



## Tipsheet: Running a Successful Food Drive

### Communicate Clearly

1. **Educate everyone about the impact of hunger in our community.**  
If people understand the importance of food drives, they will be more motivated to give. Many food shelves receive donations during year-end holiday times, but usually need donations year-round-especially during spring and summer months.
2. **Set a goal.**  
If this is the first time you have held a food drive, pick a goal that is both challenging and achievable. If you have sponsored food drives previously, consider increasing your goal this year. Be sure to post information about the food drive in a prominent location and report daily contributions towards reaching your goal
3. **Pick a theme or catchy slogan.**  
A local company used the theme "Empty carts mean empty stomachs. Fill 'er up." They developed a simple logo with a grocery cart to use on their posters and materials. Some food drives focus on special needs (e.g., items for babies or older people) or special holiday foods.
4. **Thank your donors.**  
Communicate final results and express thanks to participants—perhaps in your employee newsletter, or on your intranet or Website.

### Get Organized

1. **Find a partner.**  
Choose a local recipient for your food drive-such as Second Harvest Heartland or a neighborhood food shelf.
2. **Make it easy to give.**  
Provide grocery bags for food donations. Offer people the option to give food items, cash or checks. Identify drop-off sites. Set up a convenient drop-off site for donations at your organization-consider providing more than one site if your organization is large or has several offices. Ideally, each drop-off site should have someone who expresses a personal "thank you" to each donor.

### Provide Incentives

1. **Organize contests**  
Friendly competitions can be arranged between different departments at your organization. Offer prizes (such as coupons for free lunches or a vacation day) to the team that brings in the most donations. Based on material from The Pillsbury Company, a community supporter of United Way and Second Harvest Heartland.
2. **Items to Collect**
  - a. Nonperishable food  
Canned vegetables, soups, stews, tuna, peanut butter, jams (no glass or breakable containers), cereal, rice, pasta and dry food mixes.
  - b. Toiletry items  
Soap, toilet paper, tissue, shampoo, razors, shaving cream, toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss, bubble bath and hand/body lotion.
  - c. Baby items  
Disposable diapers and wipes.
  - d. Household products  
Dish soap, laundry soap, cleaning products, light bulbs and other commonly-used household items.

### Resources:

- United Way Caring Connection can assist your group with organizing a food drive. Call (612) 340-7440.
- [United Way Caring Connection](#) can link your employee group to hunger relief projects with local United Way community partners.