Hardee Help Center

713 E. Bay Street

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[www.hardeehelpcenter.org](http://www.hardeehelpcenter.org)

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**Food Donation Guidelines**

Hardee Help Center depends on the donations of our local businesses, individuals, churches, civic groups, schools, and other organizations to stock its Crisis Food Pantry. Households are eligible to apply for approximately a week’s worth of groceries, based on household size, upto three times a year. The following are helpful tips to follow when gathering food donations for our Crisis Food Pantry.

**General guidelines when coordinating a food drive to benefit HHC:**

* Contact the Hardee Help Center Director(s) prior to coordinating your food drive to find out what the most needed items are, and to make arrangements for pick-up of donations, if needed.
* Contact the Hardee Help Center to make arrangements to drop-off donations. We would like to make sure our staff will be on site and available to receive donations.
* Unopened toiletries (shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc.) are accepted. Items should be kept separate from any food donation to avoid contamination of any kind.
* Non-glass containers are preferred for the safety of our volunteers and staff when handling items.
* For questions not answered in this guideline, contact the Hardee Help Center Director(s) at 863-773-0034 or email: [jamie@hardeehelpcenter.com](mailto:jamie@hardeehelpcenter.com).

**Short list of most desired food items:**

* Dairy: milk - dried, evaporated, and boxed
* Protein: beef stew, nuts, peanut butter, beans, and peas (dried or canned), chili, tuna fish, chicken
* Vegetables: tomato sauce, spaghetti sauce, vegetables (canned)
* Fruit: applesauce, any canned fruit
* Grains: crackers, oatmeal, whole grain rice, all types of pasta, ready to eat low sugar/high fiber cereal (cheerios, raisin bran, etc.)
* Baby Food, Formula, and Cereal

**Food safety guidelines our organization can safely accept:**

* Chilled perishable packaged foods such as juice and cheese in their original packaging
* Meat, poultry, fish chilled to 40°f or frozen
* Dairy products 40°f to expiration date
* Frozen foods in original packaging
* Canned and packaged goods in original packaging

**The organizations cannot accept:**

* Canned and packaged 1 years beyond the “best by” date
* Dairy and Meat with expired dates
* Opened, punctured, bulging, or seriously damaged canned goods
* Home canned or home jarred products
* Foods with damaged or compromised packaging, resulting in the loss of a sanitary barrier protection
* Foods that have been served or put on a buffet table
* Cans or packages without manufacturers label
* Produce
* Foods that have been previously reheated or frozen then thawed
* Foods that have been kept in the danger temperature zone for more than 2 hours
* Any food containing alcohol
* Frozen foods with severe freezer burn
* Sushi or any seafood intended for raw consumption

Is there a potential risk that the food is unsafe? If in doubt, throw it out. Discarding food that does not meet generally accepted food safety criteria is not a waste; you are actually helping to protect the health and lives of the at-risk hungry community that we help serve.