

Pantry Donation List

1. **Meal kits that don't require extra ingredients.** Kits that include canned meat, canned sauce and pasta all in one box are great choices. This means the person receiving them can make them without having to purchase additional ingredients.
2. **Pancake and muffin mix that only require water.** Special treats or easy breakfasts are much needed and appreciated, and one of the simplest is pancake or muffin mix that only requires you to add water. Mixes which require additional ingredients, such as oil or eggs, sometimes make it more difficult for a person or family to actually make the food item.
3. **Low-Sugar Cereals.** For many, kids especially, breakfast means a bowl of cereal. By providing low-sugar options, you're helping them get off to a great start. Cereal is also especially portable and doesn't need any preparation to be enjoyed. It's easy to fill a plastic bag full of cereal and throw it in a backpack or purse as a snack for later.
4. **Canned soups and pasta meals.** Soups or even canned ravioli or pasta meals that don't require anything other than a heat source to eat are excellent for those who have limited resources. There are many places that recipients of these donations may be able to heat up these types of meals, and many kids love them and it can provide a filling warm meal.
5. **Canned meat.** Tuna, chicken, salmon, Spam or similar types of meat are excellent choices for donation. Potted meat blends, sardines and similar choices are often donated because they are inexpensive, but these are really difficult to get a child to eat no matter how hungry they are. If you are actually choosing what to donate, as opposed to decluttering things from your own pantry, focus your donations towards those canned meats listed first which are more usable in a wider variety of recipes, and also are more kid friendly.
6. **Variety of canned fruits.** Statistics say that food pantries really need more canned fruit. They often get fruit cocktail and pineapple, but peaches, pears and even cherries or tropical fruit blends would be welcomed.
7. **Allergy friendly food options.** There are many people in need who have food allergies. Donating items that are gluten free, nut free, dairy free and overall allergy friendly is always beneficial for those with specific food needs.
8. **Basic staple pantry items.** Flour, sugar, cornmeal, rice, dry beans, oil, shortening, baking soda and powder, vanilla extract and seasonings of all kinds are always welcomed. Garlic, pepper, salt, chili powder, etc. can make a meal much more palatable.
9. **Shelf stable milk.** Milk is hard to keep cold, but individual serving sizes of shelf stable milk are a great choice to donate. These are especially nice for families with kids who can't always afford the milk their kids need.
10. **Juice boxes.** 100% pure juice is always needed at food pantries. This is often given to families of young children, and grabbing individual juice boxes makes it shelf stable and easier to portion.

Ones to Skip

When purchasing items for a food bank, try to avoid:

1. junk food
2. items with glass or cellophane packaging, which can be broken in transit
3. things that need can openers or special equipment (pop-top cans—whether for veggies, meat or fruit—are a plus)

Most Needed Non-Food Items To Donate

There are also some non-food items that almost every food pantry would welcome having donated. Remember that your local food pantry may be providing not just a hot meal, but also support for paying bills, job placement or basic needs for low income or homeless families.

1. **Household Supplies:** cleaning supplies and paper products such as toilet paper, paper towels, bleach, sanitizing solutions, sanitizing wipes and basic cleaning supplies are very welcomed by those in need.
2. **Feminine hygiene products:** Maxi pads, tampons, panty liners and even feminine wipes are all items that food pantries do hand out alongside the meals. The homeless and needy in our communities need these items desperately.
3. **Baby diapers and wipes:** All sizes of baby diapers and wipes (unscented is best) can be useful for those families coming in with infants and toddlers. Additionally, things like baby wash, shampoo and diaper rash cream or new unused bottles, nipples and even formula that is in date are often welcomed.
4. **Socks and underwear:** Socks are vital to those who are homeless and out on the streets, but clean underwear is another choice that people often overlook. From kid to adults in all sizes, this is a great choice for donating. Most locations will tell you tube socks, boxer shorts for men and traditional brief style panties for women are the most versatile. And, please purchase these items new for donation, not used!