



## SUPPORTING FOOD PANTRIES THROUGH YOUR GARDEN

Supporting your local food pantry through fresh produce donation is a great way to support those in need. To ensure the process is successful for you and your selected food pantry we have outlined a few tips to keep in mind!

### Garden Documentation

Tracking your garden production is beneficial for many reasons. A simple spreadsheet or notebook can help keep you organized year after year. Here are a few suggested measures to document regularly (we suggest weekly):

- Number of pounds of each kind of vegetable that is harvested and donated
- Where the harvest goes (list which food pantry or the food bank) and the number of pounds sent to each location and when sent
- Number of volunteers by date
- Total number of volunteer hours by date
- Donations received for your garden (cash plus in-kind) including name of donor. (Be sure to send a thank you note too!)

These measures will help to show the impact you are having in getting fresh, whole foods to at-risk populations as well as labor hours to maintain your garden. Such measures provide necessary documentation and impact data as you apply for grant funding. The data also provides an on-going report of garden progress and productivity that can be shared with potential supporters (such as church members, parents at schools, and general public who might support community gardens in general).

### Tips for Donating to Food Pantries

When donating to a pantry, a few key pieces to keep in mind will ensure your donation does not end up wasted.

- Check that the pantry will be open on the day and time of your donation drop off. Try calling ahead to let them know you are planning on making a donation.
- Make sure the pantry has the proper storage to keep your produce donation fresh. If your produce needs to be refrigerated, check that the pantry has one with space for your items.
- Bring fresh produce donations in containers or bags you can leave
- Leave donation with a pantry worker versus leaving it outside the door.
- Ensure the items you are donating will be edible for at least 2 days. Remember, not all pantries are open daily or for extended hours.
- Consider planting some pantry garden favorites

#### **Pantry Garden Favorites**

Green Beans    Berries  
Snap Peas  
Melons        Carrots  
Broccoli    Potatoes  
Cauliflower    Peppers  
Squash