

Coordinating a Donation Drive



Together - There's Hope

Inspiring hope and changing lives – together.

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Getting Started

We are so glad that you are organizing a donation drive to benefit Homeless Connections. Community support from people like you is crucial to our success. Each year, the Homeless Connections helps thousands of individuals and families in our community move from crisis to increased self-sufficiency. Donation drives, like the one you are undertaking, directly impact the lives of the people we assist by helping us feed and provide the basic care items needed for them to be life and work ready. If you have any questions as you are reading through this packet, please contact Beth Servais, volunteer and special events coordinator, at beth@homelessconnections.net or at 920-734-9192.

Organize a Drive Team

Donation drives are fun, but they also require planning and people in order to be successful. Gather a team that wants to be an integral part of the drive. Each person should be assigned specific tasks. Examples of tasks you may want to assign include:

- Chairman to oversee the details and answer questions
- Financial donations (Designate a person to collect and track monetary donations or gift cards.)
- Advertising/Promotion
- Coordination of Collection Boxes
- Donation Sorting/Packing
- Donation Delivery to Homeless Connections
- Photography

Decide the Type of Drive

Determine what item or items you will be collecting in your drive. There are three main types of donation drives – food, in-kind, and service. For more information each of these drives, please read the “Types of Homeless Connections Donation Drives” section.

Select Drive Dates and Times

Determine what dates and times would be most effective to maximize your participants. Are you going to have a one day, one week, or two week event? Find out if there are any special events coming up that you could tie into your drive to help increase donations. Once dates the dates and type of drive are selected, please make sure you have permission to hold the drive on the chosen dates and at the selected location.

Set a Drive Goal

Set a goal for the amount of items or food to be collected. If you have done drives in the past, how much did you collect? Can you beat that record this time around? Setting a goal helps increase excitement and participation the closer you get to your drive’s goal.

Register Your Drive

Submit the Homeless Connections [Event Registration](#) form. Completing this form helps us support your efforts and track your donations.

Ask for Match Dollars

Ask your organization or company to make a matching gift. With service drives, ask your company or organization leadership if they would be willing and able to donate \$1 for each \$1 donated. With food and in-kind drives, ask if the company would donate a dollar amount for every pound collected or a certain dollar amount at the end of the drive if the drive goal is achieved.

Running a Drive

Promote the Drive

Let people know about your drive. Create posters about hunger and homelessness to increase awareness of the need that exists in our community. Put up flyers, use e-mail, send a memo, and place articles in newsletters and bulletins. Make sure the announcements are timely, concise, and ignite excitement about the drive. Ask for a copy of the Homeless Connections' [Quick Fact Sheet](#) to post or hand out before the event. Encourage everyone to promote the donation drive to people to help you meet or exceed your goals. Use social media such as Twitter and Facebook to help reach or increase your audience. Also, consider blogging about your event to help boost involvement. Be creative!

Request a Homeless Connections Speaker

Homeless Connections' speakers are available upon request to talk about homelessness in Wisconsin and about Homeless Connections' programs and the work that we do. Requests for a speaker can be made on the Homeless Connections' [Event Registration](#) form or by contacting jennifer@homelessconnections.net. Donation drives offer an excellent opportunity to educate participants about homelessness and the positive impact the Homeless Connections is making in the lives of those in crisis.

Make Drive Convenient

Drive collection sites should be easy to find, visible, and well-advertised. Central, high-traffic locations such as break rooms, lobbies, and meeting rooms work well. Please get approval for the donation drop-off location(s) before the drive begins.

Collect Donations

Items - Get boxes ready for the donations. Please label your boxes to let everyone know that they are to be used for Homeless Connections donations. Place boxes in visible, high-traffic areas.

Financial Donations - Let people know that financial donations are accepted and encouraged. Acquire a secure container to be used for collecting financial donations. All donors who donate via check or credit card will receive a thank you for tax purposes. If a donor gives you cash and requests a tax receipt, have them complete the Homeless Connections' [Financial Donation](#) form and place the form together with the cash.

Sort Donations

As donations are received, take time to look through the donations for any items that cannot be used by Homeless Connections. For example, if you are organizing a sock drive, Homeless Connections can only accept new, unused socks. Take pictures of the mounds of supplies before they are organized and packed. Those pictures make great "success" photos!

Deliver Donations

Delivering the donations is a great way to engage others and generate excitement about the success of your drive. Wear school/office/organization t-shirts to promote publicity of donations and the drive. Consider inviting donors to assist in the delivery of the donations. Put all donations in sturdy containers labeled for Homeless Connections. For ease of use, consider using Homeless Connections' [Drive Box Labels](#). Please remember that someone will have to lift the box. Do not over pack the boxes. Verify the drop-off date and time with Homeless Connections. If the donation drop-off date and time has changed from the original date and time listed on the Homeless Connections' [Event Registration](#) form, please notify Homeless Connections of the change. We want to be sure that we are prepared for the donation delivery.

Celebrate Your Drive's Success

When the drive is done, share your success and give thanks! Thank everyone for their part in the success of the drive. Share photos, stories, and videos of the event. Use social media and other avenues to let people know about your group's achievements. Sharing success increases awareness and lets people know about the difference they have helped make. When you are sharing your stories, please do not forget to provide Homeless Connections with stories and pictures of your successes too.

Donation Drive Timeline (Example)

6-8 Weeks

- Organize your donation drive team. Schedule face-to-face or phone meetings to discuss project ideas.
- Decide the type of drive (i.e. food, in-kind, service) your organization would like to do.
- Determine what items your group is going to collect during the drive. Example: If collecting food, is your organization going to collect any canned food item or just a specific item like soup or canned fruit?
- Set a donation drive goal.
- Ask company or organizational leaders for permission to do the drive, get authorization for your drive dates and collection locations, and ask about the possibility of a company/organizational financial match.
- Complete the Homeless Connections' [Event Registration](#) form. Send the form to Beth Servais, volunteer & special events coordinator, at beth@homelessconnections.net.
- Find out the submission deadline dates for organization/company newsletter and bulletin articles.

4-6 Weeks

- Brief drive team members on all aspects of the project and involve them in planning and preparation.
- Schedule a post-event meeting to debrief, complete any follow-up tasks, and celebrate your team's success.
- Create an agenda for the donation drive.
- Finalize donation drive team task lists.
- Determine who will be the photographer for the event, and verify the need for photo release forms.
- Begin recruiting volunteers to sort and deliver drive items to Homeless Connections.
- Order any team t-shirts or other items as needed.
- Create a tracking and information system to keep participants updated about the donation drive's progress. Create a thermometer-like donation goal chart or start an online blog about the event.
- Write and proof-read articles for newsletters and bulletins.
- Market your donation drive.

2-4 Weeks

- Tour the collection sites. Do you know where the boxes will be located? Is there room for the boxes? Address any remaining questions and concerns.
- Submit articles for newsletters and bulletins before the submission deadline dates.
- Encourage people to promote the upcoming drive to colleagues and peers.
- Place flyers and signage in high-traffic areas.

1-2 Weeks

- Make announcements about the drive at meetings or gatherings.
- Begin collecting boxes for the event. Have donation boxes clearly labeled for the event.
- Print signage for the collection boxes. To save yourself time, consider using Homeless Connections' [Drive Box Labels](#).
- Make copies of Homeless Connections' [Financial Donation](#) form for participants making a financial donation.
- Organize a "project kit" for any on-hand items that may be needed on donation collection days.
- Ramp up your team's promotion of the event. You are in the final stretch!

During Donation Drive

- Be sure to keep an eye on donation containers. Move donations to a safe and secure place as containers begin to fill up.
- Contact Homeless Connections to verify your donation delivery date and time.
- Frequently update your tracking poster/system to let everyone know how close the drive is to the goal.
- Take lots of pictures to celebrate your drive's success. Your organization is inspiring hope and changing lives!

- Say “thank you” to all the participants who are making your group’s drive a success.

Types of Homeless Connections Donation Drives

Food Drive

Homeless Connections provides basic and nutritious breakfast and dinner meals to our clients. During a food drive, non-perishable food items are collected for Homeless Connections. Food drives help us ensure that we have the food needed to serve the 78 individuals, including up to 30 children, in our Shelter Program.

Food that is needed by the Homeless Connections includes:

- Canned Vegetables (Peas, Corn, Carrots, Green Beans)
- Canned Fruit
- Canned Soups
- Peanut Butter
- Cereal
- Pasta
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Spices
- Snack-Size Chip Bags
- Granola Bars
- Fruit Cups

During your drive, you can collect all food items listed or designate just one food to be donated during the drive.

Examples of one-item drives are:

- Canned Food Drive (Canned Vegetables, Fruits, Soups)
- Cereal Drive (Breakfast Cereals)
- Pasta Drive (Macaroni, Spaghetti Noodles, Lasagna Noodles)
- Veggie Drive (Canned Vegetables)
- “Souper” Drive (Canned Soups)

To add interest to a food drive, create a theme for the drive. Get creative and have fun! Some fun themes ideas are:

- Now That’s Italian Drive(Spaghetti Noodles, Spaghetti Sauce, & Italian Seasoning)
- Spice of Life Drive (Salt, Pepper, Seasoning Salt, Chili Powder, Garlic Powder, Taco Seasoning, & Cinnamon)
- Lunch Drive (Peanut Butter, Snack-Size Chip Bags, Individual-Sized Fruit Cups, Granola Bars)
- Healthy Snack Drive (Granola Bars, Trail Mix, Raisins, Dried Fruit)
- In the Garden Drive (Canned Vegetables and Fruits)

Another fun food drive idea is to host a “day of the week” drive based on Homeless Connections’ most needed items. Make sure to let everyone know ahead of time what the collection item for each day will be. An example of a “day of the week” drive schedule would be:

- Macaroni Monday
- Peanut Butter Tuesday
- Canned Fruit & Veggie Wednesday
- Cereal Thursday
- “Souper” Friday

Food is a necessity at Homeless Connections. Many people think of hosting food drives around Thanksgiving, but the need for food donations at Homeless Connections is year round. Your support helps us ensure that we have the food needed to feed the homeless in our community.

In-Kind Drive

Last year, over \$65,000 worth of in-kind care items were given out at Homeless Connections. In-kind items donated to Homeless Connections are used to help raise our clients' self-esteem and teach basic living skills. In-kind drives help us ensure that we have the items needed to assist our clients in being life and work ready.

In-kind drives can be organized to collect categories of items or just one single item. Examples of categories of items to be collected include:

- Toiletries Drive (Shampoo, Conditioner, Deodorant, Hair Brushes, Lotion, Shaving Cream & Razors, Vaseline, Nail Clippers, Foot Powder, Q-Tips, Alcohol-Free Mouthwash, Shower Caddies, Travel Soap Dishes)
- Medicine Drive (Ibuprofen, Cold Medications, Cough Drops, Neosporin, Children's & Infant's Fever Reducer)
- Suds Drive (Dish Soap, Laundry Detergent, Stain Remover Sticks, Dryer Sheets)
- Drawer Drive (For Men, Women, & Children – New Socks, Underwear, and Flip Flops)
- Gift Card Drive (Walmart, Fleet Farm, Grocery Stores, Home Depot, Express Gas, Office Depot, Walgreens, Valley Transit)
- Battery Drive (Batteries – AAA, AA, & 9 Volt)
- Got to Have Sole Drive (Socks for Babies, Children, Women, & Men and Gift Cards to Local Shoe Stores & Stores that Sell Shoes)
- Clean Drive (Cleaning Supplies, Bathroom Cleaner, Glass Cleaner, Kitchen Scrubbies, Sponges, Paper Towels, Napkins, Garbage Bags – 30 & 13 Gallon)
- For the Children Drive (Baby Monitors, New Umbrella Strollers, Baby Food – Stage 3 & Baby Cereal, Diapers/Wipes, Diaper Rash Cream, Rattles, Dolls, Matchbox Cars, and New Pack and Plays)
- Linens Drive (Bath Towels, Twin Flat & Fitted Sheets, Twin Blankets, Pillows & Pillow Cases, Plastic Hangers, Laundry Baskets, 18 Gallon Totes – Rubbermaid & Sterilite)
- It's a Wrap Drive (Aluminum Foil, Plastic Wrap, Sandwich Bags, Gallon Ziploc Bags)
- Stamp Drive (Postage Stamps & Postcard Stamps)
- Rainy Day Drive (Umbrellas & Ponchos)
- Working Drive (Pocket Planners, Mechanical Pencils, Pens, Notepads, Legal Writing Pads, Post It Notes, Copy Paper – White & Color)

Another fun way to organize in-kind drives is to host a "day of the week" drive based on Homeless Connections' most needed in-kind items. Be sure to let participants know ahead of time what they should be bringing in each day. An example of a "day of the week" drive schedule would be:

- Medicinal Monday (Ibuprofen, Cold Medications, Neosporin, Infant's & Children's Fever Reducers)
- Toothbrush (or Toiletry) Tuesday
- Wrap Wednesday (Aluminum Foil & Plastic Wrap)
- Hanger Thursday (Plastic Hangers)
- "Bag It" Friday (Ziploc Bags, Garbage Bags – 13 & 30 Gallon Bags)

Around the holidays, a Homeless Connections' Hope Giving Tree can be used when organizing an in-kind donation drive. Set up a Christmas tree in a high-traffic area and make paper ornaments that have an in-kind item listed on them. Participants will take an ornament off the tree and bring that item in as their donation.

At Homeless Connections, we know the power of in-kind donation drives. Your support is vital to ensuring we have the items on hand needed to help our clients move more quickly from crisis to self-sufficiency. Thank you

for helping provide hope to the individuals and families in our community who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless.

Service Drive

Homeless Connections is dedicated to helping individuals and families rebuild their lives. Last year, over 3,000 people in our community were helped through Homeless Connections' four core programs: Shelter, Case Management, Street Outreach, and Prevention. A service drive helps financially support all the services offered at Homeless Connections.

Some of the services provided at Homeless Connections include:

- Parenting classes to help prevent child abuse and promote positive parenting techniques. (\$15/day, \$75/week, \$300/month)
- A warm, safe place for our 78 clients, including up to 30 children, by providing heat/water/electricity. (\$50/day, \$375/week, or \$1500/month)
- Fox Valley Technical College specialized instruction for homeless adults to help prepare them for better employment opportunities. FVTC Classes to help clients gain and/or improve employment opportunities. (\$25/day, \$125/week, \$500/month)
- The Connector service to clients going to work at time or in location not accessible by normal Valley Transit bus service. (\$7/day, \$50/week, \$200/month)
- Safe, temporary shelter to one person for one month. (\$25/day, \$188/week, \$750/month)
- Cell phones to the Street Outreach workers so clients, police officers, and staff can reach them when out connecting to people who are living in areas unfit for human habitation. (\$2.75/day, \$20/week, \$83/month, \$1000/year)
- Basic and nutritious breakfast and dinner meals to 75 individuals. (\$63/day, \$440/month)
- Transportation to clients, so they have access to go to work, look for work, and meet their medical needs. (\$83/day, \$625/week, \$2500/month)

During the holiday season, a Homeless Connections' Hope Giving Tree can be used when organizing a service donation drive. Set up a Christmas tree in a high-traffic area and make paper ornaments that list services provided by Homeless Connections. On the ornaments, service items should be listed as daily dollar amounts and also weekly/monthly dollar amounts, so participants can decide how much they would like donate towards the Homeless Connections' services. During the drive, participants take an ornament off the tree and bring in their corresponding financial donations.

Over the last few years, Homeless Connections has seen record demand for our services. Individuals and families in our community need help, and they view Homeless Connections as a place of hope. During these challenging times, service drives help ensure Homeless Connections has the funds needed to continue providing assistance. We are grateful for your support.

Homeless Connections' Wish List

KITCHEN

Canned vegetables: peas, carrots mixed vegetables
Canned fruit and soups
Whole chickens, turkeys, hams
Lunch snacks (chips, fruit & granola bars)
Brown lunch bags & sandwich bags
Can openers
Paper towels & napkins
Aprons for kitchen
Dishcloths & hand towels
Kitchen cleaning supplies & scrubbies
Heavy duty large garbage bags (leaf bag size; 30 gallon)
Tall kitchen garbage bags (13 gallon)
Dish soap
Peanut Butter
Cooking oil
Fresh fruit
Deli meat
Cereal
Coffee
Cheese
3 oz Dixie cups
Box cake mixes
Pot holders

OTHER NEEDS

Tower oscillating fans
Alarm clocks & batteries (AA, AAA, 9Volt)
Women's underwear & socks (sz 6-10)
Men's underwear & socks & flip flops
Umbrellas, rain ponchos
Bike locks & chains
Pocket planners – calendars
Room air fresheners (non aerosol)
Pain relievers, fever reducers, OTC medicines, cold/allergy meds
Flashlights

HYGIENE

Toilet paper
Hair spray (non aerosol) & mousse/gel
Shampoo & conditioner
Men's and women's deodorant
Foot powder
Vaseline
Non-scented lotion
Finger & toenail clippers
Shower caddy
Shaving cream & razors (men & women)
Mouthwash (alcohol free)
Q-Tips
Tampons
Body wash
Travel soap dishes

LAUNRY & LINENS

Laundry detergent
Fabric softener & dryer sheets
Stain remover sticks
Laundry baskets
Bath towels
Twin size flat & fitted sheets
Twin size blankets
Pillows & pillow cases
18 gallon totes (e.g., Rubbermaid, Sterlite)
Hangers - plastic
Irons

OFFICE

Notepads & legal writing pads
Stamps & postcard stamps
Copy paper (letter size, white)
Post it notes & pens
USB flash drives
Computer ink: HP 74/75/564/940

PREFERRED GIFT CARDS: Home Depot, Grocery stores, Fleet Farm, WalMart, Express Gas, Valley Transit

All donations can be dropped off at the Homeless Connections