Providing food for hungry people while striving to end hunger in our community.
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Dear Food Drive Coordinator,

This is a great opportunity to make a difference in our community. Cook County has more than 812,000 people who are food insecure and rely on emergency and supplemental food provided by the Food Depository and its member network of 650 food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and programs.

As the Food Drive Coordinator for your organization, you will serve as the liaison between your organization and the Food Depository. Whether you are hosting a traditional food drive, a virtual campaign or a combination of both, we are here to support your endeavor to fight hunger and make an impact!

I would encourage you to take a moment to familiarize yourself with the materials contained in this toolkit. We want to make this experience as fun and as easy for you as possible. To that end, we’ve created organizational, inspirational and promotional tools to help you get started and keep the momentum going.

In addition to the tools within this kit, the Food Depository also has food drive boxes, bags and other marketing materials available. You can check out all of our food drive resources at myfooddrive.org. If you need anything, please contact our Food Drive Team at fooddrives@gcfd.org or 773-843-7291.

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Kate Maehr
Executive Director & CEO
Greater Chicago Food Depository
Food Drive Overview

myfooddrive.org

1. REGISTER AND CONFIRM YOUR LINK
   Whether you are hosting a traditional food drive, virtual campaign or a combination of both, please visit myfooddrive.org and click on ‘Register a Food Drive.’ Once registered you’ll receive a confirmation email and access to a customizable web page where you can email colleagues, promote your food drive and collect financial donations.

2. PLAN
   Planning is important in order to make your food drive a success. The Food Drive Coordinator play a big role from determining the supplies you need for your drive, to creating the food drive goal, location and length.

3. PROMOTE
   Promoting your food drive around the office or community is a great way to spark interest in the drive. Use the posters provided in the coordinator packet to promote and draw awareness for your drive. We also have printable posters available at myfooddrive.org and we provide other ways to promote your food drive in the ‘Promote’ section on page 5.

4. COLLECT & DONATE
   Highlighted under the ‘Tools for Success’ section on page 8 you’ll find a variety of materials available for pickup to assist you with your food drive. Once your food drive is completed all donations can be dropped off at the Food Depository between the hours of 7:30 am and 5 pm Monday through Friday. We are located at 4100 W. Ann Lurie Place, Chicago, IL 60632. If you’ve collected a minimum of 20 boxes we can arrange to pick up your donations.
   *Please make sure all boxes are securely taped on the bottom to prevent them from breaking.*
Plan

Planning Checklist
The planning phase will be slightly different depending on whether you’re conducting your food drive with an organization, a small group, or independently. The following checklist summarizes the basic steps any food drive partner would need to take:

- **Decide who will serve as other food drive leaders of the organization.**
  Consider appointing others who are enthusiastic about the food drive as your champions. If you feel it’s necessary, organize a planning committee.

- **Set a date and length of time for your food drive.**
  Some food drives last for several months and others are one day events. If this is your first time hosting a food drive we recommend hosting your drive for a minimum of two weeks so that people have enough time to become aware of your drive and bring in their canned goods or donate online.

- **Determine where you want to hold your food drive.**
  If you’re hosting a traditional food drive, make sure your collection points are in highly visible locations to ensure maximum exposure. Consider using main entrances, lobbies, lunch/break rooms, and other public and high traffic areas for collection points. If you’re hosting a virtual food drive use the ‘Food Drive Please Give’ posters – available in English and Spanish - and your customizable web page to promote your drive and engage with supporters.

- **Set clear fundraising goals for your food drive.**
  Goals can be as simple as collecting a certain number of bags of groceries, filling a certain number of collection boxes or raising a certain amount of financial support. You can also choose a physical target such as to fill the lunch room, the executive’s office or even a truck!

- **Develop a strategy to reach your goals. Make it fun!**
  Whether you create a theme or form competitions between teams, departments or floors, make the experience fun. Check out our ‘Fundraising Tips’ and ‘Creative Theme Ideas’ in the ‘Get Involved’ section of our website and/or offer incentives to challenge winners to reach or exceed your food drive’s goals!

- **Motivate people to participate by educating them on the hunger statistics in Cook County.**
  Visit the ‘Resources and Downloads’ section on myfooddrive.org and share our downloadable Hunger 101 Statistics with your team.

- **Gather all the necessary materials and supplies you’ll need to collect donations.**
  We suggest that you use copy paper sized boxes to hold donations as they tend to be between 30 and 40 pounds when filled. Highlighted under the ‘Tools for Success’ section on page 8 you’ll find a variety of other materials available for pickup to assist you with your food drive. **Note: Please make sure the boxes are taped and don’t exceed 40 pounds.**
Promote

Promotional Checklist
Promoting your drive starts with planning fun and engaging ways to encourage participation. The promotion phase will be slightly different for every food drive partner depending on whether you are hosting a traditional food drive, virtual campaign or a combination of both, and how you plan to organize your food drive activities and engage participants.

As you promote your food drive, you will want to be sure to include the following key points:
- **Who is coordinating the food drive, including contact information**
- **Why you have organized the food drive and why you want people to participate**
- **What the collection goal is and what items are being collected to reach that goal**
- **Where and when donations are being accepted**

The following list provides a basic checklist of ways you can promote any food drive activities:

- Send email reminders about the food drive from your Greater Chicago Food Depository customizable web page
- Post flyers, posters and other signage throughout your company
- Post food drive event information on your organization’s social media accounts and tag the Food Depository by including @FoodDepository
- Make an announcement in your organization’s newsletter/bulletin or website
- Make announcements about the food drive at meetings and other group gatherings
- Ask management to join your drive by sending company-wide emails or voicemail messages to show their support
- Submit a press release about the food drive to your local weekly or community newspaper and other news organizations
Collect & Donate

Collect
Please box up all of your donated food in secure boxes not exceeding 40 pounds each. When your food drive is completed please schedule a drop off or pickup time by visiting the ‘Donate Now’ section on our website. Once you schedule a drop off or a pickup time you will be sent a confirmation number. Please add this confirmation number to the Food Drive Donations box label supplied in your packet and available for download under the ‘Get Involved’ section of our website and tape a copy to each box.

Donate
The Food Depository has four ways you can donate your food.

*Please make sure all boxes are securely taped on the bottom to prevent them from breaking.*

1. **Deliver to the Food Depository**
   The Food Depository encourages food drive donations be delivered to our facility. We are located at 4100 W. Ann Lurie Place and accept donations between the hours of 7:30 am and 5 pm Monday through Friday.

2. **Deliver to a public drop off location**
   Thanks to our generous partners, we have designated public drop off locations throughout the city of Chicago. Please note that our public drop off locations vary by the time of year, so please check the map on the ‘Donate Now’ section of our website for the most current list of public drop off locations and their hours.
   
   *The Food Depository also partners with Garvey’s Office Products to offer food drive pickups. If you order through Garvey’s, they will collect your donation and deliver them to the Food Depository.*

3. **Deliver to a member food pantry (If you have a small number of boxes or perishable food items)**
   If the Food Depository and/or public drop off locations are not conveniently located for you to drop off your donations, or if you have perishable items, you are welcome to deliver your donations directly to one of our member agencies. We advise you call and verify a time to drop off your donations. You can find a list of our member agencies by visiting chicagosfoodbank.org/agencylocator. Please note we cannot provide an acknowledgement letter when you donate to one of our member agencies.

4. **Schedule a pickup**
   The Food Depository will be happy to pick up your food donations if you meet the minimum requirements for a pickup listed below. Our transportation team typically works Monday through Friday between the hours of 7 am and 12 pm and can provide a pickup typically within seven business days of receiving your request. To request a pickup, please complete our pickup request form at myfooddrive.org under the ‘Donate Now’ section.
   - Collect a minimum of 20 full boxes (500 pounds)
   - Boxes should be near in size to that of copier paper boxes and should be taped and not exceed 40 pounds
   - All food donations must be in a box
   - Pickup location must be within Cook County
Celebrate your Success

After a successful campaign, it’s important to say thank you to all the people who volunteered their time and energy and made contributions. After all your hard work, it’s important to pause and celebrate your success! Here are some fun ideas to convey your gratitude and celebrate your success:

- Send out an email announcement with a summary of your success
- Leave thank-you notes in mailboxes, on each person’s desk, include them as payroll stuffers, etc.
- Host a special thank-you luncheon meeting
- Present a certificate or engraved plaque to the individual or team with the highest participation
- Recognize top contributors in your organization’s newsletter, blog, website and/or social media outlets – remember to tag the Food Depository by including @FoodDepository
- Post your official Food Depository thank-you letter in a high traffic area or scan and email a copy to participants
- Bring everyone to volunteer at the Food Depository so they can truly see the impact of their support

Share your story

There are many ways to run a successful food drive. Every food drive is unique and each of our food drive partners knows how best to motivate their donors to take action. Go to myfooddrive.org and under the ‘About’ section you can share your story and discover new ideas for your next food drive.
Tools for Success

Collection Resources
The Food Depository has collection supplies available for pickup that will help make your food drive a success. We offer boxes and bags, along with other options for larger food drives. To request supplies please submit a ‘Supply Request Form’ under the ‘Resources and Downloads’ section on our website.

Most Needed Items
The Food Depository collects and distributes food of only the highest quality. We ensure the products we distribute contribute to a healthy and wholesome diet. The Food Depository also inspects all food donated for signs of damage or contamination as damaged/opened food collected during food drives increases the chances of contamination. While running your food drive, the Food Depository encourages the donation of canned items, as they are more durable and have less chance of becoming damaged during the food drive process.

MOST NEEDED ITEMS

- Peanut Butter
- Canned Beans
- Canned Chili
- Canned Soup
- Canned Stew
- Canned Fruit
- Canned Vegetables
- Canned Fish
FAQs

Getting Started

Q: How long should my food drive last?
A: The length of your drive is really dependent on the type of collection event you are planning. If you have never hosted a food drive before, we recommend you consider hosting a drive for a minimum of two weeks.

Q: How do I set a collection goal?
A: We recommend that for every one employee, group member, or individual supporting your food drive that you ask them to donate a minimum of five pounds of food, which would be approximately five non-perishable food items or the equivalent in dollars – anywhere from $10-$20 and up, no amount is too high!

Q: When is the best time to host my food drive?
A: We need your support all year long!

Q: What are the most needed food items?
A: The Food Depository asks our food drive partners to focus on collecting non-perishable and canned products including peanut butter, canned beans, canned chili, canned soup, canned stew, canned fruit, canned vegetables and canned fish.

Q: Are there any items you will not accept?
A: The Food Depository is not able to accept the following types of food donations:
- Perishable food including produce (exceptions may be with advance notice)
- Items that have been opened or partially used including cans, bottles and dry goods
- Products not in their original packaging
- Products with no ingredient information labels
- Homemade or home-canned foods
- Products that have become contaminated
- Alcoholic beverages or energy drinks of any kind

Additionally, the Food Depository is not able to accept the follow types of non-food items:
- Pet food  - Cleaning Supplies
- Clothing  - Toys

Q: What is a virtual food drive?
A: A virtual food drive is a great way to host a non-traditional food drive, have a significant impact and get even more people in your network involved in your food drive efforts. A virtual campaign extends our buying power with three meals for every $1 donated.
FAQs

Q: Can dollars be converted into pounds of food?
A: Yes! For every $1 you donate, it is equivalent to approximately 1.25 pounds of food.

Q: Can I use your logo to help promote my food drive?
A: Yes. We just ask that you send us a copy of any materials you create so we may approve use of our logo. We also encourage you to utilize our printable posters – both in English and Spanish - to help with the promotion of your food drive.

Wrapping up/After the Drive:

Q: Where can I drop off my food donations?
A: We encourage you to deliver your food donations directly to the Greater Chicago Food Depository at 4100 W. Ann Lurie Place, Chicago, IL 60632 between the hours of 7:30 am and 5 pm Monday through Friday. Please remember to schedule a drop off time by visiting the ‘Donate Now’ section on our website. If the Food Depository and/or public drop off locations noted on our website are not conveniently located for you please deliver your donations directly to one of our member agencies. We advise you call and verify a time to drop off your donations. You can find a list of our member agencies by visiting chicagosfoodbank.org/agencylocator. Please note we cannot provide you with an acknowledgement letter when you donate to one of our member agencies.

Q: What are the requirements to schedule a pickup?
A: In order to schedule a pickup, you must meet the following minimum requirements:
- Collect a minimum of 20 full boxes (500 pounds)
- Boxes should be near in size to copier paper boxes and should be taped and not exceed 40 pounds
- All food donations must be in taped boxes
- Pickup location must be within Cook County
To request a pickup, please complete our pickup request form at myfooddrive.org under the ‘Donate Now’ section.

Q: How do I submit my financial donations?
A: If you collect monetary donations as part of your drive, please mail them along with a Food Drive Donation Tracking Sheet to Greater Chicago Food Depository, Attn: Food Drives, 4100 W. Ann Lurie Place, Chicago, Illinois 60632. Donation Tracking Sheets can be found under the ‘Get Involved’ section on myfooddrive.org.

Do you have a question that is not answered? Find our full list of FAQs at myfooddrive.org. Also, feel free to contact us at 773-843-7291 or email fooddrives@gcfd.org for additional assistance.
Get More Involved

Volunteering
The Greater Chicago Food Depository regularly needs volunteers to help with repacking donated food and other products. A lot of the food we receive at our warehouse comes in bulk quantities and volunteers are scheduled to help us repackage it into more manageable sizes. In a repack session you might be sorting produce, repacking bulk dry goods (cereal, pasta, rice) into smaller quantities, or even processing Food Drive donations! The Food Depository sees over 700 volunteers during our 8 weekly repack sessions listed below.

Tuesdays: 9 - 11:45 a.m. or 1 - 3:45 p.m.
Wednesdays: 1 - 3:45 p.m. or 6 - 8:45 p.m.
Thursdays: 1 - 3:45 p.m.
Fridays: 9 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.
Saturdays: 8 - 10 a.m., 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. or 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

If your interested, go to chicagosfoodbank.org/volunteer to sign-up.

Kids Day Volunteer Repack Sessions for Ages 5-13
One Saturday per month, the Food Depository hosts a Kids Day. These repack sessions are designated for families or groups with children ages 5-13. We welcome groups and families of up to 20 volunteers with one adult for each child. During winter and summer breaks, we also host bonus Kids Days. Online registration for Kids Days opens at 9:00 a.m. on the first business day of the month prior to the session. An optional tour is offered at the end of each Kids Day session.

Loading Dock Volunteers
We distribute approximately 200,000 pounds of food every day to a network of 650 food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and programs across Cook County. Volunteers are needed on weekday mornings between 6 a.m. - 12 p.m. (7 a.m. - 12 p.m. in the summer) to help load vehicles with food. We ask that loading dock volunteers commit to a minimum three hours per shift. All volunteers must wear enclosed shoes and full-length pants and be at least 16 years old.

Workplace Giving & Employee Matching Gifts
Hundreds of corporations offer matching contributions to charitable donations made by employees. By doubling the impact of each gift, companies ensure a lasting difference in the fight against hunger. Many corporations also offer the opportunity for employees to donate to the Food Depository through special collections or automatic payroll deductions—further integrating employees with their philanthropic efforts.