HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE

Food can become a more pressing need during the winter holiday season as colder weather multiplies challenges for some community members. Organize a food drive to help meet some of these needs.

Keep in mind the links between income, health, food costs and healthy eating education. Request healthier food donations as you promote the drive.

CHOOSE A SITE

Consider local food banks, homeless shelters, faith-based organizations, senior centers and schools. Once you've identified a site to donate to, start a conversation with the site’s leaders to find out whether they have the capacity to handle the amount you expect to donate and what items they most need. They may need age-sensitive or culturally specific foods.

PLAN LOGISTICS

- Set a realistic but bold goal of how much food you want to collect.
- Decide how to collect the food: at a single location on a specific day; at one or various locations over one day, several days or several weeks; or during an event like a sports game.
- Schedule a collection location(s), date(s) and time(s). Make sure to make a back-up weather plan.
- Figure out how you will hand off the donated food to the site—drop off or pick up—and where to store the food before you hand it off.
- Find a place where volunteers can sort the food before handing it over to the site.
- Determine how many volunteers you need.
- Recruit volunteers. Assign teams, roles and a volunteer lead.
- Promote the drive. Post on your group and personal social media sites, put up flyers around campus and post in any relevant student listserve.
- Secure necessary equipment for the drive including boxes or crates, transportation, signs, tables, chairs, snacks and food sorting instructions.
- Be prepared with information for people in need of food and for people curious about your organization and how they can help further.
DAY OF

- Welcome and brief volunteers on their roles.
- Set up the collection area, which could include tables, chairs, boxes and signs.
- Keep handy information on sorting instructions, community food options and further involvement possibilities.
- Thank everyone who donates.
- After the drive, clean up the area and take down all signs.
- Deliver the food to the donation site

AFTER THE DRIVE

- Thank each volunteer and your site contacts.
- Tell volunteers, site contacts and social media followers how much food was collected and whether there will be future donation opportunities.

SAMPLE FOOD LIST

No opened or expired food.

- Canned low-sodium vegetables and fruits
- Canned proteins (tuna, salmon, chicken, peanut butter, beans)
- Shelf-stable milk
- Ground coffee
- Traditional holiday foods
- 100% fruit juices
- Grains (pasta, whole wheat pasta, brown rice, macaroni and cheese)
- Condiments (salt, sugar, sauces, light soy sauce, ketchup, mustard, light salad dressings)
- Multigrain cereal (Cheerios, Corn Flakes, Grape-Nuts, Raisin Bran)