

Grow & Give Donation Program

Your extra garden-grown produce
can make a difference to those in need.



Best Practices for Community Gardens

Build enthusiasm within the garden

- Talk up growing for donation at sign up and at each garden meeting
- Have signs in the garden showing this is a donation garden
- Offer signs for individuals who donate
- Track the amount donated and display in the garden and online
- Give those who donate special perks like access to seeds, plants, extra garden space and volunteers
- Show where the donation is going

Make it easy for gardeners to donate

- The whole process should be easy from getting land and plants, to harvesting and knowing where to donate
- Having specific places to put their donated produce with clear signage (cool safe area)
- Have regular harvest times and pickup
- Have clear-cut procedures
- Have a way to signal if the donation committee can glean from a garden (sometimes done with a sign, post, or through online communication).
- Have donation tools available – crates, tubs, bags, rubber bands

Create a donation committee

- Have multiple people with different levels of responsibility
- Pair experienced and new committee members

Develop a donation plan

- Find community partners
 - o Find what, when and how much they want
 - o Develop a relationship
 - o Invite to your garden those from the donation site/who receive the food
 - o Volunteer at the donation site
 - o Keep good communication

Track your donations

- This is good for moral, evaluating your program, grants and other support
- Take and display photos

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Growing and Harvesting Tips (taken from [Growing a Giving Garden](#))

- Plant fewer crops. Food banks appreciate larger quantities of a few items.
- Harvest in batches. Plant crops, such as green onions or lettuce heads, which you can harvest all at once.
- Use succession planting. Sow the same seeds every few weeks for multiple harvests throughout the growing season.
- Grow herbs. Package them in bunches or tied with a string. Label herbs – often people have never seen them fresh!
- Connect with the program you are growing food for. Know their client demographics and what food people like to eat. The food bank or site coordinator can be a great ally.
- Wash produce and place in boxes or bins. Check with your location about their packaging preferences.

Tips for Processing & Donating Produce

- **Harvest** – not in the heat of the day. Cool vegetables, if possible, and store in a cool area out of the sun.
- **Wash** produce and place in boxes or bins. Check with your location about their packaging preferences.
- **Bring** the food in before the food bank opens. This gives volunteers and staff enough time to process your donation. Deliver produce within 24 hours of harvest.
- **Label** less common produce, such as kale, chard, fancy greens, herbs, and odd-colored squash. Even if it's familiar to you, it may not be to food bank staff or clients.
- **Weigh** and track your donations. Share the totals with your fellow gardeners and celebrate your accomplishments! Lettuce Link can provide scales.