



**2026 Scouting for Food  
Unit Leader Guide**

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## Welcome Letter

Dear Unit Leader,

Our community thrives when every child has the nourishment they need to grow and succeed. While food insecurity remains a challenge in our neighborhoods, Scouting for Food offers a powerful way to change the story. According to Feeding America, in 2023, 1 in 6 children in Cook County and 1 in 5 in Northwest Indiana faced hunger, impacting their health, learning, and well-being.

As Scouts, we are guided by a duty to help other people at all times. Scouting for Food provides a meaningful opportunity to directly support the local food pantries that care for our neighbors. In Pathway to Adventure Council, Scouting for Food is held in the spring when these resources experience reduced donations and increased demand.

Over the course of two April weekends, Scouts will make the mission of Scouting visible in their communities by canvassing neighborhoods, engaging local families, and delivering donated food to local pantries so they may restock their shelves.

We encourage your participation in Scouting for Food, whether through a traditional neighborhood food drive or one of the alternative options described on the next page. This guide is designed to help you and your unit's Scouting for Food coordinator plan a successful effort. If you need any additional support as you prepare, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are happy to help your unit succeed.

Thank you for all you do for Scouting and for the communities we serve.

Sincerely,  
Pathway to Adventure Council  
Scouting for Food Team



## Participation Opportunities

Cub Scout Packs, Scouts BSA Troops, Venturing Crews, Sea Scout Ships, and Explorer Posts have several options to collect food and/or financial donations to alleviate hunger in their communities. Please choose the option(s) that work best for your unit, or let us know if you have another idea!

1. Distribute door hangers within your chosen canvassing area one week and return to pick up the donated items and deliver them to a local food pantry the following week. This is the most traditional option.
2. Contact a local grocery store manager for their permission to solicit donations from patrons. Set up a collection area inside or in front of the store and share fliers asking shoppers to participate. Deliver donated items to a local food pantry.
3. Contact local faith communities and ask their members to bring donations on Scout Sunday. Have your Scouts in uniform at the door to collect. Deliver donated items to a local food pantry.
4. Contact other community sites (libraries, schools, local businesses, etc.) for permission to set up a collection area at their location. Deliver donated items to a local food pantry.
5. Text Scout4Food to 41444 to donate to Scouting for Food.

The most impactful participation comes from a strong relationship with a local food pantry. See page 6 for information on developing this partnership.



## Neighborhood Collection Timeline and Mechanics

### February – March

- Review the [unit territory map](#) and choose an available area for neighborhood canvassing.
- Confirm canvassing boundaries and order door hangers via Google form. ***For custom detail printing, this form is DUE BY 11:59pm MARCH 1, 2026.***
- Contact and secure a [local food pantry](#) to deliver donations to.
- **Notify local law enforcement where and when your unit will be going door-to-door.**
- Promote! Get your Scouts, their families, your sponsoring organization, and your local community excited about this service opportunity. Fliers can be found at [pathwaytoadventure.org/SFF](http://pathwaytoadventure.org/SFF).

### April

- Door Hanger Day
  - When Scouts gather at the assembly area, conduct instructional and safety briefings for all Scouts and drivers.
  - Provide everyone with door hangers, maps and driver instructions.
  - Deliver door hangers and collection bags (if used) to homes throughout your chosen area.
- Collection Day
  - When Scouts gather at the assembly area, conduct instructional and safety briefings for all Scouts and drivers.
  - Divide your collection area into smaller locations and assign drivers/Scout teams for collections.
  - Return to homes visited previously on the designated day to collect donations. Being organized and thorough helps avoid missing any donations!
  - Deliver the donations to your partner food pantry and note the total weight and/or number of items.
  - Complete the Unit Collection Report (page 13).



## Promotion and Partnership Guidelines

Be sure to capture the day in pictures! Scouting for Food photos from previous years can be found on the [council Flickr page](#).

### Promoting Through Newsletters/Social Media

Sample Message:

[Cub Scout Pack, Scouts BSA Troop, Venture Crew, etc.] sponsored by [Chartering Organization] needs your help – and so does our community. Our Scouts are participating in the annual Scouting for Food service opportunity by collecting donations of non-perishable food and hygiene items in their neighborhood on [date]. All items will stock the shelves of [local food bank/pantry name]. Visit [pathwaytoadventure.org/sff](http://pathwaytoadventure.org/sff) to learn more about the campaign and local Scouting. Thank you for making a difference in our community!

### Promoting through your Chartering Organization and Community

- Encourage Scouts to speak to local officials about the importance of Scouting for Food at a public meeting. Ask those officials to declare a Scouting for Food Proclamation.
- Arrange with your local PTAC Scouting Service Center to pick up Scouting for Food fliers and with permission, hang them at faith communities, public libraries, rec centers/park districts, village hall, and neighborhood grocery stores.
- Use social media to create awareness and encourage others to consider making a physical and/or financial donation to Scouting for Food. Ask local community organizations, chambers of commerce, schools, and news outlets (the Patch) to share your information on their social media channels.



## **Partnering with Local Food Pantries**

We highly encourage units to build a relationship with a local food pantry. The Greater Chicago Food Depository and the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana provide comprehensive lists of pantries to connect with! (<https://www.chicagosfoodpantries.org>; <https://foodbanknwi.org/pantrylocator/>)

A close partnership between the unit and food pantry allows Scouts of all ages to gain a deeper understanding of food insecurity, learn valuable service skills, and support local community members and resources. Examples of age-appropriate volunteer opportunities are provided below.

### Younger Scouts (Cub Scouts)

For younger Scouts, engaging with a food pantry is a chance to learn about food insecurity in an age-appropriate way while participating in hands-on activities. Suggested activities include:

#### *What is a Food Pantry?*

Organize a tour of a food pantry. Staff members can provide a brief presentation about the pantry's mission, its clients, and how food donations make a difference.

#### *Birthday Bags or Cards for Clients*

Younger Scouts can bring their own supplies to assemble birthday bags with cake mix, candles, and other small items to donate to a food pantry. Creating thoughtful cards for clients is another impactful activity.

### Webelos

Webelos Scouts are encouraged to take a more active role in volunteering, either with a parent or in small groups to assist during client service hours, interacting directly with clients and helping distribute food.



### Scouts BSA, Venturers, Sea Scouts, Explorers

Older Scouts can engage in more independent volunteer roles and tackle larger service projects.

#### *Independent Volunteering*

Regular Client Service Shifts: Scouts aged 12+ can volunteer during client service shifts (with parent/guardian permission), assisting clients, restocking shelves, and organizing food.

#### *Team-Building Opportunities*

Sorting Food Donations: After a food drive, a Scout group can assist in sorting and organizing donated items.

Food Insecurity Education: Watching documentaries like A Place at the Table and engaging in discussions can deepen Scouts' understanding of food insecurity as a national concern.

#### *Eagle Project Opportunities*

Scouts and food pantry leadership can discuss potential Eagle Scout projects, such as building pantry infrastructure or creating client resources to implement longer-term improvements.



## Safety Guidelines

Always follow Scouting America's [Guide to Safe Scouting](#) and [Safeguarding Youth Requirements](#).

### Vehicle Safety

- Use extreme caution when crossing streets.
- Never ride in the back of pickups or trailers.
- Always wear seatbelts when riding in a vehicle.

### Neighborhood Safety

- Notify local law enforcement ahead of time where and when your unit will be going door-to-door.
- Never enter a home, fenced yards, or other areas Scouts can be out of sight.
- Use sidewalks whenever available; do not walk across lawns.
- Do not go into unsafe areas or places you feel uncomfortable.
- Be aware of "No Solicitation" signs, gated communities, etc. Communicate beforehand for drop offs or skip these.
- Make sure Scouts are in uniform, travel in groups of two or more and are adequately supervised – this is especially true for Cub Scouts.
- Distribute door hangers no earlier than 9:00am. Place them on a handle or between a storm and entry door. **DO NOT LEAVE THEM IN A MAILBOX; THIS IS AGAINST THE LAW.**
- On collection day, begin no earlier than 9:00am. Collect from homes that received door hangers, and cover your area thoroughly so as to not miss any homes.

### Other Items

- Monitor the weather; be prepared to alter your plans and dress appropriately.
- Be friendly and courteous to everyone. Thank people even if they don't contribute.
- Only canvass and collect in the neighborhood boundaries you reported to cover.
- Do not solicit grocery stores unless you have been given permission in advance by the store manager.
- Have fun with your fellow Scouts and Scouters!





## Template for Notice to Police Department/Public Safety Office

Link to draft on letterhead: [Pathway to Adventure Council - Scouting for Food Public Safety Notice.docx](#)

Text only:

[Date]

### **Subject: Notification of Upcoming Scouting for Food Drive in Your Community**

Dear [Recipient's Name],

I am reaching out on behalf of the Pathway to Adventure Council of Scouting America, which serves thousands of youth across Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana. As part of our commitment to community service, many of our Scouts will be participating in an upcoming, annual food drive.

**[Doorhanger distribution date]** – Scouts will be distributing informational door hangers to homes in their neighborhoods, letting residents know about the collection effort.

**[Donation pickup date]** – Scouts will return to collect donated items left outside homes and deliver them to local food banks.

We wanted to inform relevant public agencies of this activity for the safety of our Scouts in case there are any community misunderstandings about what they are doing. This Google map highlights specific locations of Scout efforts:

<https://tinyurl.com/SFFmap2026>

All participating Scouts will be asked to:

- Wear their official uniform, identifying them as part of this food drive.
- Begin no earlier than 9:00am on door hanger and collection days.
- Travel with family members or fellow Scouts and leaders.



We greatly appreciate your support in sharing this information with your officers and community liaisons. If you have any questions or would like additional details, please contact [name], [title] at [phone number] or [email].

Thank you for your time and for all you do to serve our communities.

**Yours in Scouting,**

[Your Name]

[Your Title]



## Unit Scouting for Food Coordinator

**Position Overview:** Provide leadership of the unit for successful participation in the Scouting for Food campaign.

### Position Responsibilities:

- Promote and create enthusiasm for Scouting for Food within the unit, Scouting families and community.
- For door-to-door collection option:
  - Confirm participation via online form to obtain door hangers and thank-you cards for your unit.
  - Review the unit collection map and choose an available area.
  - Secure a local food pantry to accept collected items.
  - Provide maps of the unit's assigned territory and give assignments to Scouts.
  - Lead unit on distribution and collection days.
  - Coordinate delivery of collections to your chosen food pantry.
  - Review collection results and report them to your District Scouting for Food chair.
- For single-location participation options:
  - Communicate with store managers, houses of worship, school administration, or other community leaders to collect donations at their sites.
  - Coordinate delivery of collections to your chosen food pantry.
  - Review collection results and report them to your District Scouting for Food chair.
- Order and distribute patches.



## Important Links

Council Scouting for Food Website: [pathwaytoadventure.org/SFF](https://pathwaytoadventure.org/SFF)

Registration Form: <https://forms.gle/nJwak1hhA4NtDrQp6>

Collection Area Map: <https://tinyurl.com/SFFmap2026>

Neighborhood Pantry Locators:

[Greater Chicago Food Depository](#)

[Northern Illinois Food Bank](#)

[Food Bank of Northwest Indiana](#)

Collection Report: <https://forms.gle/DFwNZ5dBjaBmebPD7>

Patch Order Form: <https://scoutingevent.com/456-110341>



## Collection Report

Please submit to [PTAC.ScoutingforFood@scouting.org](mailto:PTAC.ScoutingforFood@scouting.org) within 2 weeks of your collection day.  
You may print this form or find an online version at [pathwaytoadventure.org/SFF](http://pathwaytoadventure.org/SFF).

District Name \_\_\_\_\_

Unit Type \_\_\_\_\_

Unit Number \_\_\_\_\_

Unit SFF Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Unit SFF Coordinator E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Participants \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated Pounds (or number of items) Collected \_\_\_\_\_

Service Hours Performed \_\_\_\_\_

Location Donated To \_\_\_\_\_



## Contacts

General – [PTAC.ScoutingforFood@scouting.org](mailto:PTAC.ScoutingforFood@scouting.org)

Staff Advisor – Amanda Huegelmann – [Amanda.Huegelmann@scouting.org](mailto:Amanda.Huegelmann@scouting.org)

Council Activities Chair – Mike Mikulski – [mikemikulski99@comcast.net](mailto:mikemikulski99@comcast.net)

## District Contacts

1. Calumet – Juanita Robinson – [Sochdr@aol.com](mailto:Sochdr@aol.com)
2. Checaugau – Steve Willuweit – [oneoldprop@yahoo.com](mailto:oneoldprop@yahoo.com)
3. Five Creeks – Tim Meinholz – [wheelingplumbing@hotmail.com](mailto:wheelingplumbing@hotmail.com)
4. Iron Horse – Isaiah Hardy – [Isaiah.Hardy@scouting.org](mailto:Isaiah.Hardy@scouting.org)
5. Portage Creek – Tim Strudeman – [Tim.Strudeman@scouting.org](mailto:Tim.Strudeman@scouting.org)
6. Prairie Dunes – Gisela Thielbar – [githielbar@gmail.com](mailto:githielbar@gmail.com)
7. Tall Grass – Michael Hornung – [Michael.Hornung@scouting.org](mailto:Michael.Hornung@scouting.org)
8. Thunderbird – Holly Hill – [hollymhill@gmail.com](mailto:hollymhill@gmail.com)
9. Trailblazer – Lynnette Dippon – [lynnette.dippon@comcast.net](mailto:lynnette.dippon@comcast.net)
10. Tri-Star – Cindy Kunzer – [ckunzer@aol.com](mailto:ckunzer@aol.com)