

Food drive is set for May 14

It's almost here—the Letter Carriers' "Stamp Out Hunger"® Food Drive is scheduled for Saturday, May 14. As the big day approaches, branch food drive coordinators are finalizing preparations for the annual event, which was first held 30 years ago, in 1993.

Registration for the 2022 Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is still open for branches that haven't signed up yet. Branch presidents can register their branch via the Members Only portal on nalc.org.

"We look forward to the day when no one in the country worries about feeding themselves or their families," NALC President Fredric Rolando said, "but until then, letter carriers will lend a hand to bring food to their tables. We have done this since 1993 because we see the needs when we deliver the mail to every address in the country, six or even seven days a week."

Each day, 1 in 8 Americans, including millions of children, senior citizens and veterans, are unsure where their next meal will come from. To serve that need, letter carriers collect food left out by postal patrons in the morning of the second Saturday of each May.

The timing is crucial; Food pantries can face shortages in spring and summer because holiday donations have been depleted. By summer, when most school meal programs are not available, the pressure on food banks grows even more.

Over the years, active and retired letter carriers, with the help of thousands of volunteers along with NALC's partners, have collected a total of 1.82 billion pounds of food. A feature of the food drive is that all the food collected is distributed locally, to food banks and other entities that help feed people.

Making a difference

Part of the success of our food drive is owed to our national partners: the U.S. Postal Service, the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, Vericast, United Way Worldwide, the AFL-CIO, Valpak, the Kellogg Co. and CVS Health. These partners help in many ways, including sponsoring bags, gathering volunteers and getting out the message about the food drive.

Postal customers who receive specially marked bags for food donation in the weeks leading up to food drive day are much more likely to participate. Most branches depend on the generosity of local or regional sponsors to help provide bags. Branches are encouraged to search for local sponsors, to ensure that every postal patron gets a bag. Look for opportunities to show local businesses how they can get involved and sponsor bags—if not this year, then next year.

Getting the word out matters

Beyond bags, NALC Headquarters, branch food drive coordinators and volunteers rely on various means of communication to publicize the food drive.

The digital communications team at Headquarters floods social media with news and reminders. Check out the food drive's official social media accounts on Facebook at facebook.com/StampOutHunger and on Twitter at [@StampOutHunger](https://twitter.com/StampOutHunger). Use #StampOutHunger to find or send messages about the food drive on either platform.

NALC continues to make use of newspapers, television and radio to get the word out about the food drive



to the public, with distribution of news releases as well as individual outreach to media outlets. Those efforts yield news stories leading up to the event and follow-up coverage afterward, which helps with future food drives. The Department of Communications and Media Relations at Headquarters stands ready to help branches that wish to publicize the food drive in their communities.

Of course, the NALC food drive website for branch coordinators, nalc.org/food, has all the resources that branches need, including promotional artwork, forms, thank-you cards and even city proclamation templates. The site also may provide new ideas or inspiration for promoting the food drive in your community.

Letter carriers who have questions about the food drive or who need help should contact their branch or regional food drive coordinator.

Please note that the 2022 Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is subject to change or cancellation if necessary to protect the safety and health of those involved in the food drive, in light of the pandemic. As we know, the physical food drive was not held in 2020 or 2021 for that reason. Instead, it was replaced by the ongoing virtual donor drive.

The traditional date of the food drive has been the second Saturday in May for a one-day in-person drive. This year, whether or not it turns out to be safe to hold the physical food drive, the donor drive will continue virtually. **PR**