



**Subject: Supporting Our Communities During the Federal Shutdown**

**Dear Partner Pantries,**

As you know, the ongoing federal shutdown is already creating serious strain across Arkansas. We are receiving requests for food assistance, especially from federal employees who have missed paychecks. Unfortunately, the longer this continues, the more likely we are to see families who rely on SNAP and WIC joining those lines as well.

The Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) has issued a press release indicating that November SNAP payments may be delayed or disrupted if the government does not reopen by November 1. This will place an even greater burden on our charitable food system.

To prepare, Arkansas Foodbank is implementing a disaster response plan that designates one pantry per county to serve as the lead response site. Our agency team is currently reaching out to pantries in each county to confirm their participation. These designated pantries will receive support with fundraising, volunteer recruitment, and other resources. Once we have confirmation, we'll share the list and coordinate next steps.

**All pantries—whether designated or not—are encouraged to visit our Federal Shutdown Response Toolkit for resources, templates, and guidance.** This toolkit includes messaging samples, donation flyers, digital giving setup tips, and more to help you respond effectively in your community.

**Please ensure your Vivory account is updated with any new distributions and accurate contact information.**

Unlike past emergencies such as COVID-19, we do not have access to government relief funds this time. We are asking each pantry to consider launching local fundraising efforts—within your congregations, community groups, and local businesses—to help sustain food distributions in the weeks ahead.

Here are a few simple ideas to get started:

- **Set up a digital donation tool** — Many pantries have had success collecting small donations using easy-to-use platforms like Venmo, Cash App, or PayPal.
- **Share your message** — Remind donors that every dollar helps provide food boxes to federal employees and neighbors who are temporarily without pay.
- **Engage your community** — Reach out to faith groups, local media, and civic organizations to raise awareness and invite them to participate in your efforts.

We also encourage you to ask for food donations directly. Our team has created a [customizable food donation flyer](#) that you can use to make requests in your community. Here are a few sample messages you can use to accompany the post:

- “We’re collecting shelf-stable food to support families impacted by the shutdown. Every item helps.”
- “Your donation of canned goods or pantry staples will go directly to families in need.”
- “Help us stock our shelves so no one goes hungry during this crisis.”

If you're looking for inspiration, check out [Soul Food Cafe Mission](#)'s recent post on social media—it's a great example of how to share your message authentically and effectively.

We don't know how long this shutdown will last, but we do know that together we can stand ready to serve.

**Our Programs Team is available to answer questions or offer guidance on setting up donation tools, messaging, or other resources to help you get started. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please address them to your Agency Coordinator.**

Thank you, as always, for your commitment to feeding Arkansas.

With appreciation,  
**The Programs Team**  
Arkansas Foodbank

## **[Google Folder for printable and digital resources](#)**

AFB Flyers, Media Kit, Flyer Templates, Social Media Templates, TV Slides and more

# Simple Fundraising Ideas for Pantries

These approaches are designed for volunteers and can be launched with minimal setup.

## 1. Digital Donation Tools

Set up a free account on **Venmo**, **Cash App**, or **PayPal** to collect donations. These platforms are easy to use and allow donors to give instantly from their phones.

- Share your donation link or QR code on flyers, social media, and at pantry events.
- Example message: “Help feed families affected by the federal shutdown. Every dollar helps.”

## 2. Congregation & Community Group Appeals

Ask local churches, civic clubs, or neighborhood associations to host a collection or make a group donation.

- Volunteers can speak briefly at a service or meeting.
- Provide a flyer or script with talking points like: “Support our pantry’s mission to feed families in need.”

## 3. Local Business Partnerships

Invite small businesses to:

- Place a donation jar at checkout.
- Sponsor a food drive or match community donations.
- Share your pantry’s story on their social media.

## 4. Social Media Campaigns

Use Facebook or Instagram to post:

- Pantry photos
- Impact stories
- Donation links
- Sample post: “We served 75 families last week. Help us keep going—donate today!”

## 5. Mini Events

Host a simple event like:

- A bake sale
- A chili supper

- A pantry open house. These events raise money and build awareness. Volunteers can handle setup, food, and greet guests.

## **6. School & Youth Engagement**

Partner with schools for:

- Student-led food drives
- Service projects
- Peer-to-peer fundraising This builds community ownership and introduces new volunteers.

## General Setup Tips for All Platforms

Before choosing a platform, ensure your pantry has:

- A dedicated email address for donations.
- A bank account to link for fund transfers.
- A clear name or handle that reflects your pantry's identity.
- A plan for tracking donations and acknowledging donors.

## Venmo Setup for Pantries

Venmo is owned by PayPal and offers nonprofit-specific features if you verify your charitable status.

### Steps:

#### 1. Create a Venmo Business Profile

- a. Download the Venmo app and sign up.
- b. Choose "Business" and enter your pantry's name, logo, and description.
- c. Link your bank account.

#### 2. Verify Nonprofit Status

- a. Submit 501(c)(3) documentation via PayPal to unlock nonprofit tools.

#### 3. Share Your Handle or QR Code

- a. Use the "Venmo Me" QR code feature to create a scannable donation link.
- b. Print or share the QR code via email, social media, or flyers. [[cgaa.org](http://cgaa.org)]

#### 4. Track Donations

- a. Use Venmo's transaction feed and export data for bookkeeping.
- b. Note: Venmo charges 1.9% + \$0.10 per donation. [[charitycharge.com](http://charitycharge.com)]

#### 5. Promote on Social Media

- a. Donors can share their contributions, boosting visibility. [[donorbox.org](http://donorbox.org)]

## Cash App Setup for Pantries

Cash App is simple and widely used, especially among younger donors.

## Steps:

- 1. Download and Sign Up**
  - a. Create a Cash App account and choose a unique \$Cashtag.
- 2. Link a Bank Account**
  - a. Ensure funds can be transferred securely.
- 3. Enable Business Features**
  - a. Switch to a business account in settings to comply with donation use.
- 4. Share Your \$Cashtag or QR Code**
  - a. Use Cash App's QR code generator for flyers and social media.
- 5. Track Donations Manually**
  - a. Cash App offers basic transaction history but lacks nonprofit-specific reporting.  
[\[money.com\]](https://www.money.com)

## PayPal Setup for Pantries

PayPal is robust and offers nonprofit-specific tools.

## Steps:

- 1. Create a PayPal Business Account**
  - a. Go to <https://www.paypal.com/us/webapps/mpp/donations> and register.
- 2. Verify Nonprofit Status**
  - a. Submit IRS documentation to access discounted fees and donation tools.
- 3. Set Up Donation Buttons or QR Codes**
  - a. Use PayPal's tools to embed donation buttons on your website or print QR codes.
- 4. Track and Acknowledge Donations**
  - a. PayPal provides detailed donor reports and receipt tools.
- 5. Fees**
  - a. Nonprofits pay 1.9% + \$0.10 per transaction, similar to Venmo.

# Simple Ways Pantries Can Acknowledge Gifts

## 1. Thank-You Notes

- **Handwritten cards:** A heartfelt note goes a long way. Volunteers can write simple messages like “Your gift helps feed families in our county—thank you!”
- **Printed templates:** Create a few thank-you card templates that volunteers can personalize with names and donation amounts.

## 2. Email Acknowledgements

- Use a shared pantry email account to send quick thank-you emails within 48 hours of receiving a donation.
- Include a short impact statement like “Your \$50 helped us provide 100 meals this week.”

## 3. Social Media Shoutouts

- Post donor thank-yous on Facebook or Instagram with a photo of pantry shelves or volunteers in action.
- Tag donors (with permission) and use hashtags like #ThankYouThursday or #PantryPartners.

## 4. Recognition Boards

- Create a “Wall of Gratitude” inside the pantry or on a bulletin board.
- List donor names or display thank-you messages from clients.

## 5. Thank-You Videos

- Record short clips of volunteers or clients saying “thank you” and share them via email or social media.
- These can be filmed on a phone and edited simply using free apps.

# Easy Donor Stewardship Practices for Volunteers

Stewardship is about keeping donors engaged and appreciated over time. Here are volunteer-friendly ways to do that:

## 1. Quarterly Updates

- Send a seasonal email or flyer with pantry updates, photos, and impact stories and stats.
- Include stories like “This month, we served 300 families thanks to your support. If a neighbor agrees to share their story, document it for donors. Get a signed consent for using their story and photos.

## 2. Invite Donors to Visit

- Offer informal tours or invite donors to volunteer for a shift.
- Seeing the pantry in action builds connection and trust.

## 3. Birthday or Holiday Cards

- Keep a simple spreadsheet of donor birthdays or holidays.
- Volunteers can send cards or emails with a note like “We’re grateful for you today and every day.”

## 4. Donor Spotlights

- Feature a donor in your newsletter or social media.
- Share why they give and how their support makes a difference.

## 5. Annual Gratitude Event

- Host a small appreciation event (even just coffee and cookies) once a year.
- Invite donors, volunteers, and community partners to celebrate together.

# How to Request Volunteers from Arkansas Foodbank

If your pantry needs help from volunteers—whether for food distribution, sorting, or special events—you can submit a request through the Arkansas Foodbank’s **Agency Resource Page**.

## Step-by-Step Instructions

### 1. Go to the Agency Resource Page

2. Visit: <https://arkansasfoodbank.org/resources/agency-resource-page/>

### 3. Locate the “Agency Volunteer Request” Form

Scroll down until you see the section for volunteer support. Look for the link titled “**Agency Volunteer Request**”.

### 4. Click the Form Link

Direct link:

<https://forms.microsoft.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=i32wcXJEBkyQWsHOWZ6EWwfkINeh1JtItri9aZr9ew5UMjM3MkFNMjc3S0k5MzAyMkFLWU5NRII2NSQLQCN0PWcu>

### 5. Fill Out the Form

You’ll be asked to provide:

- a. Your pantry name and contact info
- b. Type of volunteer support needed
- c. Preferred dates and times
- d. Any special instructions or requirements

### 6. Submit the Form

Once submitted, the Arkansas Foodbank team will review your request and follow up with next steps.

## Tips for Volunteers Managing the Request

- If you’re a volunteer submitting the form, check with your pantry coordinator first to confirm the details.
- Be specific about the number of volunteers needed and what tasks they’ll be doing.

If you don’t hear back within a few days, follow up with your Agency Services contact at the Foodbank.