

With your help, we can eliminate food waste in Rhode Island

Rhode to End Hunger: Donate surplus food from your business

The Rhode to End Hunger, an initiative of the Rhode Island Department of Health, has partnered with MEANS (the [Matching Excess and Need for Stability \(MEANS\) Database](#)) to help get unused, edible food to organizations who can use it. MEANS is a non-profit organization that aims to eliminate food waste in local communities.

Why donate surplus food?

It's good for your community.

In Rhode Island, one in eight households lack access to enough food for all household members. Donated food goes to feed the nearly 13% of Rhode Islanders (about 56,000 households) suffering from food insecurity. Plus, by donating you are contributing to a cleaner environment by eliminating food from the landfill. In RI, between 35-40% of the landfill is compostable material-much of which is food!

It's safe. Rhode Island and federal Good Samaritan laws protect your business from liability when you donate food in good faith that your business believes to be safe and edible.

It's easy. Many food rescue organizations can provide you with containers, pick up the food on a regular schedule, and provide you with documentation for your records.

It's good for your business.

Not only can you save on your waste bill, your donation may qualify for an enhanced tax deduction. Ask your accountant about potential deductions. Donating excess food also boosts employee morale.

Remember:

Please follow federal, state and local regulations for safe food handling for your donations.

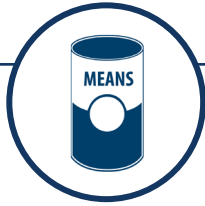
- Hot foods must be kept hot at 135 degrees F or above.
- Cold foods must be kept at 41 degrees F or below.
- Cross-contamination must be avoided.
- Prepared food must be cooled rapidly to a safe temperature.

Food that is spoiled or moldy, has been served or has not been kept according to food safety rules cannot be donated. Work with your partnering food rescue organizations by using the MEANS database to determine what they can take and to create a schedule for pickup. No matter the size or frequency of your donation, it still makes a difference to those who need it.

What can be donated?

- Fruits and vegetables
- Baked goods
- Frozen foods
- Bulk foods
- Meat and dairy products
- Packaged foods that have not been opened
- Prepared items that have not been served

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What is MEANS?

The [Matching Excess and Need for Stability \(MEANS\) Database](#) is a non-profit organization that aims to eliminate food waste in local communities. MEANS is currently partnered with 48 states, the District of Columbia and is now working with the Rhode Island Department of Health in the Rhode to End Hunger initiative.

How does it work?

Donors list their extra food on the MEANS website and connect with soup kitchens and food pantries in their area. Soup kitchens and food pantries get real-time email notifications on food donations and claim the extra food. Go to www.MEANSdatabase.org for more information.

How can I participate?

- 1 Identify the types and amounts of surplus food generated by your business ready for donation.
- 2 Sign-up or Log in to [MEANS \(www.MEANSdatabase.org\)](#)
- 3 List your donations on the MEANS website and they will match your donations to soup kitchens and food pantries in your area.
- 4 Soup kitchens and food pantries get real-time email notifications on food donations and can claim the extra food.
- 5 Package your donation in food-safe bags or containers, label the food and store it safely.
- 6 The recipient picks up the donation on an agreed upon place/time.

Liability Protection

Federal and Rhode Island laws protect you from liability when you donate food in good faith. The laws are meant to encourage donation of needed foods and protect donors.

Rhode Island laws state good-faith donors of any food, apparently fit for human consumption, shall not be subject to criminal penalty or civil damages arising from the condition of the food, unless injury is caused by the gross negligence, recklessness or intentional misconduct of the donor. For information on the Good Samaritan laws go to <https://web.uri.edu/foodsafety/files/>

Rhode Island Good Samaritan Laws (21 R.I. GEN. LAWS ANN. §§ 21-34-1, 21-34-2) and the Federal Good Samaritan law, The Bill Emerson Food Donation Act, (42 U.S. Code 1791) state that you cannot be held liable if you have donated food you believe to be safe and edible – even though this food may not be easily sold due to appearance, age, freshness, grade, size or other condition. However, food must still meet all federal, state and local quality and labeling standards.

“Rhode Islanders deserve access to healthy, wholesome food no matter what zip code they live in.”

—Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH
Director, Rhode Island Department of Health