<https://tpchd.org/healthy-places/food-safety/donate-food-safely/>

[Home](https://tpchd.org/) » [Healthy Places](https://tpchd.org/healthy-places/) » [Food Safety](https://tpchd.org/healthy-places/food-safety/) » **Donate Food Safely**

**Donate Food Safely**



[](https://tpchd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Feed-Your-Friends-and-Neighbors-Safely.pdf)

**Feed your friends and neighbors safely.**

Do you want to help feed people in need? Here’s how you can safely help in the community.

*View infographic in*[*English*](https://tpchd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Feed-Your-Friends-and-Neighbors-Safely.pdf)*,*[*Spanish*](https://tpchd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Feed-Your-Friends-and-Neighbors-Safely-Spanish.pdf)*,*[*Korean*](https://tpchd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Feed-Your-Friends-and-Neighbors-Safely-Korean.pdf)*,*[*Vietnamese*](https://tpchd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Feed-Your-Friends-and-Neighbors-Safely-Vietnamese.pdf)*,*[*Tagalog*](https://tpchd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Feed-Your-Friends-and-Neighbors-Safely-Tagalog.pdf)*,*[*Russian*](https://tpchd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Feed-Your-Friends-and-Neighbors-Safely-Russian.pdf)*and*[*Simplified Chinese*](https://tpchd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Feed-Your-Friends-and-Neighbors-Safely-Simplified-Chinese.pdf)*.*

**Food you can share without registering as a food bank or pantry:**

* Whole, uncut produce.
* Dry goods.
* Canned goods.
* Commercially packaged food that does not need refrigeration.

**You need to be a registered food bank or pantry if you:**

* Cut or prepare produce.
* Unpackage ready-to-eat food.
* Need to keep food hot or cold.
* Cook or heat food.

**You can work with existing organizations.**

* Volunteer at a food bank or pantry.
* Ask your local food bank or pantry what they need and what kind of food you can donate.
* Organize a food drive for a local food bank or pantry.
* Reach out to schools and ask to donate food or volunteer your time.

**Or you can create your own food bank or pantry.**

Registration is free, but food banks and pantries need to apply to become a nonprofit organization. Nonprofit means the IRS approves you to be a tax-exempt, charitable nonprofit organization.

* [Start a nonprofit—What you need to know](https://www.sos.wa.gov/_assets/charities/training/starting-a-nonprofit-pdf.pdf).
* [Apply to be a nonprofit](https://www.sos.wa.gov/corporations-charities).

**Food bank and food pantry or Donated Food Distributing Organization (DFDO) rules:**

* Follow food safety guidelines for Washington State. Like cold holding, handwashing, bare hand contact, etc.
* All food must be donated to people in need.
* Food that needs refrigeration must be made in a donor kitchen—like a restaurant, church, school kitchen, etc.—and not a residential home.
* Must distribute prepared food within 8 hours of preparation.
* You can accept or give out:
  + Extra from food establishments.
  + Commercially packaged and frozen food.
  + Food properly handled, stored and prepared in a donor kitchen.
  + Food that doesn’t need temperature control— like uncooked rice, canned soup and boxed cereal.
  + Baked goods that don’t require temperature control and are handled/stored/prepared in a residential home.
* You cannot accept or give out:
  + Home canned food.
  + Canned food in rusty or severely damaged containers.
  + Expired infant formula.
  + Distressed foods—like from a fire, flood, or prolonged storage.

**Resources**

* [Food banks and meal sites in Pierce County](https://www.piercecountywa.gov/454/Food-Banks).
* [How to donate food](https://www.epa.gov/recycle/donating-food).
* [Find food closets, food banks, soup kitchens, congregate meal locations, food boxes, vouchers, and subsidized grocery sites](https://www.foodpantries.org/).
* [Safe food donations and handling at DFDOs](https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/food/food-worker-and-industry/charity-food-donations).

**Report concerns.**

Help us fight outbreaks by reporting a food illness or concern.

* Submit a [foodborne illness report](https://tpchd.org/healthy-places/food-safety/report-a-foodborne-illness/) if you get sick after eating.
* Submit a [food safety concern](https://eco.tpchd.org/#/subm0/1) if you observe unsafe conditions where food is sold or served.