Hosting food drives at grocery stores

PLANNING AHEAD:
At the earliest time possible, notify North Helpline of your food, hygiene, or Baby Cupboard drive by emailing miranda@northhelpline.org, or calling 206 367 3477. Keep us in the know!

Specify a start and end date and/or time for your food drive. Food drives held at grocery stores generally last one to two days. If you wish to arrange a food drive at a grocery store, permission needs to be granted from that store (either the general manager or the owner) in advance.

Set goals for your food drive. No donation is too small, or too big! Decide if you will accept only non-perishable food, monetary donations, or both.

Create a collection system. North Helpline can provide donation barrels or boxes*, notify us and arrange a time to pick them up. Often, the best way to transport food donations once they are collected is to use small to medium-sized boxes that are easy to lift.

*What’s the difference between a barrel and a box? Our donation barrels are 32 gallon trash barrels. They come in bright yellow or red and are very noticeable! Donation boxes are shorter, white cardboard boxes more suitable for a smaller or internally held food drive.

GET NOTICED:
Promote your food drive. Alert potential donors in your communities using flyers, social media, or word of mouth.

Choose a theme. Themed food drives often generate more interest. Brainstorm possible themes (ie: “Souperbowl” Food Drive, Trick or Treating Food Drive, Martin Luther King Jr. Day Food Drive).

Sponsoring competitions between food drive groups or presenting special awards to key players can aid in the success of a food drive.

Select a visible location for your food drive. High traffic areas where donation containers are visible are best.

Be creative. Consider creating your own poster or sign to display near the donation drop off.

DURING YOUR FOOD DRIVE:
Greet customers by positioning volunteers near the entrance(s) of the store. Respect the shoppers by not crowding the entrances or forcing information. Be sure to thank each and every person who donates!

Have North Helpline’s “most needed items” flyers available for potential donors. Stop handing out flyers 20 minutes before the end of your food drive to give customers enough time to do their shopping and make their donation!
Do not leave donations unattended and regularly check donation containers. Transfer donations into smaller boxes if you start to run out of space.

Contact North Helpline if you need extra assistance during the food drive (ie: additional collection containers, or more frequent donation pick ups)