

Securing Local Support

Local NALC support is an important factor in having a successful food drive. Early and open communications with your branch president, branch officers, stewards, retirees and fellow letter carriers about plans for the food drive can gain their support and willingness to actively participate in the food drive. This support is an essential element of helping our communities *Stamp Out Hunger*.

Once you create a basic plan, meet with your branch president to discuss your vision for the food drive. Also discuss your plans at branch meetings, officers meetings, stewards meetings, etc. As time goes on and you start to implement your plans, continue to update all local NALC members about any changes and/or additional plans you may have. Communication is key to gaining support.

Local USPS Support is also an important factor in having a successful food drive. Meet with your local station manager and/or postmaster to discuss details leading up to the food drive and for the day of the food drive. Management's support can help with an agreed upon timeline for the distribution and delivery of postcards and bags. Local management support is a reinforcement of the commitment promised at the highest level of the USPS.

When NALC/USPS support is established, stand-ups are an excellent source of communications with both parties at the same time. Consistent stand-ups bring a sense of comradery and allow for all parties to be on the same page as to the expectations of the food drive. Your food drive coordinator and/or branch president can view and print all items dealing with the food drive. These items are available at: www.nalc.org/community-service/food-drive. You can also invite local food bank/pantry representatives to share information about how the food drive can help those in your community.

Stand-ups will connect rural carriers, clerks, mail handlers, custodians, etc. with the knowledge of your food drive plans. Your open communication with these fellow co-workers can gain their support too.

Fellow co-workers support is important for a smooth, efficient and successful food drive day. Knowing who, what, where, when, why, and how will gain this support. Some questions that you will want to seek answers for are:

Will all carriers pick up the donations on their own routes? Will carriers have family members who will help them collect food? Are volunteers available, and if so, who specifically are each of them assisting? Are there maps available for the volunteers? Will all food be returned to the post office or taken directly to a local food agency? Who will secure extra needed equipment (i.e. tubs, hampers, etc.) in the weeks leading up to food drive day? Who will hang posters for advertisement? Asking co-workers questions, seeking their help and cooperation, and ensuring every route is considered, will enable everyone involved to know what to expect. It will not be possible to have a plan for every aspect of the day so make sure you have back-up plans for the the unexpected that may, and probably will, come your way.

Contact Food Banks and Pantries

THE DECISION FOR FOOD DISTRIBUTION RESTS SOLELY WITH YOUR BRANCH. Your local United Way, social services and community organizations are great places to find out where needy food recipients are in your community. Prior to reaching out to a food bank or pantry, you may want to read *Tips/Talking Points for Sponsor Solicitation Meeting*. Some of the tips will help you better inform food banks and pantries during your initial conversation with them.

Once you have enlisted the participation of a local food bank and/or pantry, ask to have a face to face meeting with them. You can also ask to tour their food bank and to have them tour the post office. Familiarity on both sides allows for better and more detailed planning for food drive day.

During your meetings, ask for their assistance in implementing and/or developing your food drive plan. Food banks are a great asset for building awareness of the drive through advertising, for helping to secure funds and/or donors for food drive bags, for getting volunteers who will help on food drive day, for setting up food collection logistics and for other types of support that proves to be very helpful in the success of the food drive.

Community and Volunteer Support

Community support is not only important to obtain for food drive day, it is also important for the months, weeks, and days leading up to the food drive. The more support you have, the bigger and better your food drive can be. There are many ways that community support can benefit your food drive plans. Reading *Tips/Talking Points for Sponsor Solicitation Meeting* will help you to approach getting community support with confidence. Some examples of community support that have benefited branches across the U.S. are:

- A local bank allowed advertisement of food drive day on their billboard for a week.
- A local gym donated money to buy *Stamp Out Hunger* yard signs to post in key locations.
- A local radio station taped an announcement for the food drive and replayed it in the weeks leading up to food drive day.
- The Governor prepared a proclamation for food drive day.
- A local newspaper printed a proclamation and an article about the food drive history.
- A local carwash advertised the food drive on their electronic billboard.
- A local grocery store gave a donation of chips and drinks for volunteers.
- A local submarine shop donated foot long subs to feed the carriers and volunteers.

Volunteer support is very important on food drive day. The assistance offered relieves added time pressures and physical stress that can take place on food drive day. Also, volunteer support can be beneficial prior to and after the food drive. Here are some examples of how volunteers are so helpful:

- Retirees and family members volunteered to seek out carriers, empty their postal vehicles and bring back the food for early sorting and distribution to the food bank.
- A local Girl Scout troop handed out undelivered postcards and bags at the local grocery store the day before the food drive.
- A local trucking company provided a driver and truck free of charge on food drive day.
- High school students needing community service hours to graduate helped collect food.
- A local Boy Scout troop volunteered to sort food at the food bank the day after the food drive.
- A local church group volunteered to box up the food at the post office on food drive day.
- A military platoon and battalion enlisted to drive carrier routes to pick up food before the carriers delivered for the day.

Non-postal volunteers that you expect to work on or enter postal property must be approved for access. Discuss this with your local manager/postmaster ahead of time to avoid any problems. Many food banks have a liability waiver form that covers all volunteers who help with the food bank and this would include volunteers in connection with the *Stamp Out Hunger*[®] food drive. Speak with your food agency to see if they have this form available.

Make sure to recognize your volunteers and workers on food drive day. This can be accomplished by providing food, refreshments, “give-aways”, etc. that can be donated by local community organizations and/or purchased by your branch. Offer Volunteer Certificates or Certificates of Appreciation. Give them all a sincere and personal “Thank you” for their hard work in helping to feed the community and invite them back for next year’s food drive!

National Association of Letter Carriers



CERTIFICATE of APPRECIATION

to

**for your community leadership and
steadfast support to the NALC
“Stamp Out Hunger” Food Drive.**



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