

Food Drives: Getting Started (Credit)

1. Decide Who is the Representative in Charge of the Food Drive:

This person will be the direct contact for the food drive if there are any questions, concerns, or requested media attention. This person will actively plan the food drive, recruit volunteers, reach out to community members as to where/when to have the food drive, etc.

2. Understand the Goal of Your Food Drive:

Why do you need a food drive? What is your food pantry low on? Canned food, fresh produce, baby food, bread, pasta? Think about the population that receives this food, what would be most beneficial for them?

3. Decide How You Want to Collect the Food:

a. Single-site drop off: You ask people to bring food donations to one location during set hours on a specific day. Volunteers stay at the collection site.

b. Extended food drive: You set up multiple collection points with drop boxes/ barrels where people can leave food over the course of multiple days or weeks. Volunteers collect the donations once per day.

c. Event-related food drive: Your team partners with a local event – like a sports event, school carnival, or state fair- and sets up collection sites at the event.

***Depending on your location and if you are partnering with a company or group, see if that company or group would be willing to deliver the donated food to your agency. You could inform them that this would be a great gift to the agency if they delivered because it would save your agency money on gas.**

4. Decide Where Your Drop Off Location(s) will be and Obtain Approval from the Organization/ Company that will be the Host(s):

When you call a company to ask them to host the food drive, be prepared with the mission and goal for the food drive. Perhaps ask if the company is willing to volunteer if they sound interested.

Coordinate with the host company:

a. What date and hours would be best to have the food drive

(i.e., do they have an event coming up, will there be a holiday, are they closed at a certain time?)

b. Where specifically the food drive can be held

(i.e., at the entrance of the store or a section of the parking lot)

c. Where the food will be stored before pick up

5. Set the Dates and Duration for Your Food Drive:

Coordinators commonly ask how long their drive should be. We recommend two weeks in general but there are occasions where a longer or shorter drive can be successful. It depends on the type of drive you want to have. There are advantages to a short hard-hitting drive and there are other advantages to a longer drive that allows for more participation. Think about the amount of work & volunteers you have.

6. Recruit Volunteers for the Food Drive:

a. Write down each volunteer's full name, number and email for record.

b. Invite all volunteers to a meeting about the event.

c. Assign the volunteers tasks such as:

~ Making and distributing flyers/ signs for the event

~ Promoting the event through their family, clubs, and organizations

~ Roles during & after the Food Drive:

a. Setting up

b. Sorting Food

c. Writing Receipts

d. Cleaning up

e. Transporting the food donations to your agency

f. Follow-up communication, including the results of the drive and thanking the supporters

7. Market the Event through Social Media, Posters/ Flyers, Newspapers Ads, etc.:

Advertise your food drive. If you are partnering with an event or store, see if they can help spread the word. Spread the word online and through posters or flyers. When you advertise, make sure that you are associating your food drive with your agency, with the cause of feeding the hungry. Perhaps even ask one or two of your recipients to share their stories on how much your agency has helped them. This will give your cause a face.

8. Final Preparation Before the Event:

a. Make sure you have the proper bins/coolers to collect the food product.

b. Readdress the schedule and make sure everyone can make it to the food drive.

c. Educate the volunteers about what food is safe to collect and what donated food must

be rejected.

- d.** Create large posters to place around the event and a few blocks away from the event.
- e.** Have donated tables and chairs on hand.
- f.** Notify the volunteers if there will be refreshments at the food drive.
- g.** Have information such as food pantries that are close to the event in case someone comes up and asks for food.

9. Day of the Event:

- a.** Meet up with the host contact and double check where the food drive can be set up.
- b.** Set up tables and chairs.
- c.** Once the volunteers arrive, show them the ropes.
- d.** Post the signs and start handing out flyers.
- e.** Only allow the volunteers to place the donated food in the box/ coolers.
- f.** Have the volunteers sort through product that is being received.

Remember, if cans are bulging or if a product is open, throw it away! If a glass item was donated, wrap it in plastic sacks to ensure safe travel.

- g.** Provide donor with receipt of what they donated.
- h.** Have a great time!
- i.** Unpack the site.
- j.** Thank the host organization for allowing you to use their property.
- k.** Take the donated food back to your agency.

10. Sort the Donated Items when you get back to your Agency!

Food should be sorted for quality purposes. Be sure to dispose of any opened or damaged packages. Be sure to follow the guidelines set out in the Partner Agency Manual and Food Rescue Poster for quality checking of donated products and proper storage practices.

11. Follow-Up After 1 Week:

- a.** Call, email, or send a card to say thank you to each volunteer.

~ Include the total amount of food that was donated.

~ Ask if they would be willing to volunteer at a food drive again in the future.

- b.** Call or send a card to say thank you to the host organization

~ Include the total amount of food that was donated.

~ Ask if they would be willing to be a host site for food drives in the future.