



*Catawba County*  
**Backpack Program**  
*Food and Fund Drive*  
*Coordinator's Kit*

Thank you for hosting a food or fundraising drive to benefit the Catawba County Backpack Program. This guide contains information and suggestions for running your food drive. If you have questions regarding this information, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at [afreeland@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:afreeland@catawbacountync.gov) or (828) 695-5648.

*In this guide:*

- **How the Backpack Program Works**
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- **Getting the Most from Your Food Drive**
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# *The Mission*

To Provide Weekend Nourishment to Students in Catawba County who struggle with hunger.

## *How the Backpack Program Works*

The Program works with schools throughout the county to provide a backpack filled with food on Fridays for children who participate in the Federal Free and Reduced Meal Program or struggle with food insecurity and need food assistance over the weekends. Parents apply for the program. The Backpack Program provides elementary school students with bags filled with nutritional staples to be consumed throughout the weekend. Any food provided in the backpacks assists families who may be food insecure, meaning that their finances may force them to choose between food and other expenses. The Backpack Program seeks to assist these families. Volunteers pack bags each week and deliver them to the school.

## *How does the Backpack Program use donations?*

All items that meet guidelines are used within backpacks and distributed directly to families. Any items that do not meet guidelines are donated to other local agencies to distribute through emergency food assistance. All items distributed must be child-friendly.

## *Current Schools Participating in the Backpack Program:*

*South Newton Elementary School*

*Thornton Elementary School*

*Longview Elementary School*

*Southwest Elementary School*

*St. Stephens Elementary School*

*Webb Murray Elementary School*

*Oxford Elementary School*

*Shuford Elementary School*

*Claremont Elementary School*

*Conover School*

*Maiden Elementary School*

*Banoak Elementary School*

*Tuttle Elementary School*

*Balls Creek Elementary School*

*Catawba Elementary School*

*Lyle Creek Elementary School*

*Sherrils Ford Elementary School*

*- Viewmont, Oakwood, and Jenkins Elementary*

*Schools receive backpacks in collaboration with*

*the Service League of Hickory.*

# Ways to Help

## 1. Raise Money

The Backpack Program relies on financial donations for basic operating costs such as food purchase and food storage items.

- **Coordinate a Benefit Event.**
  - A great opportunity to showcase your creativity! Host a Silent Auction, host a dance-a-thon, Host a Pancake Breakfast or Spaghetti Dinner, hold a “Jeans for Justice Friday” in the workplace where your employees pay \$5 to wear Jeans on a given Friday, the possibilities are endless!
- **Donate by check or cash**
  - Participants should return the **Donation Form** with their check or cash, or send a list of donors with any checks and cash so that we can properly credit donations. All donors that provide contact information will receive a letter of acknowledgement and tax receipt for their donation.

## 2. Raise Food

Community food drives are an excellent source of first-quality food to be used in the backpacks. Keeping food barrels in your location reminds your staff to support the drive. Even if your primary goal is raising money, giving food makes many people feel more connected to the mission to feed hungry children.

### *What foods meet guidelines for donation?*

The [Shopping List Flyer](#) contains our most needed food items. Some general guidelines:

- Only donate items that *you* would eat.
- Check that items are still within their “Use before” date.
- No glass items, they break easily in the backpacks and can become very dangerous.
- We can only accept unopened items. We *can* accept opened packages if the internal packaging is still intact. (For example, oatmeal sold in boxes but wrapped in individual sized packets)

## 3. Volunteer

Volunteering for the Backpack Program is a great way for your members to become partners in the fight against childhood hunger in Catawba County. Drives that include volunteerism are much more successful. Volunteers provide critical support to the Backpack Program by sorting, shelving and distributing donated food.

Another way to contribute is to become a part of the team that packs and delivers the backpacks throughout the school year. If your group is interested in a particular participating school, you may be interested in assisting on a particular week and if you have the space, you may be interested in becoming a Packing Site throughout the school year.

Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator at [afreeland@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:afreeland@catawbacountync.gov) or (828) 695-5648 if you have questions concerning any information found in this packet.

# *Running Your Food Drive*

## *1. Set Your Goals*

Setting a target will make your food drive more effective. First decide whether your organization will raise food, money or both. Then calculate the goal, based on the amount previously raised, or by the number of participants, such as 10 pounds per person. To make the goal more meaningful, you can convert pounds of food and dollars to the total number of meals using the formula of 1.26 pounds = 1 meal and \$1 = 2 meals:

**(# Pounds of food ÷ 1.26) + (\$ dollars raised x 2) = Total meals**

**Example: If you raised 300 pounds of food and \$200: (300 ÷ 1.26) + (\$200 x 2) = 638 Meals**

## *2. Register Your Food Drive*

Register by emailing the following information to [afreeland@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:afreeland@catawbacountync.gov)

- Name of group/organization
- Contact Information for Coordinator of Food Drive
- Date of Food/Fundraising Drive
- Goal (Amount of Food and/or Money)
- Location(s) Food Drive will Take Place
- Length Time scheduled for Food Drive
- List any assistance you may need to make your Food Drive a success. (Flyers, copies of the Shopping List, tables, etc.)

## *3. Promote Your Food Drive*

Use letters and flyers to encourage members of your organization to participate (see the list in the **Materials and Forms** section). See the **Ideas & Inspiration** section for creative ways to make your drive a success. Department of Social Services also has staff that assist in the promotion of those who give to the agency within the local press by taking photos and writing articles featuring those who gave.

## *4. Announce Your Results*

The Backpack Program will send an acknowledgement for your donations. Make sure to announce the results and thank everyone who contributed to the success of your drive. If you would like someone from the Backpack Program to attend a check presentation or awards ceremony, please let us know.

# *Getting the Most from Your Food Drive*

Surprisingly, the most successful food drives are not always those held by the largest organizations. What's the secret?

## *Leadership*

- Ask an executive to be the “champion” for your food drive. Ask them to make a personal appeal to staff (customize our sample executive letter) or make a leadership gift.
- Make a challenge. Ask your organization to match donations or make a challenge gift. People are more motivated when the value of their contribution is extended.

## *Communication*

- Set a goal at the start of the drive. Display posters about your food drive with your goal at entrances, cafeteria, lounge, or other prominent locations.
- Distribute the **Shopping List Flyers** and **Donation Forms** to participants.
- Send email or communications updates. Remind participants of the drive deadlines.

## *Fun*

- Set up competitions between groups or floors to create excitement. Offer prizes or recognition to the winners.
- Hold a party or fundraising event to get people involved. See our **Ideas & Inspiration** section.
- Schedule a group to volunteer at the Backpack Program packing site.

# *Ideas & Inspiration*

Check out these ways that other organizations have energized their drives:

## *Hold a Competition*

For annual drives, challenge departments to see who can raise the most food. Departments can compete for prizes and raise much more each year.

## *Challenge*

One company challenged all staff to contribute to their drive. The leadership committee got 100% participation from all partners and 75% from all staff. They raised several thousand dollars.

## *Food Drive Event*

At their annual holiday party, employees of a national bank were asked to bring a food donation or a financial contribution as the price of admission. An organization could also host a Dance-a-thon, Lock-in, or sporting event, such as golf, to raise money and/or food. People will participate *if* it is fun!

## *Food Drive Drawing with Prizes*

To get your food drive off to a fast start, hold a raffle. Employees buy tickets for a chance at winning a prize (Example: a trip to Hawaii donated by a local travel agent, cash/check, a car at a local dealership, a gift card for a shopping spree at a local retailer, etc.) The raffle could raise several hundred, if not thousands of dollars.

## *Skip a Meal, "Feed a Child"*

On one day of a company's food drive, staff were asked to donate the money that they would have spent on lunch to feed a hungry child. This also gave participants perspective on how hunger impacts their daily activities.

## *"Going Shopping" Donations*

Volunteers can hand out the "Shopping List" listing needed items to customers entering a grocery store asking that they consider purchasing any item listed and leaving it on their way out the door. Retailers can also encourage customers to support by allowing them to make a donation at checkout.

## *Hold a Thank You Celebration*

To celebrate the success of their annual food drive, one company held an ice cream social to announce the results and congratulate the winners of their internal competition. This event encourages employee support year after year.

## *Make a "Canstruction"*

Use your engineering talents to build replicas of buildings, bridges and pyramids using cans of most needed foods. Then donate the cans to the Backpack Program.

# *Materials and Forms*

The following materials and forms are available via email or fax upon request from Volunteer Coordinator at [afreeland@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:afreeland@catawbacountync.gov)

## ◆ **Food Drive Registration Form**

Register by requesting a Registration Form via phone or email. The form can be filled out and returned via email, fax, or mail to the Catawba County Department of Social Services, Attention: Amanda Freeland

## ◆ **Donation Form**

Distribute to participants to make financial contributions.

Please use **Donation Form (individuals)** for those contributing cash or check directly to the Backpack Program. Please use **Donation Form (groups)** for those contributing cash or check to a collection fund to be submitted together as a group. This will make it easy to identify where amounts came from in order to provide a proper Letter of Thanks to each individual who contributed.

## ◆ **The Backpack Program Fact Sheet**

Includes information on our program and the schools we serve.

## ◆ **Shopping List Flyer**

Distribute the flyer or post in a visible location. Please edit it to include details about the drop off location for food. If you are doing a food drive at a store, just make a note that donations will be accepted as they exit the store.

# *How to Contact Us*

Email information or questions to [afreeland@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:afreeland@catawbacountync.gov)

Telephone us at (828) 695-5648

Fax us at (828) 695-5875 Attn: Backpack Program, Amanda Freeland

Send mail to: Catawba County Department of Social Services,  
**Attention:** Amanda Freeland; Backpack Program  
PO Box 669 - Newton, NC 28658



## *Food Drive Registration Form*

- Name of group/organization:
- Contact Information for Coordinator of Food Drive:
- Date of Food/Fundraising Drive:
- Goal (Amount of Food and/or Money):
- Location(s) Food Drive will Take Place:
- Length Time scheduled for Food Drive (For example throughout one month, one day event):
- List any assistance you may need to make your Food Drive a success. (Flyers, copies of the Shopping List, tables, etc.)



## *Donation Form (individuals)*

- Name:
- Contact Information (Phone number, email, and mailing address):
- Date of Donation:
- Amount of Donation:
- Is there a particular school that you would like to sponsor? If so, please list:
- Would you be interested in knowing about special events occurring with the Backpack Program throughout the year?

All Donations should be mailed to PO Box 669 Newton, NC 28658.

All donations need to clearly reference the Backpack Program, please reference "Backpack Program" on all checks. Any cash contributions should have this form attached.

*Thank You for your donation to the Backpack Program. Your generosity will serve the children of Catawba County and help eliminate childhood hunger by assisting a family in need.*

*If you have any questions concerning your donation, contact Amanda Freeland at (828) 695-5648*

*Thank You!*



## *Donation Form (groups)*

- Name of organization/group/agency: \_\_\_\_\_
- Primary Contact Information (Phone number, email, and mailing address): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Donor	Address of Donor	Amount Donated	Check or Cash?	Designated School

All Donations should be mailed to PO Box 669 Newton, NC 28658.

All donations need to clearly reference the Backpack Program, please reference "Backpack Program" on all checks. Any cash contributions should have this form attached.

*Thank You for your donation to the Backpack Program!!*

*If you have any questions concerning your donation, contact Amanda Freeland at (828) 695-5648*



# The Backpack Program

Catawba County Social Services & ECCCCM  
*Providing Food for Students When School is Out*

## Fact Sheet

### *The Mission*

To Provide Weekend Nourishment to Students in Catawba County who struggle with food insecurity.

### *How the Backpack Program Works*

The Program works with schools throughout the county to provide a backpack filled with food on Fridays for children who participate in the Federal Free and Reduced Meal Program or who struggle with food insecurity. Parents apply for the program. The Backpack Program provides elementary school students with bags filled with nutritional staples to be consumed throughout the weekend. Any food provided in the backpacks assists families who may be food insecure, meaning that their finances may force them to choose between food and other expenses. The Backpack Program seeks to assist these families. Volunteers pack bags each week and deliver them to the school.

Over 700 students currently receive food and snacks through the Backpack Program at listed schools each weekend.

Over 5,000 elementary school students receive free lunch; the USDA has found that 23% of our district is food insecure, which means that over 1,000 students may be food insecure in our target area. The Program seeks to serve all those who need it.

### *How does the Backpack Program use donations?*

All items that meet guidelines are used within backpacks and distributed directly to families. Any items that do not meet guidelines are donated to other local agencies to distribute through emergency food assistance. All items distributed must be child-friendly. **Every bag includes 3 dinners, 2 lunch items, 2 breakfast items, and snacks.**

### *Current Schools Participating in the Backpack Program:*

South Newton Elementary School

Tuttle Elementary School

Thornton Elementary School

Balls Creek Elementary School

Longview Elementary School

Catawba Elementary School

Southwest Elementary School

Lyle Creek Elementary School

St. Stephens Elementary School

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*-Viewmont, Oakwood, and Jenkins Elementary Schools*

Oxford Elementary School

*receive backpacks in collaboration with the Service League of Hickory.*

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