



Community Impact

Retail Rescue Program

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) & Training Manual



Program Overview

Welcome to the **Golden Harvest Food Bank (GHFB) Retail Rescue Program**.

Golden Harvest Food Bank is a proud member of the **Feeding America** network, a nationwide system of more than 200+ food banks and 60,000 meal programs working together to help communities access food without judgment or stigma.

Through this network, over **4.3 billion pounds of food and groceries** have been rescued and distributed. Despite these efforts, nearly **48 million people across the United States** continue to face daily hunger challenges.

Golden Harvest Food Bank relies on strong partnerships with hunger-relief organizations as the need for food assistance continues to grow. One important source of donated food is the Retail Rescue Program, in which food and grocery retailers set aside items such as deli, dairy, produce, baked goods, and dry or canned goods for donation to food banks or hunger-relief partners.

This program helps expand food access, reduce food waste, and increase the availability of nutritious perishable foods. GHFB provides training and certification to its network of qualified hunger relief partners who request to participate in the Retail Rescue Program.

Program Goals

- Increase access to nutritious food
- Reduce food waste
- Strengthen community partnerships
- Expand distribution of perishable foods
- Support economic development

Legal Protection

Good Samaritan Law protects businesses, volunteers, and nonprofit organizations from civil or criminal liability when they donate safe and wholesome food or grocery products for distribution to individuals in need.



1. Eligibility Requirements

To participate, agencies must:

- Be an active GHFB Hunger Relief Network Partner (**HRNP**)
- Maintain good standing with all reporting requirements
- Be referred to the program by the HRNP's assigned Hunger Relief Network Coordinator
- **Not** sell, barter, or exchange donated items
- Provide adequate refrigeration and storage
- Sign an annual Retail Rescue Program Agreement
- Provide primary and backup points of contact
- Report donations weekly via MealConnect (required)
- Follow assigned pickup schedules
- Accept all food categories
- Use proper equipment (coolers, thermometers, etc.)
- Attend required trainings and meetings
- **Agreeing to represent** Golden Harvest Food Bank and Feeding America in a responsible and respectful manner during each pickup. **HRNP** is responsible for the actions of its volunteers while participating in the Retail Rescue Program.

Failure to comply may result in program suspension or withdrawal.

2. Facility & Administrative Requirements

Facility Requirements

Agencies must have:

- Refrigerator and freezer with temperature logs and thermometers
- Scale for weighing donations
- Thermometer for checking food temperatures
- Transportation capable of moving up to 4 pallets
- Mobile coolers, ice chests, or freezer blankets

Administrative Requirements

- Signed Retail Rescue Program Agreement
- Ongoing communication with GHFB



- Consistent pickup capability
 - Recommended reporting within 48 hours, not to exceed 2 weeks from the assigned pick up day
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3. Food Safety & Certification

- All **HRNPs** must maintain a current food safety certification
 - Congregate feeding agencies require **ServSafe Manager Certification**
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4. Temperature Monitoring

HRNP must:

- Record temperatures at pickup and delivery
 - Maintain temperature logs
 - Use thermometers for all perishable items
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5. Professional Conduct & Expectations

Proper Attire

- Closed-toe shoes
- Clean clothing
- ID badges (if required)

Professional Behavior

HRNP represents GHFB and must:

- Be punctual
- Communicate delays
- Notify GHFB and stores of missed pickups
- Remain flexible during pickups
- Maintain respectful interactions



6. Building Retail Relationships

Strong store relationships are critical to program success.

Best Practices

- Thank the store staff at every pickup
- Communicate clearly and consistently
- Be flexible with store processes
- Educate stores on community impact
- Invite stores to agency events

Show Appreciation

- Thank-you cards
- Public recognition
- Social media mentions
- Community awards

7. Roles & Store Personnel

Key Contacts

- **Receiving Manager:** Coordinates donation staging
- **Department Managers:** Oversee specific departments
- **Store Manager:** Oversees overall operations

Report unresolved issues to the GHFB Retail Rescue Program Manager.

8. General Donation Guidelines

- Follow store-specific donation policies
- Accept all items “as is”
- Only collect from approved grocery departments

9. Pickup Procedures



Step-by-Step Process

1. Check in with the Receiving Department
 2. Proceed to the specified pickup zone.
 3. Collect and separate items:
 - Perishables (meat, dairy, produce, etc.)
 - Non-perishables
 - Separate meat by type (no mixing species)
 4. Check out with Receiving
 5. Store items in temperature-controlled containers
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10. Donation Categories *(items are dependent on the grocer's program requirements)*

Meat

- Must be frozen before expiration
- Includes packaged, butcher-wrapped, and frozen items
- Examples include ground meat, fish, steaks, pork chops, chicken, etc.

Produce

- Fruits and vegetables (may be ripe or slightly bruised)
- Whole packaged or loose produce
- Examples include lettuce, apples, oranges, tomatoes, etc.

Deli

- Refrigerated packaged meals, packaged meats, and prepared sandwiches
- Examples include sliced deli meat, salads, sandwiches, soups, rotisserie chicken, etc.

Dairy

- Liquid dairy, solid dairy, and refrigerated juices
- Examples include milk, yogurt, eggs, cheese, creamers, butter, cookie dough, and canned biscuits.

Bakery



- Baked goods
- Examples include snack cakes, pastries, pies, baked goods, rolls, hotdog/hamburger buns, fresh-baked cookies, etc.

Frozen

- Must be frozen on or before the sell-by/expiration dates. This includes meats, raw or cooked, side dishes, baked goods, and vegetables raw or cooked
- Examples include frozen pizza, frozen TV dinners, ice cream, frozen bagged vegetables, frozen bagged meats

Grocery

- Any items that do not fit into the other categories.
- Examples include shelf-stable juice, soda, water, cereal, pasta, canned goods, candy, chips, etc.

Non-Food

- Any non-food items that are donated
- Examples include napkins, toilet paper, pet food, cookware, trash bags, sandwich bags, etc.

11. Reporting & MealConnect

Purpose

- Track donation volume
- Ensure accountability
- Identify trends

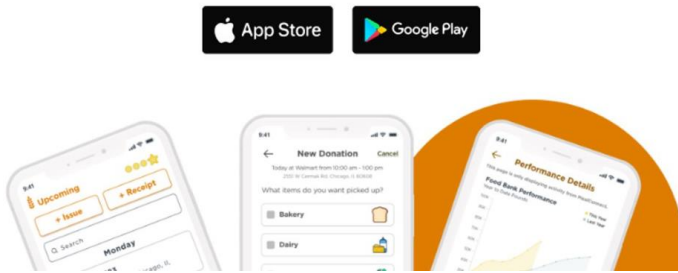
Requirements

- Weigh all donations
- Record by category
- Strongly recommend reporting within 48 hours, not to exceed 2 weeks from the assigned pick up day

Platform



- MealConnect (web and mobile app)



- Website: www.mealconnect.org

12. Food Date Guidelines

Types of Dates

- **Sell By:** Store display guidance
- **Best By:** Quality indicator
- **Use By:** Peak quality date
- **Closed Code:** Manufacturer tracking

Key Notes

- Most foods can be used beyond printed dates
 - Dairy and baby food have stricter limits
 - Many items are safe up to 7 days past the use-by date
 - Freezing extends shelf life
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13. Equipment & Person Requirements

HRNP must have:

- Scale
- Thermometer
- Coolers or freezer blankets
- Reliable Transportation (size varies by store donation volume)
- Reliable staff or volunteer base

14. Program FAQs

Food Quantity

- Varies by store and season
- Can range from small boxes to several pallets

Time Commitment

- Up to 5 pickups per week
- Includes transport, sorting, and reporting

Store Assignment

- Based on availability and proximity

Holidays

- Communicate closures early
- Expect increased volume after the holidays

15. Retail Agreement

1. The Retail Enabled Hunger Relief Network Partner (REHRNP) must reliably adhere to scheduled pickup dates and times. If a pickup cannot be completed as planned, REHRNP must immediately call the retail store and call the GHFB Retail Rescue Program Manager at 706-736-1199 ext. 126. **Three instances of failing to pick up the product at the scheduled date and time will result in GHFB removing the REHRNP from the Retail Rescue Program.**



2. REHRNP is required to measure and document sample temperatures for all frozen and refrigerated products at the time of pickup and again upon delivery at the distribution site.
3. REHRNP commits to maintaining proper equipment to ensure the safe transportation, storage, and documentation of donated food. This includes, but is not limited to, freezer blankets, scales, thermometers, and coolers with reusable freezer packs, when relevant.
4. REHRNP must report the weight of all donations by product category to GHFB weekly via the MealConnect platform. Reports more than two (2) weeks overdue will result in suspension from the Retail Rescue Program. **Three instances of failing to report or reporting late will prompt GHFB to consider removing the REHRNP from the Retail Rescue Program.**
5. REHRNP shall not transfer donated products to any organization outside the GHFB hunger relief network and must notify the GHFB Retail Rescue Program Manager when it desires to do so.
6. REHRNP agrees that all food received from retail donors must comply with GHFB food safety standards and guidelines, as outlined in the required annual partnership training.
7. REHRNP is required to complete Retail and Food Safety Training annually and to comply with all applicable guidelines presented during these sessions.

GHFB reserves the right to modify program requirements, including, but not limited to, retail store assignments, pickup schedules, and participation criteria, as necessary. All non-emergency changes will be communicated in writing with at least one (1) weeks' notice. In emergency situations, changes may be implemented immediately, with notification from both the retailer and the Retail Rescue Program Manager.