



Food Drive Manual



Conscious of the many forms of hunger, Our Neighbors' Table strives to provide our guests with nourishing food, kindness, dignity and a sense of community.

Dear Friend,

Thank you so much for partnering with Our Neighbors' Table by hosting a food drive. The need for food in our community has never been greater! In this manual you will find all the necessary tools and ideas to organize a successful drive.

We rely greatly on volunteers to help us provide healthy meals to families in need. Without your assistance, we would never be able to have enough food for the hundreds of people who come to us for assistance.

We are available Monday through Friday for any help that you may need for your project. Please contact Our Neighbors' Table at 978-388-1907 to let us know about your plans and we will help you in any way that we can. Keep in mind, community service hours are available for students who coordinate a food drive in their school, faith community or service organization. Please call us for details.

Thank you so much for your efforts to help end hunger in our community. We are very grateful for your support!

Sincerely,

Lyndsey Haight
Executive Director

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Hunger Facts

To help understand hunger, many organizations use the term "food insecurity." Households who are food insecure have reduced the quality and quantity of their diet because they do not have enough money to make ends meet. Those described as being *food insecure with hunger* are more seriously affected and are forced to frequently skip meals and experience hunger. (Project Bread)

National

In 2010, 48.8 million Americans lived in food insecure households (32.6 million adults and 16.2 million children). This represents 14.5 percent of all American households (17.2 million households). (feedingamerica.org)

State

The most recent measurement (2010) reveals that 271,355 households (10.8 percent of all Massachusetts households) were food insecure, and nearly half of these households experience the most extreme condition, known as food insecurity with hunger. (projectbread.org)

Local

In 2011, Our Neighbors' Table distributed 250,142 pounds of food to 9,744 households, averaging 187 families each week in our food pantry. In our community meal, we provided 12,946 meals to a total of 6,859 guests.

What Kind of Person Goes to a Food Pantry?

Many people in our community wonder why people need to come to a food pantry. They ask us questions like: What kind of people come to Our Neighbors' Table for food? Why don't they have enough money to buy their own food? Why don't they get a job? These are all good questions. Listed below are some examples of who comes to our food pantry most often and why they come.

- A family with a mom and dad and two children. Both parents work, but their hours have been cut and they cannot find better paying jobs. They are struggling to pay for rent, utilities, healthcare, clothing and food. Getting food from the food pantry allows them to put more of their money to other uses.
- A mom with three children who has just left an abusive relationship, and is struggling to provide for her family.
- A senior citizen who is on a fixed income and is sometimes choosing between heating his apartment, paying for his medication and buying groceries.
- A disabled veteran who is unable to work and does not receive enough benefits to make ends meet.
- A young man with a mental illness who cannot keep a job.
- A woman trying to recover from addiction, just out of jail, looking for a job and trying to rebuild her life.
- A middle class family of five. The father, who is the primary wage earner, has been diagnosed with cancer and has lost his job. The family can't make their mortgage payments and is losing their home.
- A grandmother, living on social security, who is raising her three grandchildren.
- An eighteen year old, living on his own, unable to find a job.

The people who come to us for help are the people who live in our neighborhoods, go to our schools and are members of our faith communities. They are our neighbors and our friends. No one wants to come to a food pantry and ask for help. It's a very, very difficult thing to do. People come because they have no other choice. At Our Neighbors' Table, we give without judging, and we try to treat each person that comes to us with kindness, respect and dignity.

Key Steps in Running a Food Drive

1. Determine the dates, location and length of your food drive. You may decide to hold it at several different locations or just one. It may be a one day event or last for a week or a month.
2. Think about whether your food drive will be held on its own or whether to make it a part of another event in your agency, business, faith community or organization. This could be your own food drive, or you could partner with other similar groups or organizations.
3. Decide what you are going to collect. (See "List of Most Needed Items" in this packet.) You may decide to collect a particular item or a variety of items. Contact Our Neighbors' Table to get our current list of which items we need the most, and let us know what your plans are and when your food drive will be held.
4. Consider whether your food drive will have a theme. (See "Creative Food Drive Ideas" in this packet.)
5. Decide if your food drive will have a specific goal, and if so, decide how you will measure that goal and update donors on your progress.
6. Promote your food drive! Make sure someone is in charge of publicity (posters, announcements, bulletins, newspaper articles, Facebook, emailing lists, website, etc.)
7. Gather supplies for collecting food. While you might want to use large, decorated drop-in boxes to collect donations, keep in mind that you will also want smaller, sturdier boxes to transport the items. If you are collecting canned goods, they can get quite heavy! Liquor store boxes are both sturdy and a great size.
8. Consider displaying your collected items in a prominent location, or in some type of creative manner. Let members of your organization see the actual results of your food drive.
9. Once your food drive is complete, sort the food (if possible) and call Our Neighbors' Table to arrange for drop-off. (See "What to Do Once You've Finished your Drive" in this packet.)

Our Neighbors' Table Most Needed Items

Our Neighbors' Table regularly distributes the following items in our food pantry (in addition to perishable items such as fresh milk, eggs, fruits, vegetables, yogurt and bread). Please call Our Neighbors' Table before your food drive to find out which items we need the most. You can also check our website: www.ourneighborstable.org/wishlist.html

Peanut Butter and Jelly

Cereal (any kind of boxed cereal, oatmeal, breakfast bars)

Soup (chicken noodle, tomato, chunky soups, low sodium)

Canned Meals (ravioli, spaghetti & meatballs, beef stew, chili)

Juice (any kind of 100% juice - cans, plastic bottles, juice boxes)

Canned Meat (chicken, tuna)

Pasta and Rice (dry pasta, flavored pasta mixes, white or brown rice, flavored rice mixes, macaroni & cheese, raamen noodles)

Tomato Products (any kind of pasta sauce, canned tomatoes)

Canned Vegetables

Canned Fruit

Baked Beans

Personal Care Items (deodorant, bar soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, toilet paper, disposable razors)

If you are making a list of suggested items for your food drive, please include the following reminder on all of your flyers and announcements:

Please check expiration dates on your donations! Remember to only donate things that you would want to eat yourself.

What to Do When Your Drive Is Over

Congratulations! You have finished your food drive and collected all of your food. What should you do now?

1. Sort the food into medium sized boxes. (You can obtain these boxes from grocery stores or liquor stores ahead of time.) Try not to make the boxes too heavy!
2. If you have enough volunteers, sort the food into categories. For example, put canned soup in one box, canned vegetables in another, pasta in a third box, and so on. Discard any foods that have been opened, or are soiled. Our Neighbors' Table will check all expiration dates when we receive the donations.
3. Call Our Neighbors' Table and tell us that your drive is complete. If you are able to deliver the items to us, it would be a huge help. It is important that you call a few days in advance so that we can have volunteers on hand to put away the donations. If you cannot deliver the donations, please give us several days' notice so that we can arrange for a volunteer to pick them up.
4. If you can, take a picture of your group and the food that has been collected and send it to Our Neighbors' Table. We would love to post it on our Facebook page.
5. Congratulate yourself on a job well done. Sometimes, when doing a food drive for the first time, you have very high expectations of how much food you might collect. Try to remember that not every food drive results in a huge amount of food. There are many factors that can affect the results, including a difficult economy, bad weather, a competing event, etc. Many times a food drive starts out very small in the beginning and grows steadily each year. Our Neighbors' Table appreciates your hard work, and we are very grateful for your efforts, no matter how much food is collected!

Checklist

- _____ Decide if you will partner with another group or organization
- _____ Choose a type of drive, or a theme
- _____ Decide the date and duration of your drive
- _____ Decide whether you are going to collect a single item or multiple items
- _____ Call Our Neighbors' Table to get most current needed items
- _____ Make a list of tasks
- _____ Set a goal of how much you hope to collect
- _____ Choose a collection method
- _____ Gather supplies
- _____ Publicize your drive (make posters, flyers, send emails, etc.)
- _____ Obtain/decorate/set up collection boxes
- _____ Collect your food
- _____ Sort your food
- _____ Contact Our Neighbors' Table for delivery
- _____ Thank everyone involved
- _____ Fill out Feedback Form (in this packet)

Creative Food Drive Ideas

Use an existing event

Consider holding your food drive in conjunction with an established event at your organization, or within your community. Encourage all attendees to bring an item for your drive, or ask the event coordinators if a donated item could replace or reduce an admission fee.

Compete for a good cause

Have a competition between sections of your organization (religious ed classes, groups of employees, teams who are each collecting different items). Or, compete with another business, organization or faith community. Have a prize, such as a pizza party or an ice cream party for the winners.

Create a raffle

The price of a ticket is a canned food item. Contact local businesses to see if they would donate a prize.

Challenge your leader

Ask your manager, or president or minister if he/she would do something wacky, such as sit up on the roof, or get locked up in "jail" - 15 minutes lock-up for each 100 cans of food that gets donated, or wear a special costume, or shave a beard or mustache. Ask the leader to come up with his/her own idea!

Use food to construct something

Make a sculpture of all the donated items, or divide into teams and have a contest for the best sculpture. Employees or customers or parishioners can vote for their favorite sculpture.

Hold a sports related food drive

Have two collection areas - one for each team in the Super Bowl, or the World Series, or perhaps a local high school championship. Donors can vote with their cans of food for their favorite team. Great for playoffs in any sport!

Host a run/relay

Organize a 5K Run or a Marathon. Instead of cash donations, collect pledges of canned goods. For example, you could ask for one canned good per mile from each sponsor. Or, collect cash donations and donate to Our Neighbors' Table for purchase of food.

Collect multiple items or a single item

Have different groups within your organization collect a different food item. See which group can collect the most! Have a month-long food drive and ask for a different food item each week. Or have everyone bring in as much of one item as they can and see how much you can collect. Have a prize for the winning team (dress down day, coffee & donuts, prime parking spot for a week, cookout).

Make a special occasion

Have a Costume Day or a Crazy Hat day. When people ask why you are wearing something silly, tell them about the food drive and encourage them to make a donation.

Make it easy to donate

Make up donation bags ahead of time with list of most needed items stapled on. Have collection boxes in high-traffic areas where they will get noticed and be convenient for donors.

Ask Our Neighbors' Table for a speaker

Invite a speaker from ONT to your kick off to speak about local hunger and the need for donations. Or, invite us to your celebration at the end of your food drive so we can say thank you in person.

Hunger fast

Have members of your group (who are healthy enough to do so) fast for a day and donate the money they would have spent that day on food. Or, encourage members or customers to skip a meal and donate the cost of that meal.

Unusual collection container

Find a large, interesting item such as a canoe, or a vehicle or a child's swimming pool to place in a prominent location and challenge your organization to fill it with food.

Divide your food drive into meals

Have a month long food drive and collect items for breakfast the first week (cereal, juice, oatmeal, cereal bars); lunch the next week (macaroni & cheese, tuna, soup); dinner the next week (pasta, pasta sauce, canned meals, rice, beef stew); and personal care products the final week.

Company matches

Encourage your company or administration to match the food donated by employees or customers or members.

Weigh-in

Have your management team or your parish council or your trustees weigh in and try to match their combined weight with pounds of food collected in your food drive.

Use humor

Use a humorous theme to call attention to your drive: "We **CAN** do it" for a canned food drive, or "**Meat** the Need" to collect canned meats and canned meals or "**DARE** to care" for a Halloween food drive. Be creative!

Remember to Promote Your Food Drive!

Make posters and flyers advertising your food drive and post throughout your organization (see "Helpful Online Tools" in this packet for clip art and sample posters). Make sure that all posters or flyers include a line which says "Please check expiration dates on your donations."

Make a giant poster with a thermometer. List your goal at the top, and mark your progress each day (see "Helpful Online Tools" in this packet for a template of a thermometer).

Post information on your website. Send out email alerts. Use Twitter and Facebook.

Write a press release about your drive and submit it to your local newspaper. Ask the paper to send a reporter and a photographer.

Contact Our Neighbors' Table so we can help to publicize your event.

Helpful Online Tools

Our Neighbors' Table website:

www.Ourneighborstable.org

Food Drive Clip Art

Go to Google, and type in "food drive clip art"

Ideas for Posters and Flyers

Go to Google, and type in "food drive posters"

Instructions for Making a Poster Size Thermometer

www.thermometertemplate.com

Hunger Quiz

<http://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hunger-facts/quiz.aspx>

(You can use this as part of your project if you wish)

Contact Form

Please complete this form and mail, email or fax to Our Neighbors' Table prior to your food drive.

Your Name _____

Your Phone _____

Your Email _____

Name of Your Group or Organization _____

Name of Contact Person _____

Date(s) of Your Food Drive _____

Brief Description of Your Drive (what types of donations are you collecting, collection method, etc.)

Are You Able To Deliver Food? _____Yes _____No

Please send to Our Neighbor's Table
PO Box 592
Amesbury, MA 01913
Phone: 978-388-1907
Fax: 978-388-4972
Email: community@ourneighborstable.org

Food Drive Feedback

If you would share a copy of this completed form, it will help Our Neighbors' Table to learn what kinds of things work best in food drives, and how we can help to make them more successful.

Date/Duration of Food Drive: _____

Theme/Style/Type of Food Drive: _____

Type of Food Collected (specific items/general): _____

How You Publicized Your Drive: _____

Method of Collection: _____

Results (how much food collected): _____

Did you use any of these ideas/techniques in your food drive?

_____ Theme

_____ Competition

_____ Incentive (raffles, prizes, etc.)

_____ Social Media (Facebook, website, emails, etc.)

_____ Tie Food Drive in with Existing Successful Event

_____ Partner with Other Similar Organizations

_____ Speaker from Our Neighbors' Table

Is there anything that worked particularly well with your food drive that you could share with others?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Are there any changes you would make if you held another food drive?

Are there specific ways that Our Neighbors' Table could have been more helpful with your food drive?

Would you be willing to coordinate another food drive for Our Neighbors' Table next year? _____

Thank you so much!

