

How to Start a Food Drive



- Select a steering committee. This can include volunteers within the community.
- Identify your objective – to organize a city wide nonperishable food drive in July benefitting all the local food pantries. Cash donations are also accepted and valued at 4 pounds for each dollar donated. Designate an address where people can send their cash donations. Checks can be made out to Thanksgiving in July. Open a bank account for the checks.

The food drive will be a three-part process.

- 1) Encourage individual business, civic and faith-based organizations to hold their own food drives.
 - 2) Participation by all local grocery stores.
 - 3) Individual food or cash donations from community members.
- Identify and contact all the food pantries. Explain what you are doing. They need to know if contacted by the media. Work closely with the pantries so the food can be properly collected. You will need their cooperation when it comes time to deliver the food. Identify the contact person. Invite a representative of one of the larger pantries to join your steering committee.
 - Determine what percentage of food each pantry will receive based on the size of the pantry or the donation area.
 - Set a date for the food drive and the final collection. The food drive can be for a week or the entire month of July.
 - Contact the local grocery stores and ask them to participate. This includes signage, promoting the food drive and a food barrel at the front of the store. I have several other suggestions for the grocery store participation.
 - Decide on a drop off site for the food on the final day of the food drive. You may choose to have more than one location. Most likely there will be press and television coverage at the drop off site. Someone should be there to talk to the media and answer questions.
 - Arrange for delivery of the food donations at the end of the food drive to the local pantries. Determine how to transport the food. You will need volunteers and donated trucks for this.
 - The food needs to be weighed before delivery. Weighing the trucks at a local scale before and after picking up the donations works best.
 - Media coverage is a must for the first time food drive. Send out multiple press releases as the event unfolds. Include someone on the steering committee good with the media and press releases.
 - You need to educate the public what is going on and why you need their support. You can use radio, TV, newspaper articles, mass mailing, press releases, social media, etc. Use the Thanksgiving in July logo on promotional materials whenever possible.
 - Arrange for a follow up article in your local paper thanking those involved in the drive and report on the amount of food collected. We found that food continued to come in for one or two weeks after the drive.