

Still time to register for food drive

The March 9 deadline for branches to register for the 28th annual Letter Carriers' "Stamp Out Hunger" Food Drive is fast approaching. This year's food drive is on Saturday, May 9, so time is running out to register and prepare.

Branch presidents can register quickly by using the "Member's Only" portal at nalc.org. Once they've logged in to the portal, they can simply select the "Food Drive" button, enter the information into the fields, and select "Complete Registration."

Branch registration locks in a branch's order for food drive reminder postcards, so **it is important for branches to register as soon as possible to ensure proper allocation of postcards.**

Branches also should search for local sponsors of specially branded food drive bags. Such bags are a win-win, helping to significantly drive up totals of food collected while also putting the sponsor's name right next to the familiar and trusted Stamp Out Hunger logo, creating a positive association for both the sponsor and the Postal Service. For information on ordering bags, go to the online food drive toolkit at nalc.org/food.

The toolkit also contains contact information for regional and state food drive coordinators. If a food drive coordinator encounters problems working with local managers on food drive logistics, the branch president or the regional food drive coordinator can lend a hand.

Food drive partners

This year's food drive national partners are the U.S. Postal Service, the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), the National Rural Letter Carriers' Associa-

tion, the AFL-CIO, United Way Worldwide, the Kellogg Co., CVS Health and direct-mail marketing companies Valassis and Valpak.

Thanks to NALC's partnerships with UFCW and Valpak—the company behind those familiar coupon-stuffed blue envelopes—every postal customer will receive a reminder postcard in the mail a few days before May 9.

Why the food drive matters

Tens of millions of Americans, including many elderly people, military veterans and children, are uncertain where their next meal will come from. Many turn to local food pantries for help. But food pantries can face critical shortages in summer, when holiday donations have been depleted and the absence of school meal programs brings additional need for food.

That's why food pantries—and the hungry—look to letter carriers to deliver each spring.

The annual letter carrier food drive, held the second Saturday in May, helps replenish community pantries, shelters and churches nationwide.

"Letter carriers know the great need in communities throughout the country," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Our food drive can make the difference between someone going hungry and someone being nourished."

Last year, active and retired letter carriers, with the help of thousands of volunteers and NALC's partners, collected 75.7 million pounds of food, bringing the 27-year total to 1.75 billion pounds.

Food drive art unveiled

Beginning with a close relationship between cartoonist Bil Keane and his letter carrier, Keane's popular "Family



Circus" comic strip has been associated with the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive since the first food drive in 1992.

Following Bil's death in 2001, his son Jeff has followed in his father's footsteps, creating and donating special artwork to help spread the word about the annual event. This year's drawing will no doubt find its way onto many promotional items, including posters, T-shirts and yard signs—not to mention food drive bags.

The cartoon and other promotional artwork are available in the food drive tool kit. Remember, the "Family Circus" cartoon was a gift from Jeff Keane and can be used to publicize the food drive; no permission is needed.

Merchandise available

You can find a one-stop online shop for wearable and promotional food drive-related items at stampouthungerstore.com. Branches or individuals can easily order union-made T-shirts, hats, yard signs, buttons and more to help promote the drive.

You can view, like and share the latest news and updates about the food drive on Facebook at facebook.com/StampOutHunger and on Twitter at [@StampOutHunger](https://twitter.com/StampOutHunger). **PR**