

Guidelines for **HEALTHY** Food Donations

Fairfax food pantries are in need of donations year-round to fulfill their mission of providing healthy, nutritious foods to hungry individuals and families. Your healthy donation can make a difference.

Going Hungry is a Reality for Many in Fairfax County

- **44,000** residents receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps).
- Over **25%** of the students enrolled in the Fairfax County Public Schools receive free or reduced-cost lunches.
- More than **62,000** individuals live below the federal poverty level.
- An additional **86,000** residents live in households with incomes 100-185% of poverty.
- The 2013 Fairfax County Youth Survey reports that **19%** of high school students reported going hungry at some time in the past 30 days.
- Emergency food requests received by Fairfax County increased **50%** from 2008 to 2010.

Make Your Food Donation Count

Access to nutritious food options is a community-wide commitment in Fairfax County. Keep these tips in mind when selecting items to donate:

- **Limit foods high in fat and sugar.** Cakes, cookies, candies and sweetened drinks do not offer much nutritional value. Consider donating foods high in fiber and low in sugar.
- **Packaged foods are often high in sodium.** Look for foods labeled "low sodium," "reduced sodium" or "no added salt."
- **Consider making half your donation fruits and vegetables.** Stock up on lower-sodium canned tomatoes and other vegetables. Select canned fruits labeled "100% juice."
- **Whole grains are a complete package.** Look for whole wheat bread, brown rice and other whole-grain products. By consuming whole-grain foods, families get more fiber and vitamins with each bite.

Whether donating directly to a food pantry or hosting a food drive, consider the following tips to ensure your generosity has the greatest impact:

- **Contact your local food pantry in advance of your food drive.** Requesting guidance directly from the pantry receiving your donation saves time for everyone.
- **Check the expiration date.** Pantries cannot distribute previously opened or expired foods.
- **Not all pantries can accept items requiring refrigeration.** Contact your local food pantry for guidance.
- **Many pantries DO accept fresh produce.** Consider donating fresh fruits and vegetables. Contact your local food pantry for guidance.
- **Avoid donating items in glass containers** (except for baby food), due to the possibility of breakage.

Tips...

Many Fairfax-based food pantries serve different ethnic populations. Your local food pantry can offer guidance on the best foods to donate.

Donate healthy items that you and your family would eat.

Foods high in fats, oils and sugar provide calories, but few nutrients. These foods make up a high percentage of many diets because they are inexpensive and easy to obtain. By choosing to donate healthy foods, you play a role in improving the health of Fairfax County.



The Live Healthy Fairfax initiative aims to transform our community into a place where everyone may lead healthier, more productive lives.

Food Providers Network

The Food Providers Network (FPN) was formed in 2010 to bring together faith-based and nonprofit organizations to help individuals and families obtain adequate food in times of need. The FPN provides a venue for area food banks and pantries to share best practices and service delivery models with the overall goal of strengthening the network of support to the community.

The FPN is committed to raise awareness in Fairfax County about the need for sustained food donations of quality food. As the request for food assistance continues to grow in Fairfax, so does the need for healthy food donations.

Members of the Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax have worked with the FPN and faith community representatives to address food pantry needs within the Fairfax Community.

For more information about the Food Providers Network (FPN), visit:
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/fpn.htm.

Additional Resources

To contact a food pantry in your ZIP code, please visit the Human Services Resource Guide:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/HSRG

For additional assistance or other food emergency needs, please visit Coordinated Services Planning:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/csp/
or call (703) 222-0880, TTY 711

This initiative is supported by Food Providers Network, www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/fpn.htm
Live Healthy Fairfax, www.fairfaxcounty.gov/livehealthy



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