

TOOLKITS

Community Renewal: Supporting a Local Food Bank

Supporting a Local Food Bank

THE FACTS

This summer, commit yourself and a team of your friends and neighbors to help feed America's hungry. This tool kit will give you the basics to volunteer at a food bank, start a food drive, recruit a team, organize your group, and make an impact this summer.

100% of food banks responding to a Feeding America survey reported increases in demand for emergency food assistance over the last year. Demand for emergency food assistance increased at a rate ranging from 28.6% - 37.7%¹

Many people are turning to food banks for the first time because of the economic climate. 99.4% of food banks and distribution agencies reported seeing more first time users in the last year. 74% reported seeing more newly unemployed persons. 48% of food banks and distribution agencies reported seeing a greater number of children in their food lines.

72% of food banks do not feel as though they are able to adequately meet the needs of their communities without adjusting the amount of food distributed.

Across the America's Second Harvest network of over 63,000 agencies, 66 percent of pantries, 41 percent of kitchen programs, and 11 percent of shelter programs have no paid staff, relying entirely on volunteers.ⁱ²

This summer, commit yourself and a team of your friends, family, and neighbors to help alleviate hunger and join United We Serve. This tool kit will give you the basics to run a food drive, recruit a team, organize your group, and make an impact this summer.

GETTING STARTED

While no two projects will be the same, successful projects will share a few common practices. We encourage you to incorporate the following elements into your service project:

- Create a team with your friends and neighbors to share the effort;
- Set outcome-based goals and track your progress to those goals;
- Celebrate your successes together.

¹ Feeding America, Local Impact Survey, Result Summary

² Rhoda Cohen, M. Kim, and J. Ohls. *Hunger In America 2006*. America's Second Harvest-The Nation's Food Bank Network. February 2006.

The Challenge: Many community-based organizations do not have enough capacity to manage a large number of volunteers, so they need you to organize yourself in coordination with them. This tool kit is designed to either help you organize a group and be a positive addition to a community-based organization, or, if such an organization does not exist, to be a well-organized independently-run group that fills a needed gap in the community.

A step by step guide to getting started and executing service activities follows. Please let us know how your project goes and what you learn by telling your story at [Serve.gov](https://www.serve.gov).

STEP ONE: IDENTIFY LOCAL PARTNERS

Check out the organizations already doing good work in your area. Many existing service groups have identified community needs and have built the expertise to provide solutions.

- Search for [local opportunities](#) to serve food pantries and soup kitchens.
- Contact a local faith-based or community center, senior center, or community-based organization and ask if there is currently a food service program that needs support.
- If no local organization needs support, run [a virtual food drive](#) to stretch your dollar!
- [Get a guide to finding local partners](#)

STEP TWO: BUILD A TEAM

Teams can help share the work, motivate members and hold each other accountable. Teams build community. Ask your family, friends, colleagues, and faith group members to serve with you.

- Host a house meeting or potluck to choose a project, set goals, recruit volunteers and plan next steps.
- [Get a guide for hosting a house meeting](#)
- Post your service activity on [Serve.gov](https://www.serve.gov) to recruit new volunteers.

STEP THREE: SET A GOAL

Set a service goal for June 22 – September 11 and hold yourself accountable. Commit as individuals and as a team to securing a certain amount of food donations. Set your goals high to stretch yourself. Then keep track of how you are doing and designate someone to be responsible for updating the group on how you are progressing toward your goals. You'll be surprised at how much you can do when you commit, focus, and follow through.

- [Get a goal-setting guide](#)

STEP FOUR: SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY

The key to effective service is planning. Organize your materials, make confirmation calls and, if you have time, read supplemental materials before you volunteer.

- How to run a food drive – the basics [is this supposed to be a link?]
- Feeding America links to a network of over 63,000 agencies and over 200 food banks. The website provides information on [volunteer opportunities](#) and contact information for [local food banks](#).
- [Get a tip sheet for your service activity](#)

STEP FIVE: REPORT AND CELEBRATE SUCCESSES

Your team members, the community, and the President want to know about your successes and hear your stories. Share your accomplishments by reporting your results. We will highlight the best stories throughout the summer. Tell us about your successes and what you have learned, or just tell your story of service at [Serve.gov](https://www.serve.gov)

FOLLOW UP**SPREAD THE SERVICE**

- After every event, thank your volunteers and sign them up for the next event.

FINDING LOCAL PARTNERS: FOOD DRIVES

Check out the organizations already doing good work in your community. Many existing service groups have identified community needs and built the expertise to provide solutions. Get plugged in with them!

It will be helpful to provide background on the local service landscape to the attendees of your house meeting. A few phone calls can produce all the information you need to know your options.

For food drives:

- Search for [local food banks](#) and [local volunteer opportunities](#).
- Call your local faith group or community center and ask if they have a food service program (sample phone script below).

SAMPLE PHONE SCRIPT:

- Hi, my name is _____ and I'm interested in volunteering with your organization. What are your greatest needs locally?
- I have a group of ___ friends willing to commit ___ hours a week to helping feed the hungry. What would you like us to do?
- Do you serve food at this location and are you interested in volunteers?
- Do you need food donations? Are there restrictions on the kind of food you can accept?
- Do you need administrative help?
- Are you the best person for me to contact?

Remember to keep track of who you have contacted so you can follow up as necessary. You can use the chart below or create one that fits your project.

Group name	Contact name	Contact number	Type of volunteers needed	# of vols needed

House Meetings

Purpose:

House meetings are a valuable tactic for recruiting volunteers and building a team. House meetings allow community members to share their concerns and join together to work for progress. Within the room, you already have all the tools you need to enact change on a local level. Every attendee can contribute time or resources or leadership abilities.

Your house meeting will help you identify your leadership team. The people that are committed enough to come to your house meeting should be considered potential leaders of the initiatives being implemented in their communities.

As a house meeting host, invite people from your social network to participate in a discussion about your community, pressing needs, and potential solutions. House meetings often engage people new to service and unclear about next steps. Serving with the support of a team will increase the ease and comfort of many new volunteers.

Building community through house meetings is a critical step toward the President's ultimate goal, which is to support everyday Americans in a grassroots effort to improve lives and strengthen communities.

A House Meeting

Goals

- Choose and plan a service project for the summer.
- Set measurable group and personal goals for your United We Serve project.
- Identify 5 attendees to be team leaders.
- Plan the next meeting of the leadership team and identify next steps for each leader.
- Obtain commitments from all attendees to volunteer on a regular basis from June 22 – September 11.

Host Duties

- Before
 - To have **20** people attend, you will need to invite **50**. Brainstorm a list of **50** people to invite. Include your friends, family, members of your faith group, colleagues, book club attendees, etc.
 - Make calls to the **50** people on your list to invite them to your house meeting. Remember that phone calls are much more effective than a mass email.
 - Post your house meeting on Serve.gov and invite local residents interested in volunteering to attend.
 - Browse Serve.gov to see what needs in your community aren't being met and which organizations you might be able to partner with. Take some preliminary steps to identify local partners already working in the community.
 - Prepare necessary materials.

- During
 - Be prepared to give a short explanation of why you became involved/what inspired you to serve.
 - Consider how you most want to serve your community. President Obama has identified four target areas for summer service: health, education, community renewal, and energy and environment. What does your community most need?

- After
 - Thank attendees and get their pledge to serve this summer.
 - Organize a follow-up volunteer leadership meeting with your new team to take next steps.

House Meeting Planner

Use this brainstorm sheet to think of those you want to invite, including those who have never volunteered before or may be new to Untied We Serve.

Name	Phone #	Invited (Y/N)	Committed (Y/N)	Confirmed (Y/N)	Notes
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Name: Please print the invitee’s full name.

Invite: Please mark **yes, no, maybe** or **left message (LM)**. This will help you track who you need to contact and who you should be calling for confirmation. The only real invitations are when you speak with someone directly.

Commit: Please mark **yes, no** or **maybe**.

Confirm: Please mark **yes, no** or **left message (LM)**. You’ll need to call every invitee who said yes or maybe, and every invitee who only got a left message. Please do not assume that **anybody** will come without a confirmation the day before your meeting. It can’t hurt to give people a quick reminder, and you need to know how many people will be at your meeting to make that meeting as effective and enjoyable as possible.

House Meeting Agenda

*****Before starting the meeting, have everyone sign in and appoint a timekeeper who will keep each section running on time.*****

- 0:00-0:10 **Host welcome and introduction**
- Host of the meeting introduces themselves and welcomes attendees.
 - Host shares why (s)he was inspired to organize the house meeting and the purpose of the meeting.
- 0:10-0:25 **Attendee introductions**
- Go around the room and ask each person to introduce themselves and share their reason for wanting to serve this summer.
- 0:25-0:45 **Choose a project**
- Host introduces three or four project ideas and opens up the room for discussion.
 - Discuss what projects will work best in your community.
 - Group votes on project choice.
- 0:45-0:55 **Set goals and identify leadership**
- Ask which attendees are interested in being volunteer leaders – they should stay after the meeting for 15 minutes and commit to a weekly planning meeting from June 22 - September 11.
 - Ask each attendee to consider personal summer goals and make a realistic but ambitious summer commitment.
- 0:55-1:00 **Conclusion**
- At the end of the meeting, the group should have:
 - At least one project to commit to for the summer.
 - A leadership team.
 - Pledges from each attendee to participate.
- 1:00-1:15 **Leadership team meeting**
- Meet with volunteer leaders to set weekly meeting and divide responsibilities.
 - Fill out attached worksheets.

Leadership Team Worksheet

The members of my team include:

Name	Phone Number	Email

Our weekly leadership meetings occur every _____ at _____.

Who are 5 other friends and family members who you will call to enlist in your group's project? Make these calls during the leadership team meeting, if possible:

Name	Phone Number	Email

Setting Goals and Tracking Progress

Breaking Down Your Goal

What is your group's project?

Who are your local partners?

What is your group's goal? (ie, how many lbs of donated food will you secure, how many hours will you spend reading to kids, how many homes will you audit?)

How many weeks do you have until the National Day of Service and Remembrance on September 11th?

What will you have to average per week between now and September 11th to reach your goal?

How many volunteers will you have to recruit on average per week to reach that goal? How many hours would you guess they have to work? If it's not clear at first, you should be ambitious and then adjust your recruitment goal as you go.

Tracking Progress to Goals

Our team will report progress to goals every _____ to _____.

_____ will share our progress to goals with all team members by email/phone calls every _____.

We will also share our story and accomplishments at serve.gov.

SETTING GOALS: FOOD DRIVES

Food banks are faced with an increase in demand and a lack of staff. 100% of food banks responding to a Feeding America survey reported increases in demand for emergency food assistance over the last year. Demand for emergency food assistance increased at a rate ranging from 28.6% - 37.7%³

72% of food banks do not feel as though they are able to adequately meet the needs of their communities without adjusting the amount of food distributed.

Across the America's Second Harvest network of over 63,000 agencies, 66 percent of pantries, 41 percent of kitchen programs, and 11 percent of shelter programs have no paid staff, relying entirely on volunteers.ⁱⁱ⁴

What will you do to help feed America's hungry?

SET CONCRETE GOALS

Setting goals helps you be accountable to yourself and also increases accountability within a group. Clear goals at the beginning of a project will also help you determine how your project will work and what role group members can play. Once goals are set, you can track your progress, compare your results with other group members, and figure out what works best so everyone can meet (or exceed) their goals.

Set a service goal for June 22 – September 11 and hold yourself accountable. Commit as an individual and as a team to help alleviate hunger this summer. Then keep your commitment. Let's see what we can do together!

- As an individual, I will secure _____ dollars worth of donated food this summer.
- As a team we will secure _____ blank dollars worth of food this summer.

Part of setting good outcome goals is thinking about how you will achieve them. As a group or an individual, think about process-based goals to map out how you will hit your goals above:

- As an individual, I will ask _____ friends, family members, colleagues to donate food this summer.
- I will recruit _____ volunteers to support food banks with me this summer.
- As a team we will recruit _____ volunteers to support food banks with us this summer.

³ Feeding America, Local Impact Survey, Result Summary

⁴ Rhoda Cohen, M. Kim, and J. Ohls. *Hunger In America 2006*. America's Second Harvest-The Nation's Food Bank Network. February 2006.

TRACK PROGRESS TOWARD YOUR GOALS

- Set a weekly or biweekly deadline to report progress. For example, "Our team will report progress every Friday. The person responsible for reporting results for your team is _____."
- Make sure every group member is in the loop. Designate a group member to track and share the results. For example, "Our team will share our progress with all members by email/phone calls every week. The person responsible for sharing progress is _____."
- Keep track of your progress. Score sheets like the one below can be helpful.

Week	\$worth of food donated	# of meals that can be served thanks to donations	# individuals who donated	# volunteers active
June 22				
June 29				
July 6				
July 13				
July 20				
July 27				
August 3				
August 10				
August 17				
August 24				
August 31				
September 7				
Total				

TIPS: DONATING TO FOOD BANKS

Respecting the needs of local partners:

When organizing a food drive, it is critical to work in conjunction with your local food bank. A hastily-organized local food drive can actually put a strain on the local agency and expend time and money better spent feeding the hungry. Not all food banks have the resources to sort cans, examine expiration dates, verify food safety and distribute goods.

Following are three ways you can help support your local food bank.

1.) Volunteer at your local food bank or hunger-relief agency

Food banks and the agencies they serve (soup kitchens, food pantries and emergency shelters), are in need of volunteers to serve and sort food, answer phones and provide office support. However, these activities are best coordinated directly with your local food bank or neighborhood feeding organization. You can find the food banks closest to you by visiting:

<http://feedingamerica.org/foodbank-results.aspx>

2.) Support a virtual food drive: the efficient solution

Because food banks typically handle truckload size donations of food, a virtual food drive is one of the most efficient ways to help get more food to more hungry Americans by maximizing the dollar. Just like traditional food drives, virtual food drives allow you to shop items, engage your friends and build a service community. In addition, you can:

- Stretch your dollar by shopping in bulk. For every dollar you donate, Feeding America can provide 7 meals to men, women and children facing hunger in our country.
- Ensure the Food Bank gets the food items it most needs.
- Reduce distribution and sorting costs.

By participating in a virtual food drive, you can help your food bank acquire the food they need to feed your community. A virtual food drive is easy:

- **Create an account** at the Feeding America [food drive](#).
- **Plan a Kick-Off event:** Kick-off your virtual food drive with an event! You can host a party and ask each attendee to sign a pledge. You can partner with your faith group to request donations at service. Consider alerting local media.

During your virtual food drive:

- **Consider incentives:** Motivate your friends and co-workers to donate by creating a competition or organizing a raffle. Keep track of which group purchases the most food. Record which individual contributes the greatest number of virtual cans. Recognize the donors with certificates or awards.

- **Spread the word:** Decide how people will be encouraged to participate. The most successful way to build momentum is to ask your personal network to contribute. These requests will be most successful when made in person or by phone. Flyers and emails are useful, but less successful.

After your virtual food drive ends:

- **Celebrate:** Share the total amount of food donated with all your participants. Thank your participants. Consider how you could do it better next time. Plan your next drive!

3.) Become An Advocate

Hungry Americans need more than just food. They need committed and trained advocates who support public policy changes to bring hunger relief to our nation. Whether it's writing a letter, making phone calls, educating your friends and family, or sharing your story, you can help us feed hungry Americans. Learn more about the actions you can take to relieve hunger at Feeding America's [hunger action center](#).

CELEBRATE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Your work this summer matters and should be celebrated. Remember to go to [Serve.gov](https://www.serve.gov) and tell us your summer story of service.

Also, be sure to keep track of what worked for you this summer and what could be improved. You can learn from this service project when you organize your next service project!
