and academic requirements

Supervision & Support

- Interns will receive regular supervision from SPFC staff
- Weekly or biweekly check-ins for reflection and guidance
- Ongoing support during distribution shifts
- Opportunities for feedback, learning, and professional development

Preferred Qualifications

- Preferred enrollment in a BSW, MSW, or related program
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Compassionate, respectful, and nonjudgmental approach
- Ability to engage with diverse populations
- Interest in community-based work and resource navigation

Important Notes

- This role is **not clinical case management**, but may include elements of informal resource support
- Interns should be comfortable initiating conversations in a dynamic environment