California
STATE EMPLOYEES
FOOD DRIVE
WWW.FOODDRIVE.CA.GOV

NOVEMBER 9, 2026 – JANUARY 8, 2027

2026 CA STATE EMPLOYEES FOOD DRIVE COORDINATOR MANUAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

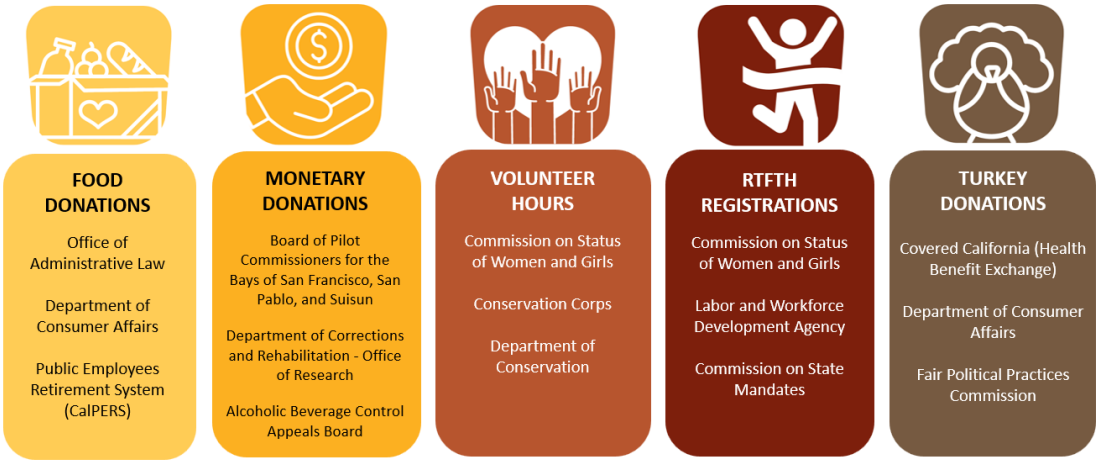
2025 Recap	3
2026 Food Drive Timeline	4
General Information	5
How the Food Drive Works	6
Food Banks Across the State	7
Food Donations	8
Monetary Donations (Cash, Check, Our Promise)	9
Steps to Success	10
Previous Success Stories	11
SFBFS Turkey Drive	12
Run to Feed the Hungry (RTFTH)	13
Frequently Asked Questions	14

2025 RECAP
California State Employees Food Drive

Last year, California state agencies donated over $76,000 to food banks throughout the state! As well as over 26,340 pounds of food, 1,225 turkeys, 324 Run to Feed the Hungry registrations, and 376 volunteer hours!

We are so grateful for everyone who participated in the food drive and helped make an impact in our local communities. The following departments led the way in each category!

TOP DONATION AMOUNT PER CATEGORY *(OVERALL)*



TOP THREE DEPARTMENTS BY CATEGORY *(PER CAPITA)*

2026 FOOD DRIVE TIMELINE

November 9, 2026 - January 8, 2027

Monday, November 9	**Food Drive BEGINS**
Monday, November 9	Kick Off Call @ 4-4:30 PM *Zoom (all state employees invited)*
Friday, November 13	SFBFS Turkey Drive @ 7 AM – 7 PM *Drop off at Cal Expo: 1600 Exposition Boulevard, Sacramento*
Thursday, November 26	Thanksgiving Day / Run to Feed the Hungry in Sacramento
Wednesday, December 16	SFBFS Volunteer Day @ 9am-12pm *Email cafooddrive@cdfa.ca.gov to sign up (8 slots available)*
Tuesday, December 22	SFBFS Volunteer Day @ 1-4pm *Email cafooddrive@cdfa.ca.gov to sign up (20 slots available)*
Friday, January 8	**Food Drive ENDS / Food Drive Credit DUE**
Tuesday, January 12	Totals & Awards Announcement (via email)

Every Tuesday: CDFA will send weekly emails with the updated food drive totals

GENERAL INFORMATION

STATEWIDE FOOD DRIVE COORDINATOR:

- Rachel Beck, CA Department of Food & Agriculture
    - cafooddrive@cdfa.ca.gov

STATE EMPLOYEES FOOD DRIVE WEB PAGE:

- www.fooddrive.ca.gov
- All the information you need to be successful in your food drive efforts is on this site. You can find the food drive logo and flyers, social media kit, webinar recordings, food bank websites, and other resources.

FOOD BANK WEBSITES:

- http://www.fooddrive.ca.gov/donate/
- This includes a list of food banks by county in California. If there is a food bank you think should be added, please email Rachel at cafooddrive@cdfa.ca.gov.

HOW THE FOOD DRIVE WORKS

PARTICIPATION
Each participating State Agency designates a coordinator for the drive. Coordinators are asked to:

- Promote the State Employees Food Drive to their department
- Disseminate updates & information
- Encourage staff participation in the food drive
- Remind staff to submit food drive credit
- If possible, create fundraising opportunities for staff
    - *Ideas for this are on page 11!*

COMMUNICATION
Coordinators will receive a weekly e-mail every Tuesday with the updated department totals throughout the food drive.

- If you are not receiving e-mails, please check in with Rachel at cafooddrive@cdfa.ca.gov.

FOOD DRIVE CREDIT CALCULATIONS
For your agency/department to receive food drive credit, each employee will need to submit their donation details through the Food Drive Credit Form by **January 8, 2027**.

Once received, the donation will be added to the department's totals. Totals will be added up per the following categories:

- Monetary Donations
- Food Donations
- Volunteer Hours
- Turkey Drive Donations
- Run to Feed the Hungry / Thanksgiving Run Registrations

Totals will also be evaluated per capita of each participating department at the end of the drive.

If you would like to coordinate division competitions within your department, CDFA can add your department's divisions to the Food Drive Credit Form and provide a breakdown by division upon request. To do so, please email the list of your department's divisions to cafooddrive@cdfa.ca.gov.

FOOD BANKS ACROSS THE STATE

As state employees have shifted to remote work, the food drive has been expanded to serve all California communities. We encourage state employees to donate to the food bank of their choosing. The State Employees Food Drive website includes a map broken down by county, with links to each food bank.

Please note: donations are not restricted to these food banks. CDFA encourages donations to all food banks throughout California.

FOOD DONATIONS

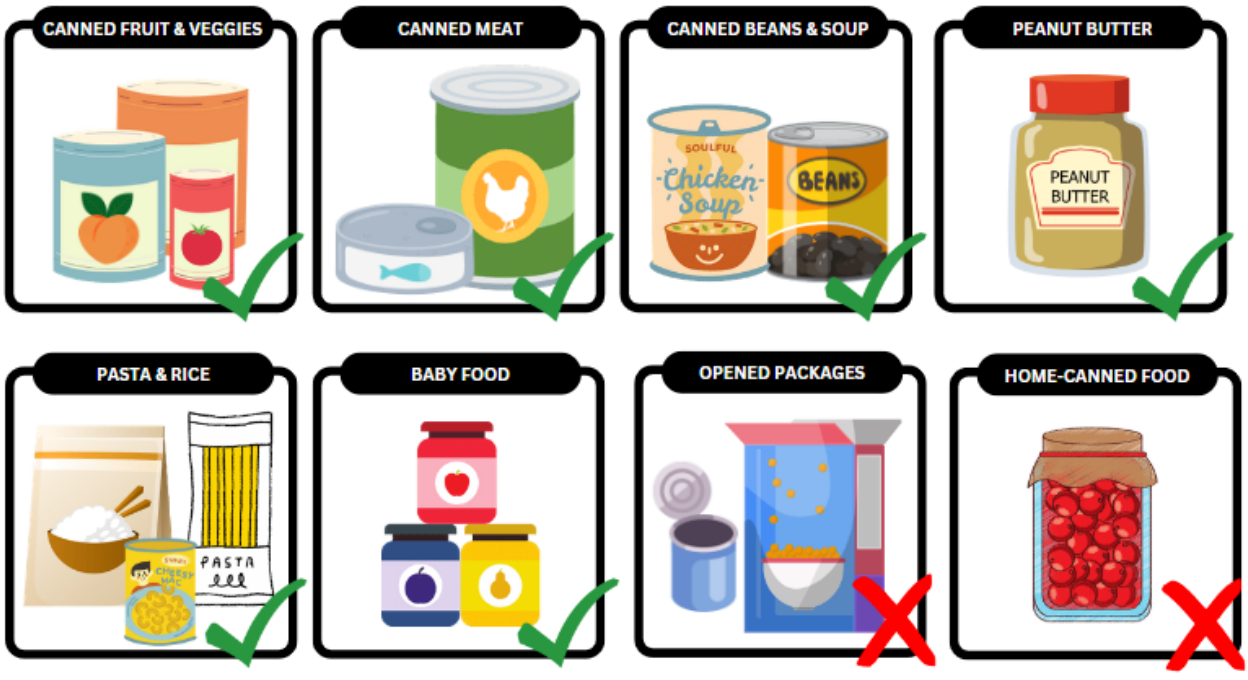
***Please Note**: The acceptance of food donations may vary by food bank and in most cases monetary donations are preferred. Please confirm with the food bank before starting your collection process.*

The best type of food for donations is non-perishable, highly nutritious, low sodium and reduced sugar. Foods that are recommended for donation include the following:

- Canned tuna fish & meats
- Canned fruit in water
- Canned vegetables
- Beans
- Soup
- Peanut butter
- Pasta & Rice

Baby food (dry and/or canned) and baby formula are always in demand. (Non-glass containers are preferred, but if you receive glass, make sure to separate it so that the containers are safe from breaking.)

Please, no opened packages, cans or bottles, or home-canned foods. Reasonably expired food, if safe and desirable for consumption, are accepted.



MONETARY DONATIONS

***Important**: Funds collected for the State Employees Food Drive cannot be used to offset employee/agency expenses (ex: reimbursement for mileage). All funds collected must be applied to the Food Drive as required by law.*

Here are a few ways to submit monetary donations to the Food Drive:

ONLINE

1. Visit the State Employees Food Drive website for a map of food banks by county and click on the food bank you would like to donate to.
2. Submit your donation through the selected food bank's online donation portal.

CASH/CHECK

1. Visit the State Employees Food Drive website for a map of food banks by county and click on the food bank you would like to donate to.
2. Mail or drop off your cash/check to the food bank of your choosing.

OUR PROMISE CAMPAIGN

Our Promise: California State Employees Giving at Work was established in 1957 to provide a single charitable fundraising drive in the State community. Our Promise offers California State employees the opportunity to utilize payroll deduction to support charitable organization they feel passionate about. Over the past 60 plus years, State employees have raised more than $300 million to make California a better place to live, work and play.

1. Login to your Cal Employee Connect (CEC) Profile
    a. In the top right corner, click your name > User Profile
    b. Click the Our Promise Campaign donation button.
    c. Create an account or login to your existing account.

2. Choose "One Time Gift" or "Payroll Deduction", decide how much you would like to give, and select your favorite non-profit(s).
    a. For the purposes of the State Employees Food Drive, please select a California Food Bank to receive Food Drive credit.

3. Confirm and complete your gift!

STEPS TO SUCCESS FOR YOUR FOOD DRIVE

Promotional Ideas:

- Share the 2026 State Employees Food Drive flyer
- Share pre-made food drive graphics from the SEFD website on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
- Download pre-made food drive Zoom backgrounds from the SEFD website to use during meetings
- Send e-mail reminders to staff
    - *Examples: update your coworkers with your department's weekly totals, create a newsletter template and use the pre-made food drive graphics to share about donation opportunities.*
- Create a thermometer to track your department's progress
- Coordinate inter-department or office competitions for the most food donations, monetary donations, volunteer hours, etc.
    - *If you would like to make division competitions within your department, and have your department's divisions added to the Food Drive Credit Form, please email cafooddrive@cdfa.ca.gov.*

Fundraising Ideas:

- Host an auction with donated items
- Host a raffle with donated items
    - Raffle tickets could be purchased with canned foods, or raffle ticket purchases can be a combined agency donation
- Host a bake sale
- Host a special event (ex: chili cook-off, photo contest)
    - *Charge canned food for admission, or collect admission payments for a combined agency donation*
- Host a Virtual Day of Giving
- Host a Drive Thru event
- Encourage staff participation in the Our Promise Campaign (page 9)
- Dine In & Donate Day: Encourage employees to skip one meal out and instead donate the funds saved from that meal back to the Food Bank.
- Check out The Second Harvest of the Greater Valley's page of ideas at https://localfoodbank.org/fun-food-drive-ideas

PREVIOUS SUCCESS STORIES

In 2025, The **Employment Development Department** hosted a food drive and worked together to collect **1,840 pounds of nonperishable food** for Feeding America Riverside San Bernardino!

In 2024, **Caltrans District 2** hosted a Districtwide Canned Food Structure Contest and collected a total of 4,886 items of food! This was their second year hosting this contest and found it really gets employees motivated to donate, show off their skills, and represent their division.

In 2023, The **CA Department of Tax & Fee Administration** (CDTFA) hosted a competition between divisions to compete for bragging rights and the Golden Gobbler trophy - resulting in the donation of 230 turkeys to the Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services, as well as 4 turkeys to the Stockton Food Bank!

SFBFS TURKEY DRIVE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2026
7 AM – 7 PM

What is it?
SFBFS and KCRA hold the largest one-day Turkey Drive in Sacramento. In 2025, the 18th Annual Turkey Drive collected ***18,321 turkeys*** for families in need throughout Sacramento County.

Where is it?
CAL EXPO: Drop your frozen turkey(s) at Cal Expo Main Gate Loop – 1600 Exposition Boulevard, Sacramento CA

How does it work?
Individuals/agencies can drop off turkeys on the way to work, at lunch or after work.

A donation form (available online) is provided for you to turn in when donating turkeys to ensure the proper number of turkeys are recorded.

- ***NOTE****: Since the donations will be added to rest of the general public's donations that day, it is very important that the form lists the following to receive credit: your* ***agency name****,* ***donor names****, and the* ***number of turkeys****.*

Please do not bring cash/check donations on this day. SFBFS provides an opportunity to donate $20 online for a turkey instead. Click here to learn more.

Pictured: Franchise Tax Board's 2025 Turkey Drive

RUN TO FEED THE HUNGRY

THANKSGIVING DAY NOVEMBER 26, 2026

What is it?
The event is a 10K run & 5K run/walk to support Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services. Click here to learn more.

When?
Thanksgiving morning - Thursday, November 26, 2026

- 10K starts at 8:15 AM
- 5K starts at 9 AM

Where?
The event features a loop course that starts on J Street just west of the entrance to the Sacramento State campus and runs through the beautiful tree-lined streets of East Sacramento.

How do you get food drive credit?

1. State employees can register themselves and immediate family members online at www.runtofeedthehungry.com.
2. Once registered, **add your registration details to the Food Drive Credit Form.** Registrations will be added to each agency's total.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can we view our departments food drive credit totals?
State Employees will need to submit their donation details through the Food Drive Credit Form. We will email the updated totals every Tuesday.

Will food collection barrels be provided for in-person donations?
No, food collection barrels will not be provided. You are welcome to place your own barrels in your office(s), however please note the acceptance of food donations may vary by food bank and in most cases monetary donations are preferred. Please confirm with the food bank before starting your collection process.

If I donate to a food bank through the Our Promise Campaign, can I submit my monthly payment for food drive credit?
Absolutely! When submitting this information to the Food Drive Credit Form, please only include the amounts for November 2026 - January 2027.

How do you know which agency brings turkeys to the Turkey Drive? In order to get food drive credit toward your agency, each turkey donation needs to be accompanied by the turkey donation form (available online).

- *It is very important that the form lists your **agency name**, **donor names**, and the **number of turkeys**. Turkey donations from state employees are mixed in with the donations from the general public and the form is our only way to track state employee donations from the day.*

If state employees participate in the Run to Feed the Hungry, can they also submit donation credit for family members?
YES! Employees who register for the Run to Feed the Hungry can upload their registration details to the Food Drive Credit Form, and include immediate family member registrations.

When is the last day to submit food drive credit?
All monetary donations, food donations, volunteer hours, turkey drive donations, and Run to Feed the Hungry registrations need to be submitted via the Food Drive Credit Form no later than **Friday, January 8, 2027**, to be counted toward the State Employees Food Drive totals.

When will final totals of the drive be announced?
The final totals will be announced on **Tuesday, January 12, 2027**, via email.