



Leader's Guide

Donating safe and nutritious food to food pantries and soup kitchens

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Introduction

The United States (U.S.) has an abundance of food; yet many people in the U.S. still suffer from food insecurity and utilize food assistance, such as food pantries and soup kitchens. Hungry families could use some of

the significant proportion of the U.S. food supply that regularly goes to waste. In fact, an estimated 30-40 percent of the U.S. food supply is wasted—that is, not available for human consumption—with 31 percent food loss at the retail and consumer levels. Food retailer and consumer donations of safe and healthy food to entities such as food pantries and soup kitchens can help feed those hungry families while reducing food waste.

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Some groups may be reluctant to donate food that would otherwise go to waste for fear they will be liable if the food they donate makes someone sick. Therefore, the U.S. Congress in 1996 passed the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act to reduce potential donor liability for donations made in good faith. In particular, this act can help grocery stores, restaurants and similar retail organizations feel more comfortable about donating food, instead of needlessly sending food to the landfill.

However, it is critical that such entities receive food donations that are as safe and nutritious as possible so that more people have access to safe and healthy food, rather than just whatever food has been in the back of someone's cupboard too long. This lesson provides food safety tips for people who are donating food to such entities, as well as for groups organizing food drives.

Objectives

- Identify foods that are safe to donate—and those that are not—to food pantries and soup kitchens.
- Discuss safe practices for donating food to food banks and food pantries.
- Develop a list of the top three points for participants to consider the next time they donate to a food bank or soup kitchen or organize a food drive.



Intended audiences

Adults and youths who may be donating to a food pantry, food bank or soup kitchen, or organizing a food drive. Such groups may include:

- Parent-teacher organizations
- Community clubs
- 4-H Clubs
- School organizations
- Church groups
- Philanthropic groups

Before the lesson

1. Review this leader's guide and its companion fact sheet (#N1311).
2. Check listed references for more information.
3. Assemble materials, including:
 - Pens or pencils
 - Copies of the fact sheet
 - Copies of the evaluation to be distributed following the lesson
4. Look at the list of suggested illustrations in the "During the lesson" section below, and determine which illustrations you will use to reinforce food safety concepts. Gather the necessary materials for those illustrations and activities.

During the lesson

1. Give each participant a copy of the fact sheet and a pencil, and allow a few minutes for each person to review the information.
2. Allow 45 to 50 minutes to teach the lesson. Try to answer questions as you go along, instead of waiting until the end.
3. Begin by asking participants why they think food safety is important when they donate to food pantries and soup kitchens.
4. Discuss the introductory paragraphs from the fact sheet. Be sure to emphasize that it is important to donate food that is safe and nutritious, and not just any leftover

food, because many people who use food pantries and soup kitchens are young, old, pregnant or sick and particularly vulnerable to foodborne illness.

5. Ask and allow participants to discuss each of the questions in the fact sheet before continuing with the answers and explanatory information.
6. Use the accompanying PowerPoint presentation (including photos on slides) to discuss some of the important points for donating foods safely.
7. Use any of the following suggested illustrations and discussion starters while reviewing the relevant section:
 - a. Bring some foods and ask if they should be donated (e.g., outdated food, dented cans and home-canned foods, as well as some foods that are acceptable to donate).
 - b. Show a food thermometer, and discuss safe food holding temperatures (above 135 degrees F or below 41 degrees F). Perhaps mention that though these are the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) holding temperature regulations for food businesses, the FDA and the U. S. Department of Agriculture generally use 140 degrees F and 40 degrees F in consumer information on safe holding temperatures, as those temperatures are safer and are easier to remember.
 - i. Reiterate that food thermometers are inexpensive (~\$5) and important for monitoring the proper temperature to control microbial growth.
 - ii. Mention that thermometers must be calibrated for accuracy. More information on calibrating thermometers is available on Page 10 of K-State Research and Extension publication 3138¹.
 - c. Show an example of a large food-grade container that is safe for holding food. Also, show a garbage bag or can, which should be used for holding trash, not food for consumption.
 - d. Show pictures of dented cans or the flowchart poster from North Carolina State University² showing when it is safe to use dented cans.
 - e. Show the MyPlate graphic³ and talk about what constitutes nutritious meals for people, including those in need. Show the suggested nonperishable items for food drives card included in the fact sheet, and talk about ideas for food donations from each food group. Emphasize that variety is valuable! For example, if everyone donates canned corn for the food drive, a food pantry client may end up eating corn at every meal. Also talk about special dietary needs that might exist for a food pantry client who has diabetes, high blood pressure or is pregnant, etc., and what foods might be healthful for those special needs.
 - f. Discuss local opportunities to donate food, reviewing the location of your nearest food bank, soup kitchen, homeless shelter, etc., as well as such information as their hours of operation. Discuss the timing of community food drives and other opportunities to donate food (e.g., some churches collect food year-round), and discuss if this group should organize a safe and healthy food drive for the community.
 - g. Arrange for your group to visit the local food bank, soup kitchen, homeless shelter or another entity that uses

¹Londa Nwadike, "Food Safety for Kansas Farmers Market Vendors: Regulations and Best Practices," Kansas State University, January 2017, www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3138.pdf.

²North Carolina State University Extension, "Can I use this can?" <https://foodsafety.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Can-I-use-this-can.pdf?fwd=no>.

³Available from U.S Department of Agriculture, "ChooseMyPlate.gov," April 19, 2017, <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlate>, and other locations.

donated food. Tour the facility, talk to the manager or volunteers on duty and ask what foods or other things they need—such as cash or additional volunteers—and how your group can help.

- 8) Ask participants to discuss the top three points they will consider the next time they donate to a food bank or soup kitchen or organize a food drive. Have them write down a few key points they plan to consider on the fact sheet.
- 9) Ask the participants to fill out an evaluation for the program.
- 10) Thank the audience for their participation.

References

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- Haley, James. 2013. The legal guide to the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act. University of Arkansas School of Law, August 8. <http://media.law.uark.edu/arklawnotes/2013/08/08/the-legal-guide-to-the-bill-emerson-good-samaritan-food-donation-act/>.
- McKelvey, Bill. 2014. Healthy shelves: Promoting and enhancing good nutrition in food pantries. Interdisciplinary Center for Food Security, University of Missouri. <http://foodsecurity.missouri.edu/healthy-shelves/>.

- North Carolina State University Extension. Food pantries and food banks. <https://foodsafety.ces.ncsu.edu/food-pantries-and-food-banks/>.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. Office of the Chief Economist. U.S. food waste challenge frequently asked questions. <https://www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/faqs.htm>.
- University of Missouri Extension. Nutrition and health. <http://extension.missouri.edu/main/DisplayCategory.aspx?C=5>.

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Evaluation

We appreciate your opinions! Please help us make our programs better by taking about 5 minutes to answer the following questions. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may skip answering one or more questions if you wish. The information that you share will be held in the strictest confidence. We will summarize it in reports, in order to evaluate our program. We greatly value your participation. Thank you!

Scale: 1-Agree completely, 2-Agree somewhat, 3-Neutral, 4-Disagree somewhat, 5-Disagree completely

1. As a result of this program, I learned which foods can be safely donated to food pantries and soup kitchens.

1 2 3 4 5

2. As a result of this program, I learned safe practices in donating food to food banks and food pantries.

1 2 3 4 5

3. As a result of this program, I have also learned (please indicate)

4. I plan to take action and/or change something in my life (at home, play, or at work).

1 2 3 4 5

5. If agree, please describe the action or changes you plan to make and when:

6. Additional comments:

7. A University of Missouri Extension representative may contact me later to talk about this program (We are asking for your contact information so that we may follow up with you about what you learned from this program):

No Yes

8. If yes, my contact information is below: (e.g. name, phone and/or email):



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