

Food Drive Toolkit



Introduction

Thank you for volunteering to conduct a food drive on behalf of Pantry Packs, a program of the Lake Washington Schools Foundation. Pantry Packs relies on food drives by volunteers to help keep the warehouse full and provide a variety of food that we cannot achieve when ordering in bulk. Additionally, food drives are a great way to educate community members about food insecurity in local schools.

Pantry Packs serves over 1,000 students in more than 43 participating schools. This adds up to over 4,000 packs monthly!

We would not be able to continue to meet this need without the help of volunteers like you! Be sure to let us know your food drive plans by emailing fooddrives@lwsf.org.

Overview

There are four phases to a food drive:

- Planning the Drive
- Promoting the Drive
- Collecting the Food
- Sorting and Delivering the Food

This guide provides information on how to conduct each phase and includes tips and tools to help you conduct a successful food drive!

Planning the Drive

Pantry Packs accepts food donations from September through March. We **NO LONGER** accept pre-assembled packs.

Types of Food Drives

- **Traditional Food Drive:** Invite your community to donate a variety of kid-friendly, nonperishable food items
- **Single Item Food Drive:** Choose one item from our [“Most Wanted” Kid-Friendly Food List](#) to collect during your food drive.
- **One Day Food Drive**
 - Grocery Store: Coordinate with a local grocery store to set up a station, hand out flyers, and collect items from our [“Most Wanted” Kid-Friendly Food List](#)

- Event: Use an event/sporting event as an opportunity to share information about food insecurity and collect items for a food drive.
- **Competitive Food Drive:** Hold a friendly food drive competition within your organization/school to boost participation. Compete to determine which group can collect the most items during the food drive, or assign each class/department a different food item to collect during the drive.
- **Virtual Food Drive:** Use social media/email/other forms of communication to run a drive where contributions can be sent directly to us by purchasing through our [Amazon wish](#) (Please remember to let us know you're hosting a drive, and ask contributors to include a gift message with their Amazon purchase—such as their contact information or the name of the food drive they're participating in. This helps our team accurately track donations to the correct drive.)

Things to consider when determining which food drive you will host:

- How much time do you have to host a drive/collect donations?
- Where will you collect food donations? Do you have a place to collect donations over a period of time or do you have space limitations?

If you choose to accept gift cards, please use them to buy Pantry Packs food before delivery. Monetary donations are also accepted directly by Lake Washington Schools Foundation on the [Pantry Packs page](#) and will be used for Pantry Packs bulk food purchasing.

Promoting the Drive

Advertise as early and as widely as possible.

Advertise the food drive with posters/flyers at your organization, on your website, on your social media sites, and in your newsletters. Important information to include in advertising:

- Start and end dates of the food drive
- Location to turn in food
- A list of food item suggestions can be found at www.lwsf.org/kid-friendly-food-list
 - If you are collecting at a grocery store, adding aisle numbers helps donors find the items easily.
- Pantry Packs Amazon wish list can be found at www.lwsf.org/amazon-wish-list.
- Information to educate your community about food insecurity and the Pantry Packs program is available at www.lwsf.org/pantry-packs.
- Encourage your community to follow us on [our Facebook page](#), and tag us on Facebook (@PantryPacksLWSD) with food drive related posts!

Unique flyers can be made as part of food drive preparation, or you can download and customize this [editable flyer template](#).

Collecting the Food

You will need to provide some type of bin/box for collecting food items. Grocery store produce departments are often happy to put boxes aside for you. Pantry Packs is unable to provide bins or boxes.

If you are collecting as part of a school/organization, designate a visible central donation location at your site. Have a predetermined staging area for overflow of collection.

If you are planning a grocery store drive, enlist friendly, outgoing volunteers to hand out flyers and collect donations from shoppers.

A couple of things to keep in mind:

- We ask for specific packaging and sizes to ensure packs are an appropriate size and weight for student backpacks.
- **We do not accept the following items:** expired food, glass containers, cans greater than 15 oz, perishable items, and containers with foil lids.
- Food items must have an expiration date at least three months from time of donation.

Sorting and Delivering the Food

Sorting Donations

Once you have finished collecting food, please sort the food before delivering it to the warehouse. We ask that you:

- Check to ensure that items have an expiration date at least three months from time of donation.
- Sort and box donations by type - meals, oatmeal, soup, granola bars, etc. If you aren't certain which category the item goes in, put it in a separate box/bag and we will sort it.

Delivery

At the end of the food drive, food must be delivered to the warehouse **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**. Donations can only be accepted at the Pantry Packs warehouse location at 14816 NE 95th Street - Bldg 6 in Redmond from early September until March. The warehouse is not staffed daily, so please email fooddrives@lwsf.org in advance to arrange a time for donation delivery.

Send pictures of your food drive and delivery to pantrypacks@lwsf.org so we can be sure to thank your group via social media.