SCOUTING FOR FOOD

2026

UNIT LEADER GUIDE

GREATER ST. LOUIS AREA SCOUTING

Saturday
November 14
Bag Distribution Day

Saturday
November 21
Food Collection Day

25,000 SCOUTS • 2 SATURDAYS • 662 PANTRIES • 2 MILLION FOOD DONATIONS

YOUR GAME PLAN STARTS HERE

Scouting for Food succeeds neighborhood by neighborhood. This guide is your step-by-step resource to help your unit lead with confidence, engage your community, and make a meaningful difference together.

BEFORE THE FIRST SATURDAY

- ☐ Name a unit SFF chair to lead bag distribution, food collection, and food delivery.
- ☐ From district SFF leadership, pick up blue food bags and confirm assigned neighborhoods and food drop-off site.
- ☐ Assign Scout families to each street on both days.
- ☐ Set a time and place on or before Nov. 14 to meet as a unit and hand out maps and bags.
- ☐ Plan your Nov. 21 food collection, drop off, and celebration plans.
- ☐ Make sure every Scout family knows the plan, and push 100% participation for this signature service project.
- ☐ Order your souvenir SFF patches at GatewayTraders.org.

SAME STREETS, SAME PROMISE.

The same Scouts, families, or partner groups must cover the same homes on both Saturdays. When different groups cover each day, homes and donations are often missed, creating an inconsistent experience for residents and generating complaints. Keep each team on the same streets and routes for both bag distribution and food collection. Thank you!

SPREAD THE WORD
SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POST

Scouting for Food is coming to our neighborhood! Look for Scouts from [Unit name] at your door on Saturday, Nov. 14, delivering a blue Scouting for Food bag. Here's how to help:

- **Fill the bag with non-perishable food this week.**
- **Set it by your front door by 9 AM on Saturday, Nov. 21.**
- **Scouts will pick it up, and every item stays local, going to area food pantries.**

Thank you for helping our neighbors facing hunger!

SATURDAY, NOV. 14 | BAG DISTRIBUTION DAY

BEGIN NO EARLIER THAN 9:00 A.M.

Scouts and partner groups distribute the iconic blue Scouting for Food grocery bags to homes across St. Louis City and 63 surrounding counties in Missouri and Illinois.

09:00

BEGIN DISTRIBUTING BAGS

Begin at your chosen starting point.

Work as a team.

Hang an empty bag at every address on your assigned route.

Stay safe.

Contact your unit Scouting for Food chair when finished.

AT EVERY RESIDENCE

- Place an empty blue collection bag on or next to the front door.
- Do not place a bag in, on, or tied to a mailbox.
- Do not place bags in or on vehicles.
- Do not open or enter a home; stay on the porch or walkway.
- Skip homes displaying "No Trespassing" or "Do Not Enter" signs.
- Move on if the door says "No Solicitation."
- Do not enter controlled-access apartment buildings without permission from the property manager. You may leave bags at the main entrance instead.
- Watch for unleashed animals.
- If you have any safety concerns, skip the house and notify your Scouting for Food adult leadership.

VEHICLE SAFETY

- Buckle up and follow traffic laws.
- Stay alert for vehicles while canvassing; never enter the street unexpectedly.
- Never ride in a truck bed.

SATURDAY, NOV. 21
FOOD COLLECTION DAY

BEGIN NO EARLIER THAN 10:00 A.M.

This is collection day. Return to the same neighborhoods to gather filled bags of donated food. Follow your route, stay safe, and take every donation to your assigned drop off site.

10:00 a.m.
Begin pickup, never earlier.

Morning
Cover the exact same area where your teams distributed bags.

Early Afternoon
Canvass every assigned street again to catch late or missed bags.

By 4:00 p.m.
Deliver food to your assigned drop-off site.

WHERE THE FOOD GOES: Every donation stays local. In St. Louis City and County, food goes to the St. Louis Area Foodbank and Operation Food Search, which distribute it to area pantries. Across the other 62 counties, Scout families deliver donations straight to community food programs. In all, the drive supports 662 local pantries serving neighbors facing hunger.

BE SAFE. BE PREPARED.

1 COVER YOUR ASSIGNED NEIGHBORHOODS

Stay within your assigned neighborhoods, and cover ALL homes. Crossing into another unit's area without notice causes confusion.

2 KEEP SCOUTS VISIBLE

Work in small groups and stick to populated areas, avoiding alleys and secluded spots. Adults should keep children in view at all times.

3 RESPECT PROPERTY

Use driveways and walkways. Do not cut across yards or flowers. Leave gates as you found them. Be courteous and leave no trace.

4 RETRACE YOUR ROUTE

Before moving to the next street, double back and confirm every home received a bag. It's easy for kids to miss one.

5 MAKE THE SECOND PASS

On Nov. 21, drive your route again in late afternoon. This 2nd sweep picks up hundreds of late or missed bags each year.

6 SAFETY FIRST

If something feels unsafe or uncertain, step away and contact Scouting for Food leadership immediately. Trust your instincts.

BEFORE YOU GO: SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR SUPERVISING ADULTS

- Confirm at least two adults are supervising the group. This is Scouting America's "two-deep leadership" policy.
- Review the assigned neighborhoods and boundaries with your group; providing maps if helpful.
- Make sure every Scout has a buddy and knows to stay with them all day.
- Review the safety rules, then quiz each Scout to confirm they understand. For example:
  - What do you do if a homeowner asks you to grab the food from inside their home?
  - What do you do if you see a "No Soliciting" or "No Trespassing" sign?
- Remind Scouts to stay on walkways, never enter a home, garage, or vehicle, and keep clear of unleashed animals.
- If using vehicles, follow traffic laws, buckle every rider, and never allow anyone to ride in a truck bed.
- Make sure every Scout knows to tell an adult right away if something feels unsafe or unsure.
- Save the Scouting for Food leadership contact number in your phone, share it with the group.
- Take a head count regularly, and always before moving to the next street or area, to make sure everyone is with the group.

WHAT'S POSSIBLE, PROVEN.

Scouting for Food began in St. Louis in 1985, when Scouts and community partners joined forces to help neighbors facing hunger on a scale no one had tried before. With help from Anheuser-Busch, area fire departments, local pantries, and the Army Reserve, Scouts collected 750,000 cans that first year.

1985 FIRST DRIVE

63 COUNTIES SERVED

2 MILLION ITEMS IN A TYPICAL YEAR

Now, in 2026, that same partnership spirit powers a drive far larger than anyone imagined in 1985. The number of Scouts participating has grown to nearly 25,000, and hundreds more volunteers from community partners – including Rotary Clubs, high school sports teams, National Honor Society chapters, church groups, and United Way volunteers – turn out to help. Together, they'll collect nearly 2 million cans, jars, and boxes of food across the region this year.

In St. Louis City and County, Scouts pick up donations from homes and bring them to 30 drop-off sites, most of them still firehouses. About 30 commercial truck drivers donate their time and equipment to haul the food to the St. Louis Area Foodbank and Operation Food Search, where volunteers sort it and prepare it for hundreds of local pantries. In 62 surrounding counties, donations go straight to local pantries. Armada (formerly Sunset Transportation) and the St. Louis Area Foodbank are the backbone of today's drive, just as Anheuser-Busch and the Army Reserve were in 1985. Together, that effort has brought in 70 million items of food since the first drive. What started as a one-time service project is now one of the largest single-day hunger relief efforts in the nation.

In 1985, we proved what's possible when a community decides no one should go hungry. Today, we're asking you to prove it again. Open your heart, fill your bag, set it out on November 21, and Scouts will carry it the rest of the way.

GREATER ST. LOUIS AREA SCOUTING

Foodbank® St. Louis Area Foodbank

ARMADA

Operation Food Search