



Perishable Food & Meal Donations

Thank you for your interest in donating to Compass Housing Alliance! Please take a look at the guidelines outlined below when thinking about your upcoming meal shift or donation drop off. Please keep in mind that each Compass location has different meal service and donation opportunities available, check with the Community Resources Coordinator before reaching out to an individual program.

For group projects or meal service, please reach out at least one full month before your desired date.

Q: Can we donate a fully cooked meal?

A: Yes – however, meals cooked off-site must be prepared in a **donor** kitchen. In general, it works best to purchase supplies before your volunteer event and cook the meal on-site. Ask the Community Resources Coordinator to provide you with a list of programs who have kitchens where meals can be prepared on site.

Q: Can we donate packaged foods that do not need refrigeration?

A: Yes! The donation of commercially canned, boxed, and otherwise packaged foods is encouraged.

Q: What about fresh produce?

A: All fresh produce is suitable for donation, including home-grown fruits and vegetables!

Q: Can licensed food establishments donate menu or deli items?

A: Because they have commercial-grade equipment, licensed food establishments may donate surplus menu and deli items prepared and handled with the same consideration for safety as food sold to customers.

Q: What about perishable foods past the "sell by" date?

A: As per state and city law perishable foods past the original manufacturer's "sell by" (or "best if used by") date can be donated, but not foods past a "use by" date. **Due to storage restrictions, Compass locations cannot accept any perishable donations that are within 3 days of their marked date.** Example: It is Monday December 5th and you are hoping to donate two jugs of milk that are marked with a sell by date of December 7th - we cannot accept this donation.

Q: What foods are not suitable for donation?

A: Certain foods are **not** suitable for donation because of safety concerns. These foods include:

- Home canned, vacuum-packed or pickled foods
- Perishable foods past a "use by" date, unless frozen
- Foods in soiled containers, in sharply dented or rusty cans, or in opened or torn containers
- Unpasteurized milk
- Foods with an "off" odor; Spoiled foods; Foods that have been temperature abused
- Foods prepared, cooked, cooled, or reheated at home / personal residence (except for baked goods)
- Foods left out of a refrigerator for more than two hours

****A DONOR KITCHEN** is a publicly available kitchen in a faith-based organization, community center, or other site. The DONOR KITCHEN does not need to have a health permit, but must have basic facilities such as adequate handwashing, dishwashing, refrigeration, and cooking equipment. It must have a safe water supply, be protected from weather and animals, and be cleaned before food preparation starts.

Additional Food Donation Guidelines for the City of Seattle viewable [here](#)

Additional Food Donation Guidelines for the State of Washington viewable [here](#)