

How to prepare for a successful food drive

Each year, NALC urges branches to register for the Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive held on the second Saturday in May. Stamp Out Hunger is the largest single-day food drive in the nation.

Below you will find a guide on how to help your branch create a successful food drive, including the newly revamped registration process and website.

Registration

Work on the food drive must start in advance and must be a priority. The process begins with the branch selecting a food drive coordinator.

Once the food drive coordinator has been identified, the branch president should direct the coordinator to our newly designed website at nalc.org/community-service/food-drive to complete the branch registration form. The registration forms will be listed by region and should be returned promptly to the designated regional office. The coordinator should complete all fields on the form, including the name, address and website of the organizations that will receive the branch's donations.

Groundwork

Once the branch is registered, the food drive coordinator should explore NALC's newly designed website to order supplies; find information, such as the coordinator's manual or a sample press release; and find the national partners' and state and regional coordinators' contact information.

The food drive coordinator will want to make sure to review the coordinator's manual and then enlist help, as the branch will need volunteers. Start by asking the branch members to sign up by placing a sign-up sheet at your monthly branch meeting and on your branch web page and/or social media pages. Be mindful that you can solicit help from other crafts and NALC co-sponsors such as United Way.

Review the coordinator's manual and then create a timeline of duties and the branch's available budget to share with your volunteers, so they know what is expected of them. Schedule a meeting with the volunteers to identify skills or useful contacts. Make sure to set realistic expectations, assist with training if needed, provide reassurance and follow up regularly.

Building partnerships

Take advantage of local opportunities to solicit donations from businesses. Letter carriers have an advantage, as they interact with businesses daily and will have a relationship with the point of contact. In the coordinator's manual, you will find tips and talking points on how to secure local support.

Prior to meeting with a potential partner, create a folder and include material that you can leave with the prospective partner, including a letter explaining the cause, what type of donations you are requesting and how those donations will be used. Create a list of the possible partners and include the date the meeting took place, or the date the packet of information was mailed if you were not able to have a meeting, so you can follow up.

A great resource to use is your local United Way, which might be able to assist when attempting to get sponsors for bags. You can find more information at unitedway.org/find-your-united-way.

Advertising

There are numerous ways your branch can get the word out. One way is by establishing media contacts and asking them to help promote the drive. Also, you can contact your elected officials and ask them to declare the second Saturday in May as



Food Drive Day. You will find a sample press release for news and radio stations, along with a sample proclamation for your elected officials, in the food drive coordinator's manual.

Other ways include wearing food drive T-shirts; putting out lawn signs; hanging

posters and flyers inside banks, churches or grocery stores; providing stand-up talks with carriers to get them excited about the food drive; and sharing information on social media.

Remember to follow NALC's social media accounts on Facebook at facebook.com/StampOutHunger and on X (formerly known as Twitter) at [@StampOutHunger](https://twitter.com/StampOutHunger) for more ideas.

Next steps

After the food drive, what's next? The food drive coordinator should visit the NALC website to retrieve the final results form and record the weight (pounds) of the food collected plus the value in food of the money donated. Once the final results have been submitted to the applicable regional office, the coordinator should compile the information that has been collected and provide it to the branch president. The information should include lists of volunteers, vendor and partner contacts, food banks in your area with their contact information, a timeline of events leading up to the food drive, along with notes on what worked and areas to improve.

Determine if the current food drive coordinator will continue in that role next year. If not, do you have a replacement? In order for a branch to succeed, leaders must train the next generation.

Thank you for continuing the fight to Stamp Out Hunger. **PR**