

Running a Food Drive

St. Vincent Place, Sault Ste. Marie



Donations

Tips and ideas for running a food drive to support your local food bank



Why support the food bank?

4 million Canadians,
or 1 in 8 households,
are considered food
insecure

20%, or 1 in 5, of the
SVP Food Bank clients
are under the age of
18

25%, or 1 in 4, of the
SVP Food Bank clients
are over the age of 50

The St. Vincent Place food bank receives no government funding, relying instead solely on donations to help our clients. That's why the support of local individuals, organizations, and businesses is so important to us and our success.

While food banks tend to receive a large influx of donations at Christmas, that tends to drop off quite sharply in January. Unfortunately, the number of clients in need of help doesn't ease up, leading to a demand that far exceeds the supply.

By March or April (and sometimes even sooner), any stores that the food bank was able to build up over Christmas have usually depleted, and food bank shelves start to look very bare. That tends to last until into the fall, making spring and summer the best time to run a food drive.



Where to collect donations, and from whom

You've got more options than you might think when it comes to running a food drive



1. Collect canned goods at work - Many workplaces are happy to accommodate an employee who wants to take on the initiative and collect canned goods. Talk to your boss, put out a memo or put up signs asking for donations, and set out a box or bin to collect the donations.

2. Collect in your apartment or neighbourhood – Deliver small flyers saying that you'll be by on a certain day to collect any donations placed outside your neighbour's doors. Taking the work out of dropping off the donations will encourage your neighbours to take part.

3. Collect at school – Many schools are more than happy to support a student's (or their parents') charitable efforts. See if you can put up signs on a school bulletin board or put notices in newsletters. Encourage your friends at other schools to do the same.

4. Set up a table somewhere public - Many stores, malls, banks, or other businesses are happy to provide a site for you to run a one-day food drive. Grocery stores are particularly good locations for them, since customers can see you on their way into the store and pick up some extra cans to drop off to you on their way out. Don't hesitate to ask business owners.

5. Make use of social media – The easier it is for someone to donate, the more likely they are to do it! In addition to asking for donations of canned goods via social media, you can also use Facebook's donation platform to collect money from your friends that you'll then use to go buy canned goods to donate yourself.

Some Fun Ideas



There are a few things you can do to make your food drive more appealing

1. Determine a theme for your food drive - By adding a theme, you can get potential donors more excited about getting involved. Some ideas include:
 - Earth Day Food Drive - "Go Green" by asking for donations of canned green vegetables like green beans and peas
 - Spread the Love Food Drive - Some of the most demanded items in food banks are peanut butter and jam. Ask for donations of these two items.
 - Spring Into Action Food Drive - Spring is one of the worst times for food bank donations, so ask your donors to get into the giving spirit this Spring.
 - Shark Week Food Drive - Everyone loves Shark Week, so ask your donors to really get into it this year by donating seafood items, particularly canned tuna and salmon.
 - Back to School Food Drive - Help parents send their kids to school with a full lunch bag by collecting donations of good (school-safe) lunch items, like apple sauce and granola bars.
 - Trick-or-Can Food Drive - At Halloween, dress up in your costume and go door to door collecting canned goods to donate.
2. Challenge your donors - Run a "100-Can Challenge" or challenge them to fill your vehicle with donations. If you're collecting at a school, challenge each class to bring in the most cans.
3. Offer a potential perk to donors - Asking people in your office to donate? See if you can raffle off something like the best parking spot, where each can donated gets an entry into the draw. Or run a dress-down day, allowing any employee who brings in a can to wear jeans, or pyjamas if you're running the food drive at a school.

Tips for Success



Ensure the success of your food drive by following this advice

1. Make sure that everyone knows when your food drive will end. A lot of people procrastinate, thinking they've still got time, so make sure they know the deadline to donate.
2. Take advantage of your network to help spread the word.
3. Make sure you've chosen the best location for your food drive. If you're at a store or other business, make sure you're near the entrance. If you've set up a donation bin at work, make sure it's somewhere all employees will see it.
4. Don't go it alone. Just about everything is easier with help, and organizing a food drive is no different. Get your friends involved.
5. Contact the food bank ahead of time. We will usually be able to help promote your food drive, and might even be able to supply some marketing materials, like flyers.

Have more questions?



Get in touch with St. Vincent Place today for more tips on organizing your food drive, help with promoting it, or information on what we most need in our food bank.

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