



# FOOD DRIVE TOOLKIT



*EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO  
ORGANIZE A FOOD DRIVE*

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# Introduction

The Aurora Food Pantry relies entirely on the support of the community and donations made through membership in the Ontario Association of Food Banks to help those who are experiencing food insecurity. The Pantry receives no government funding for its work.

Every month the Pantry provides food for approximately 600 residents of Aurora and north Oak Ridges. Almost 40% of those supported are children.

The range of foods that we are able to provide clients is dependent on what is donated to us and what we are able to purchase with the funds we have. Our goal is to provide five days of meals for each person in the family once a month. For those under two years, we provide five days of meals twice per month.

The individual donations and the food drives that the community mounts are the backbone of our Pantry. Thank you for hosting a food drive to benefit your community.

This brochure is designed to assist you with your food drive. It is drawn from our own experience and the experience of others who have mounted food drives. However, if we have not answered the questions that you might have, please call us at (905) 841-1577.

# Taking the First Step

1. Contact us (905 841-1577) to find out what food items are most needed. This is also an opportunity to brainstorm on a theme or focus for your event.
2. Be clear who your audience is for the drive: a school; your workplace; a community group you belong to; your neighbours; your friends. Knowing this helps guide you as to who can help out, what your focus might be, and when it might be most successful.
3. Pick a date and a time frame for your drive. If the drive is to celebrate someone's birthday, for example, the timeframe is likely to be much narrower than if it is to be a school event.  
*Hint: The experts say that a drive should be no longer than three weeks as people lose interest.*
4. Decide on whether the food drive will include a competitive element: the class that brings in the most items; the department that raises the most money; or the group that has the most people involved.
5. Reach out to others who can help you. Depending on the type of drive you are mounting, you may need people to create posters; others to pick up the donations; and others to keep track of any funds that are raised. *Hint: You may wish to check with the York Region District School Board as to whether students can count assisting with the food drive as Community Involvement Hours*

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## Food Drive Themes

- Skip a lunch and donate the cash
  - Grade-appropriate focus: JK-Grade 3 baby items; Grade 4-6 food for school lunches; etc
  - “Gone fishing”: focus on canned tuna, salmon
  - Sandwich Day: non-perishable items to make a sandwich
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# Getting Organized

1. Whether the food drive is at a single site or multiple sites, you will need boxes to contain the donations. You will likely get a lot of canned food and cans are heavy! While you may wish to use a large box to show the growing mountain of food, make sure you have boxes no larger than 15" x 12" x 20" for safe lifting and transport.
2. If you anticipate that cheques, currency or gift cards may be donated, ensure you have a safe place to keep them and that there are specific volunteers looking after them.
3. Depending on the length of the food drive, you may need to have volunteers empty the collection box. Please discuss with the Pantry whether you will be bringing donations over as a single event or as your collection box fills.
4. If you plan to have someone at the collection box when it might be being filled, consider assigning several people for shorter shifts of time.

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## Count-Down!

1. 48 hours ahead of the food drive, remind your volunteers, your target audience and your family(!) that the countdown has started
  2. 24 hours ahead or the night before, set up donation boxes and signage as needed
  3. Lift-off! Enjoy your food drive and remember to thank everyone
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# Spreading the Word

1. In advance of the drive, make sure your target audience has the necessary information through some consistent key messages:
  - your goal
  - who you are helping
  - what you need your audience to do
  - when and where the food drive is taking place
2. Put up signage to promote the food drive
3. Use social media to spread the word about your food drive both in anticipation of the food drive and during the drive. Remember to use #AuroraFoodPantry.
4. Let the local media know—you never know, you may be front page news!
5. Remember to remind your audience 48 hours in advance of the food drive.

# Holding the Food Drive

1. Remind yourself of the goals of the food drive—helping others being the primary one. Your efforts will make a difference for those who experience hunger in our community.
2. Keep track of your volunteers and remind *them* of the positive outcomes of the food drive. Make sure they have a beverage and a snack to keep their energy high.
3. Ensure that bins are being emptied as needed and that cheques, cash and/or gift cards are being picked up by the designated volunteer.
4. Thank your volunteers often.

# Wrapping It Up

1. Congratulate yourself and your team on a job well done. Thank all your volunteers.
2. Take down all signage, posters and any associated litter from the food drive site. Leave the site as you found it.
3. Use social media and the local media to let them know of your successful food drive. Give specifics where available—“we filled three pumpkin boxes with donated food”.
4. Finalize drop-off plans with your volunteers and with the Pantry.
5. Start planning *next* year’s food drive!



# In Conclusion

We hope that this Food Drive Toolkit was helpful to you. Some of the steps will not be relevant to your planned event, but they may trigger further ideas for your food drive. Please remember that the Aurora Food Pantry wants your food drive to be a success. We are a phone call away if you have any questions that we might answer.

Please refer to our website [aurorafoodpantry@gmail.com](mailto:aurorafoodpantry@gmail.com) for the most up-to-date list of our most needed items. This list can change significantly from month to month, or even week to week, as it is heavily dependent on what donations we have received.

Finally, on behalf of the clients, volunteers and Board of the Aurora Food Pantry, thank you for all your efforts to help those who experience food insecurity in our community.