



Kitchen Coalition Distribution Partner Basics

What is Kitchen Coalition?

Kitchen Coalition is an initiative of Second Harvest Heartland, harnessing the power of the food bank to bring nutritious, prepared meals to communities facing the biggest meal gap. We know that not everyone facing hunger has the home, health, or ability to use the groceries our food bank offers. So, we've built a network of local restaurants and caterers who turn food bank ingredients into nutritious, freshly prepared meals. Then, trusted nonprofits get those meals to neighbors on a predictable schedule.

Who needs a Kitchen Coalition meal?

For far too many people facing hunger, receiving food only solves part of the problem. Kitchen Coalition chefs cook for neighbors who may not have the home, health, or ability to cook the groceries our food bank offers. We focus our efforts on addressing three common barriers to preparing meals:

- inconsistent access to a kitchen
- physical mobility or illness
- managing a crisis, challenge, or transition

While there is a factor of dignity and convenience in a prepared meal, most importantly, there are individuals and scenarios where prepared meals are the only option to meet the food needs of folks in our communities.

How do we ensure Kitchen Coalition meals go to the folks who need them?

Meals are provided free of charge to distribution partners. These partners are community groups, non-profits, schools, and others who get meals into the hands of those who need them. We trust our partners to know their community's needs.

We continually evaluate the balance of distribution partners with goal to reach a representative population of those who face hunger. We aspire to over deliver on reaching BIPOC communities that may be less connected to established hunger relief systems.

What is in a Kitchen Coalition meal?

Meals are produced by restaurants, caterers, and other commercial kitchens using fresh ingredients that are primarily sourced by Second Harvest Heartland, including donated and rescued foods. Meals are balanced and will contain a protein, starch, and a vegetable / produce item. Meals are provided in 1 or 4 serving containers. Most meals are distributed cold, to be reheated.

We do our best to ensure meals are connected to the communities who they are nourishing. This means partnering with local kitchens, seeking out BIPOC chefs and restaurant owners, and culturally tailoring meals when important to a given community e.g., halal, vegetarian.

What do you need to partner with Kitchen Coalition?

- Ability to meet food safety and other contract guidelines
 - Meals must be refrigerated; each can spend up to 30 minutes outside of refrigeration during distribution. Preference for organizations that can store meals, in some cases KC can provide refrigerated trucks for distribution
 - Meals have about a 3-5 day shelf life from date of production
- Ability to target those who need a prepared meal
 - Meals are meant for individuals and families who are food insecure and face additional barriers to the nourishment of a prepared meal
 - Either your mission is to target individuals who meet this description e.g., unhoused population, or you will inform individuals of purpose of meals before providing them
- Meals should be incremental e.g., not replacing a meal you're serving today and not able to be funded by a government program e.g., CACFP, SFSP
- Plan for regular distribution
 - Partners have a set day(s) to receive KC meals each week
 - Meals can be picked up at production kitchen or KC can drop off
 - # of meals is consistent week by week but menu changes
- Willingness to sign an agreement on food safety and distribution guidelines
- Willingness to do a pulse check survey with recipients during program

