

How can the Letter Carriers' Food Drive help you?



Community and Membership Outreach Coordinator Pam Donato

As we enter the critical final weeks before the Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive on Saturday, May 13, we expect that local branch leaders are reaching out to their fellow letter carriers and asking for their help in getting all of the important food drive-related tasks completed.

There are postcards and promotional bags to be distributed to each delivery unit. Local television and radio stations are looking to interview letter carriers about the upcoming drive. Help is needed in getting the posters with the Family Circus artwork hung up all around town. There are city council meetings to attend, proclamations to be requested and maybe even food drive T-shirts to hand out.

Bottom line: There's no shortage of tasks to be done and requests for help to be made.

But I'd like to turn the request around and ask you: What do you need to be successful on Saturday, May 13?

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Ask for support from your local USPS supervisor, postmaster or district manager: All letter carriers should attend a food drive stand-up talk on the clock, to include watching the motivational video. Guidance on delivery of postcards and (if available) promotional bags, as well as a plan for the day of the drive, must be provided by a joint local NALC/USPS team.

There is unwavering support for the food drive by Postmaster General Megan Brennan and by USPS Chief Operations Officer David Williams. Any unresolved conflicts regarding local implementation should be brought directly to your national business agent. A copy of letters of explicit support from the PMG and the COO, along with a Postal Service action plan (written by USPS, representing their committed plan for the food drive), can be found at the Food Drive Toolkit link at nalc.org/food—look under “Support from USPS.”

Ask for help with picking up food donations: Most branches have found groups of volunteers who can help with picking up the food donations. Ask for volunteers from your local Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, from middle school and high school groups and athletic teams, your local AARP, United Way, VFW and American Legion chapters. There are so many organizations full of people eager

to help, and your local branch leaders can coordinate those groups' assistance easily—and they, in turn, can help you on what we all know can be a very busy day. Asking for help now, weeks before the drive, will put “connecting with volunteers” on your local leaders' front burners.

Rank-and-file letter carriers can also help here, by making suggestions of good volunteer groups you personally know about—especially middle school and high school groups that are looking for good volunteer projects that can help them provide documented community service hours for their members. Talk with your shop steward or your local branch president about your ideas.

Ask about giving food from our drive to a local food pantry: One of the most popular aspects of our food drive is that all of the food collected is given to local pantries selected by the branch president. Most branches provide donated food to multiple food agencies—from large food banks to small shelters; from outreach centers to church pantries. Simply ask your branch president to include a specific non-profit organization as a food recipient. This is great for the neighborhood resource, it's important for local relationships in our communities, and it reinforces for each of us the real person-to-person impact we're making with our work.

Yes, we ultimately need you to make this food drive a success. We make a lot of requests of you as we work on the largest one-day food drive in the world.

Now, please ask your local leaders what you need to make this year's food drive a success.

