



Food and Cash Drive Toolkit



Join us to provide good foods in
the good fight against hunger

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Hunger in Minnesota

Year after year more Minnesotans have difficulty feeding themselves and their families and this trend is expected to continue. Nutritious foods are often not affordable or accessible on a limited budget. For many households, one car repair or one health emergency can throw their budget into turmoil. When you have limited control over fixed monthly expenses like the mortgage or rent, when things get tight, one of the first budget items cut is food.

Food insecurity takes many different forms. It may mean skipping meals, eating less than needed to live a healthy life or making due with foods that are filling but not nutritious. It may mean that your home is in a food desert—an urban or rural area where the availability of affordable, healthy, fresh food is limited. As of 2018 1.6 million Minnesotans lack easy access to healthy food. That puts us at seventh-worst in the nation for residents with no grocery options close to their homes.

For the first time, the number of people living near the poverty level in Twin Cities suburbs exceeds those living in Minneapolis/St. Paul. The face and address of hunger continues to change.

Our Impact

Since the recession, reaching over 3 million food shelf visits in a year has become the new normal for the emergency food system. Food shelves and hunger relief programs need assistance. This is where The Food Group steps in. We are a full service food bank with partnerships and programs focused on access to nutritious foods. We provide nutritious food and support services to 237 hunger relief partners, including food shelves, meal programs and mobile food shelf sites throughout the Twin Cities.

Because of our generous partners in 2019, The Food Group collected more than 7.3 million pounds of food. Where does the food come from?

- 6.3 million pounds were purchased from whole sale distributors, food processors and local farm partners.
- 1 million pounds were donated by wholesale distributors, food processors, local farm partners plus donations received from food drives!

**In Minnesota,
1 in 9 people struggle
with hunger.**

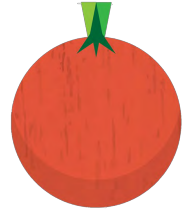
**1 in 6 kids go to bed
hungry every night
in Minnesota.**

**One third of
Minnesotans lack
access to healthy food.**

Get Started

What is a food and cash drive?

A food and cash drive is an excellent opportunity for you to become direct partners with The Food Group and help us provide good foods in the good fight against hunger. Drives can be done by any group of people—businesses, neighborhoods, events, teams, schools, faith communities, military units, scouts or any group of dedicated people who want to help. We aim to collect healthy food that will be distributed to our food shelf partners for free. Cash drives provide funds we can use to purchase wholesale bulk products to distribute to our partners. Food and cash drives are critical to the ongoing mission of The Food Group: Fighting hunger. Nourishing our community.



Your donations make a difference:

1.2 pounds of food = 1 meal

\$1 can provide 2 meals

4 Steps to Success

1. Set your goals

Consider how long you'll run the drive and keep in mind the average person who participates in a food drive will donate 5 pounds of food. So if you expect 100 people to get involved a reasonable goal is 500 pounds! Also decide if you will be collecting food or cash or both.

2. Organize

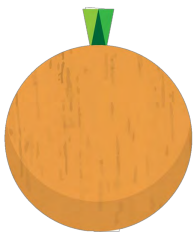
If you're running this through an organization make sure they are on board! Then pick a date. The length is up to you—one day, one week, one month—whatever works for your event. The key is to give your participants enough notice so they can be prepared. Think about the details—do you want to have a theme or kick off event, would someone be willing to match your cash donations, where will you put the bins, etc. Then tell us! We'll help you figure out what bins you need, drop off/pick up dates, promotional materials, etc. Let us know by filling out the form on our website!

3. Promote

This is the secret to a successful drive! The more people who know about your event the greater your potential impact. Spread the word, utilize social media, and let us help you! Remember to keep promoting once the drive has begun! Keep enthusiasm high, send out reminders, hold a contest, award prizes, etc.

4. Celebrate

Following your scheduled pick up date, The Food Group will weigh food donations and count monetary donations. You will then receive notice of how much your drive collected. Make sure you share this news with your participants and celebrate the impact you've made! Don't forget to thank them for their involvement!



Best Food Options to Donate



We want to provide healthy food, so we welcome donations low in fat and sodium, high in protein, and rich in the kinds of good ingredients you would want in your own home!

Vegetables (a variety of colors)

Low sodium canned veggies and veggie juices; pasta sauces; canned white or sweet potatoes; salsa

Fruits

Canned fruit; sugar free applesauce; dried fruit; 100% fruit juices

Poultry/Fish/Beans/Nuts

Canned tuna or chicken; canned and dried beans; low sodium broth or bean soups; un-salted nuts; peanut butter; canned and dried lentils

Dairy

Powdered & shelf stable milk; milk alternatives (rice, soy, etc.)

Grains (First ingredient should be "Whole" grain, corn or wheat)

Brown or wild rice; whole grain pasta, cereals, muffin and pancake mixes; trans fat free tortillas; old fashioned oats or low sugar oatmeal; whole grain crackers and other snacks; granola bars; gluten free options

Spices/Cooking Oils

Olive, canola & vegetable oils; salt, pepper, onion powder, & garlic powder; dried basil, oregano, thyme, & rosemary; chili powders & taco seasonings; cinnamon, nutmeg and other baking spices

Food & Cash Drive Collection Containers

Blue Barrel

- durable polyethylene
- 22'W x 35'H
- Holds approx. 150 lbs.
- The Food Group logo displayed



Green Tote

- 48' x 45' x 34'
- Holds approx. 750 lbs.
- Can be placed on top of a pallet

Cash Box

- 10' x 18'
- collect cash, coins, checks
- The Food Group logo displayed



Corporate Drive Ideas: Fighting Hunger in the Workplace

- **Brown Bag:** Encourage employees to bring a bag lunch for a day or week, then donate the amount they would have spent eating out for those lunches.
- **Sell raffle tickets:** For \$1 or \$5, employees can turn in their tickets for a reserved parking space for a week, casual dress day, day off with pay, gift cards, etc.
- **Encourage competition:** Get different floors, departments, teams to see who can donate the most amount of food or cash. Offer incentives for the winning team!
- **Host a 'CAN'struction event:** A competition using only canned food donations as the building materials.
- **Fill the Bag:** Provide employees with a paper grocery bag they can take to fill up with donations.
- **Heat or Eat:** Donate the amount of money it would take to heat your home for a week. Help make sure families don't have to make this choice.
- **Ask your company to match donations:** Ensure your donations go even further to help more families experiencing hunger by doubling your impact. Ask if your company will match donations (ex. 100 pounds collected matched with \$100)

Food Drive Themes



Back to school

Pb & j, granola bars, juice boxes, raisins, individual snack bags.



Oh Baby

Formula, wipes, baby food, toddler meals, diapers.



Veggie Mania

Canned green, orange and white vegetables (beans, peas, sweet potatoes, etc.)



Trick or Treat so others can Eat

Collect canned food and other Hygiene products, instead of candy!



Wake Up Call

Canned coffee creamer, cereal, oatmeal, tea, muffin, pancake and waffle mixes.



Dinner's served

Canned stew, beans, instant potatoes, stuffing mix, chunky soups, and chili.



Ooodles of Noodles

Mac and cheese, spaghetti, whole wheat and gluten free noodles, egg noodles, sauces.



Cinco De Mayo

Tortillas, rice, beans, sauces, canned tomatoes, Mexican style vegetables.



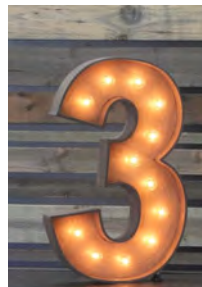
Winter Wonderland

Dry and canned soups, crackers, stuffing, pumpkin, cranberry sauce.



Wash up Week

Collect hygiene products: soap, Shampoo, tooth-brushes and paste, tampons/pads, toilet paper.



3 Weeks of Food

The first week collect breakfast items, the second lunch, the third dinner items.



Fruit Fun

Canned peaches, pears, pineapple, fruit cocktail, applesauce, juice boxes.

FAQs for food and cash drives

How is a food bank like The Food Group different from a food shelf?

We are a non-profit that works to source nutritious food, which we then distribute to food shelf partners. We help them have a steady supply food in order to meet the needs of their clients.

How do I start a food or cash drive?

Contact Talia Miracle at tmiracle@thefoodgroupmn.org or fill out the online form on our website!

How do I get my barrels delivered or picked up?

The Food Group will deliver empty containers and pick up full ones. We will schedule these details when you are organizing your drive. However, we ask you to consider delivering the food to us if it is less than 500 lbs.

Where can I drop off food?

Right at our warehouse! Just come in the front door or ring the buzzer and we'll collect your food and weigh it on the spot for you. 8501 54th Ave. N. New Hope MN 55428

What food can't you accept?

We cannot accept home cooked/baked items, food that has been opened or food that is missing it's original packing. We cannot accept any alcohol. Glass is discouraged because it breaks easily in handling. We prefer to collect healthy, nutritious foods-because that is the food people who are hungry need the most!

Can you accept food that is past it's expiration date?

Yes we can! The truth is that expiration, use by and sell by dates are all confusing and each food shelf has it's own requirements. We deliver food to them and they follow their own procedures.

Should I donate food or money?

The short answer is both! Give in the best way you can and know that all donations are necessary and important to the work we do. Food donations go onto our shelves right away and are redistributed as fast as possible. Money donations are just as crucial and can actually provide more bang for your buck! This picture shows how!



How can you provide that much food for so little money?

While you pay retail price on food, The Food Group has partnerships and bulk purchasing power that allows us to buy more at wholesale prices. Our ability to leverage your dollars is the best way to provide a consistent food supply and put more food into more hands.

Where do donations go?

100% of donated food is given to our food shelf partners free of charge. Cash donations help us maintain operations and enable us to purchase low-cost bulk food that we redistribute to our partners.

How do I get a tax donation receipt?

Most donations to The Food Group are tax-deductible. We are a 501c3 non-profit organization tax ID number 41-1246504. We can provide receipts to anyone who would like one, email Talia Miracle at tmiracle@thefoodgroupmn.org

Are there other ways to support The Food Group?

YES! See where your donations go and bring a group to volunteer at our warehouse!

THANK YOU



On behalf of The Food Group and those we serve, **thank you** for your willingness to join us in the fight against hunger! Every food and cash drive makes a difference and we appreciate every pound and dollar that comes in!

One of our food shelf partners shared 100 responses from food shelf participants answering the question, "When I have enough food in my home I can..." Some of the answers were:

- "Not worry what I'll be cooking my kids for dinner."
- "Stop being stressed all the time. I can sleep better at night."
- "Share some of it with my neighbor."
- "Concentrate better. Work harder. Be happy."
- "Pay my bills for energy and rent."
- "Eat good and have a full stomach, help my mom out with food and everyone in my house can eat without being hungry."
- "Eat right and take care of my diabetes."
- "Be happy and grateful I am no longer hungry!"

You are helping make this possible. Our work must continue and cannot be done without the generous support of people like you! Thank you for your commitment to the belief that access to nutritious food is a basic right for all people. Thank you for being a part of the solution!