

We're excited you're thinking about starting a program to recover food and help your community.



INSPIRE OTHERS

Equipment and
Technology



Introduction

Food Forward started with two volunteers who used clippers to harvest tangerines. The fruit was put in leftover boxes collected from a nearby Costco, loaded up in a personal vehicle, and driven to a local hunger relief agency 10 minutes away.

You don't need much to get started recovering produce! However, here are some questions to help you think about what kind of equipment will make your work easier and sustainable.

Equipment

Questions to consider

- What type of food recovery will you be doing? Will you be harvesting fruit and vegetables from fields or trees, or picking up prepackaged food from a grocery store? What storage needs, such as refrigeration, will the food require?
- What equipment do you or those in your network already have?
- Where will you store your equipment?
- Do you have a name and logo that could appear on your equipment? If you'll be working with a large number of hunger relief agencies and produce donors, branding your equipment (even if just with a sticker or stamp) may be helpful.
- Do you plan to transport the food yourself, or will a hunger relief agency pick it up?
- What equipment is needed versus wanted?

Tips

- Make sure to offer safety training and clear instructions for all equipment you provide. We advise volunteers not to use ladders of any kind or any equipment other than what we provide them. This encourages a safe experience and reduces the chance of accidents due to faulty equipment.
- Think about how your equipment and food recovery event might be experienced by people of different ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Remember that volunteers can help with tasks besides heavy lifting: removing leaves and stems from produce, boxing it up, and recording the weight, among other things.



Food Forward's equipment



- Sturdy Food Forward-branded cardboard boxes used for all produce we collect through Backyard Harvest and Farmers Market Recovery.
 - We estimate how many boxes we'll need for each harvest or glean based on the amount and variety of produce we're collecting.
 - Fruits and vegetables recovered through Wholesale Recovery stay in their original packaging and do not get transferred into Food Forward boxes.
- Branded T-shirts for our staff and volunteer Event Leaders.
- Name tags.
- Several vehicles to transport produce.
- We bring these items to all of our volunteer events:
 - Volunteer waivers and pens.
 - Flyers and business cards.
 - Important information for our volunteer Event Leaders, such as key contacts, a leader manual, equipment safety policies, emergency procedures, and a certificate of liability insurance.

- Backyard Harvest events usually have:
 - Gloves and goggles.
 - Harvesting equipment: fruit pickers, fruit picker extension poles and extra nuts and bolts; clippers and pruners; rakes and garbage bags.
 - Other items volunteers might need, such as sunscreen and Benadryl.
 - Food Forward yard sign to let passersby know why we're there.
- Farmers Market Recovery events usually have:
 - Hand cart or something similar to transport produce boxes through the market.
 - Aprons and back braces.
 - Scale, dry erase sheet, and marker to keep track of donations on site.
- Community Ambassador events, such as a high school's volunteer fair, usually have:
 - Flyers on food waste, food insecurity, and Food Forward's work.
 - Information signup sheets and clipboard.
 - Branded tablecloth and fun fruit props.
 - Stickers and temporary tattoos.

- Wholesale Recovery (staff-operated) uses the following:
 - Warehouse with large refrigerator and pallet storage racks.
 - Material handling equipment (pallet jacks, forklifts, loading docks, etc.)
 - Plastic wrap to secure produce on pallets.
 - Trucks and qualified drivers with produce knowledge.



Technology

Questions to consider

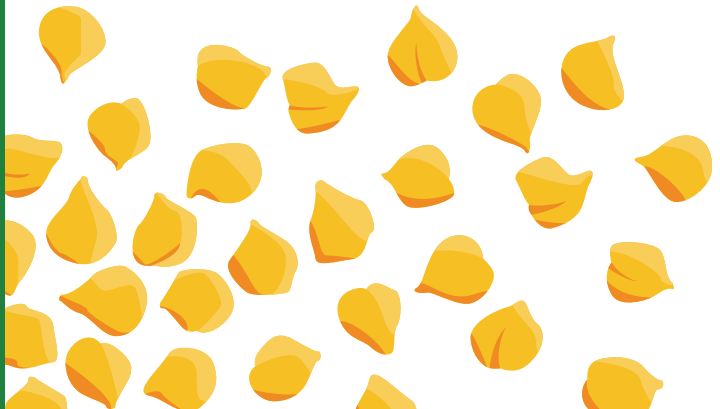
- What information do you plan to track, and what platform/system will you use to track it?
- How will you communicate with your stakeholders (volunteers, hunger relief agencies, food donors, financial donors, etc.)?

Tips

- It may be helpful to track the following information:
 - Pounds of produce you recover
 - Which hunger relief agencies you donate to
 - How many volunteers you have
 - How many people your food reaches
- Consider using the same size container/box for produce where possible — especially if you recover a limited number of produce varieties — to reduce your workload tracking pounds.
For example, when you know that your full box of oranges weighs approximately 35 pounds, you don't need to weigh each full box. It is still helpful to weigh boxes that aren't full, contain varieties you don't usually recover, or contain more than one variety.

Food Forward's technology

- A custom CRM that tracks all of our data together
- A platform to collect online donations
- A platform to send various newsletters
- Add-ons and automated responses to make sending mass emails easier



For more booklets visit
foodforward.org