

Make better use of all food that cannot be donated by using a food-to-animal or organics composting program.

hennepin.us/organics

For more food safety information, please visit:

minneapolismn.gov/foodsafety

minneapolismn.gov/fooddonation

hennepin.us/business/envhealth

health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food

or contact your local health department.

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Food donation guidelines for licensed food facilities

Save food and help people in need

Help your community and the environment



In the United States, as much as 40 percent of food produced for people to eat is wasted along the food chain. Grocery stores, restaurants and institutions are responsible for about 40 percent of this waste. Meanwhile, 11 percent of Minnesotans don't have a steady supply of food to their tables. Donating surplus prepared food helps local hunger-relief agencies serve those in need, including many children and seniors.

Donating food also helps the environment by preventing waste. Wasted food is the most prevalent material in the trash by far, representing about 20 percent of the trash by weight. When food is wasted, the water, energy, fertilizer and cropland that went into producing the food is wasted, too.

You are protected from liability

Food donors are protected by the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Act, which was passed into federal law in 1996. Organizations that donate food in good faith to a nonprofit for distribution to needy individuals are not subject to civil or criminal liability that arises from the condition of the food.

Save money on your taxes

The federal tax code allows a deduction for donated food. Eligible businesses can deduct the lesser of either (a) twice the cost of acquiring the donated food or (b) the cost of acquiring the donated food, plus one-half of the food's expected profit margin, if it were sold at its fair market value. Contact your tax professional to determine its application to your business.

Get recognized for your efforts

Join industry leaders such as Eastside Food Co-op, Lunds & Byerlys and Gastrotruck to be recognized as a Hennepin County Environmental Partner. Partners that donate edible food receive a window decal, a listing in the directory and resources to help you communicate to your customers that you care about the community.

How to get started



1. Identify foods you can donate

Licensed food establishments can donate food that has not been served (e.g., leftover food from a buffet may not be donated). Hunger-relief organizations are most in need of entrees, soups, sandwiches, yogurt parfaits and other healthy, prepared foods.

2. Find an organization that will take your food

Call a hunger-relief organization and let them know what you have and the quantity. The recipient organization must have a food license. The following organizations are a good place to start. Find additional options at hennepin.us/organics.

- Peace House Community, 1816 Portland Ave S, Minneapolis, 612-870-7263
- Community Bridge, 2400 Park Ave S, Minneapolis, 612-321-1967

3. Arrange for delivery of the food

Talk to your staff about donating food. Some of the food establishments that donate food have found an employee who champions the effort and will volunteer to deliver the food.

If you can't find someone to deliver your food, Hennepin County has trained volunteers who will come to your location and transport your food to a hunger-relief agency. Learn more at hennepin.us/organics.

How can I keep the food safe?

The Minnesota Food Code applies to all donated food.

Donated prepared foods and potentially hazardous foods must meet the temperature requirements below. Some examples of potentially hazardous foods include cut tomatoes or melons, dairy products, meats, poultry, seafood, most cooked food and cut leafy greens.

1. Cold food must be maintained at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below.
2. Hot food must be maintained at 140 degrees Fahrenheit or above.
3. Cooling process for hot food: potentially hazardous food must be cooled from 140 degrees to 71 degrees Fahrenheit in less than 2 hours, and cooled from 71 degrees to 41 degrees or below in less than 4 hours for a total of 6 hours.

How should I label the food?

Requirements for labeling depend on whether the food is in its original package or has been prepared as a meal.

- Donated commercially prepackaged food labels must clearly show the name of the item or food, manufacturer information, list of ingredients, and use-by date -- if included. Must contain the statement: "Donated Food-Not for Resale."
- Donated prepared food must be labeled on the outside of the container with the name of the food, the food donor, and the preparation date. (Example: Lasagna prepared 1/12/17, from ABC Restaurant, 123 Food Street). Each individual item does not need to be labeled.

How should I transport the food?

- The donated food should be accompanied by a log sheet with times and temperature of the product when it left the donating establishment. Upon arrival at the receiving establishment, record the time and temperature on the log sheet. The product should be delivered at 41°F or below for cold items or 140°F or above for hot items.
- The log sheet should be filled out completely, be kept with the product and retained for a minimum of three months at the receiving establishment.
- If the potentially hazardous food is received at a temperature between 41°F and 140°F and has been outside of that range for 2 hours or less, it should be immediately served. If the potentially hazardous food has been outside of that range for more than two hours, it should be discarded.