



Organizing a Community Plant Distribution

Sourcing & Caring for Donated Plants

- Work with local nurseries, school greenhouses, community gardens, farm partners, etc. to source plant donations
 - When possible, provide extra seeds for them to grow that fit your neighbors needs and the growing abilities of your partners/donors
- Grow seedlings to donate with volunteers, school groups, etc.
 - We host field trips at our Food Bank Farm that start seeds with us.
 - Other ideas – Boy and Girl Scout clubs, 4H Clubs, FFAs, afterschool programs, etc.
- Have a place to collect donated plants where they will be cared for daily, or make a plan to have folx bring donations directly to your event.
 - Is this a Plant Swap or Plant Distribution?
 - Consider quality of plants being brought directly to your event
 - Do you want to or have the ability to fertilize or pot up plants that may be struggling?
 - This is very customizable, so work with your donors if you don't have the ability for long-term plant care.

Plan the Event

- Find a Site
 - Where are your neighbors already accessing resources?
 - We partner with a local pantry
 - Other ideas are libraries, your food bank, public parks, etc.
 - Consider parking, crowd control, ease of movement through the space for those using mobility aids, visibility, etc.
- Choose a date
 - Choose a time that works well for your growing region.
 - In Zone 6, we choose a date late in May when our nursery partners are looking for homes for spring and summer starts that haven't sold yet.
 - Consider a backup date for weather purposes.
- Include community partners that are able to provide relevant education, resources and/or wraparound services (if desired).
 - SNAP Outreach, Nutrition Educators, Environmental Services, Seed Libraries, Master Gardeners, etc.
 - Make sure your partners are prepared for both the set date and the backup date.
- Ensure you recruit enough staff or volunteers to help direct the flow of traffic, track impacts, and assist with packing plants into vehicles.

Promote your Event

- Work to promote the event via media advisory/press release, newsletters, social media, or however you are accessing your neighbors' attention.
 - If you are partnering with a host agency, make sure they are promoting on their platforms as well.
 - You will gain a following after consistently hosting this. Neighbors will start calling to ask for the date each year.

Event Day

- Gather all needed materials before the event to ensure the day goes smoothly.
 - We provide water, Gatorade, and lunches to all partners, volunteers and staff working that day.
 - We bring tents, tables and chairs to ensure comfort on what is typically a hot day.
 - Consider offering something for participants to carry their plants in. We use recycled can liner boxes from the pantry.
- The day of the event may feel very chaotic, but consider some safeguards you can put in place to create a little more order.
 - We capture number of individuals in the household to have a way of determining how many people were served. Formalize a process where folx must check in with someone in order to access the space.
 - If you're outdoors or in a parking lot, consider traffic cones to direct cars and people.
 - Have plenty of staff and volunteers available to keep plants watered, remove empty trays, assist neighbors, etc. and give them assigned tasks.
- Encourage sharing by offering information on where folx can donate the excess produce they grow.
 - We encourage people to share with their families, friends, and neighbors first, and anything else can come to the Food Bank!

Capture the Impact

- Find a way to collect neighbor feedback in ways that work for everyone
 - Communications team attends our events for pictures, video, and audio testimonial from our neighbors attending the event.
 - We also offer our neighbors in attendance a chance to be entered to win a gift card by calling to leave a Google Voice testimonial.

Follows-Ups

- Make sure you have a plan for leftover plants
 - We take our leftover plants on Mobile Food Pantries, and often try to schedule our event within a day or so of an MFP in order to move them quickly.
- Thank your hosts, donors, partners and volunteers
 - Handwritten thank you cards, social media posts
- Share the Impact
 - Press release post event, emails to your leadership and Board of Directors, social media posts with pictures, etc.

