



## Gleaning - Your Guide to Holiday Food Recovery

Every year in America we throw away over **30 million tons of food**, enough to fill the Rose Bowl Stadium every three days. Food waste does more than just fill up our landfills, it decomposes without oxygen and releases greenhouse gases, mainly methane. Greenhouse gases capture and retain heat in the atmosphere, in effect warming the earth.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), methane causes **21 times as much warming** as the carbon produced by burning fossil fuels like gasoline and coal. A **study** by the University of Arizona states that if Americans cut their food waste in half, they would reduce the country's environmental impact by 25%.

### How Gleaning Can Help

The word *glean* refers to gathering leftover grain after reapers complete their harvest. Portland has an established network that recovers, or gleans surplus food and distributes it to schools, food pantries and social service agencies.

Since federal subsidies to food pantries have been reduced, and demand for emergency food boxes is increasing in Oregon, gleaning is a great opportunity to address multiple problems at once. Organizations like **Urban Gleaners** and **Metro's Fork It Over** program connect food donors and recipients.

### Instructions for Donating Extra Food

1. If you host a large event (like a holiday party or wedding) and are likely to have 15 or more pounds of extra food, **email Urban Gleaners** two days before the event or call 503-226-8061. They will pick up the food or you can arrange to deliver it yourself. If you have at least 50 pounds of food, contact **Blanchet House** - a homeless shelter in Old Town. They will pick it up within five miles. Call 503-241-4340.
2. Cover and refrigerate perishable food in disposable containers as soon as possible until it is picked up.
3. Seal non-perishable foods like bread in plastic wrap to keep them fresh. No refrigeration is required.

The Federal **Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act** protects people from liability. It assumes that you donate edible, safe food in good faith. Each state has also passed Good Samaritan Laws that provide liability protection to good faith donors.

### Volunteer Opportunities

You can also support gleaning any time of year by volunteering. Most Urban Gleaners' volunteers work fixed weekly shifts. They pick up food on scheduled days from regular donors, such as grocery stores, and deliver it to a distribution center in Old Town. Urban Gleaners also needs delivery volunteers for one-time events. You can sign up **online** or contact **Jane Anne Morton** at 503-226-8061.

The Portland Fruit Tree Project collects local fruit before it falls and becomes bruised, and delivers it to families in need. They prevent 45,000 pounds of valuable fruit from going to waste in a typical year. They offer a range of **volunteer opportunities**, such as harvesting, conducting outreach, and caring for trees.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul conducts a **Food Repack program**, part of a citywide network that collects surplus food from grocers, universities, hospitals, restaurants and major caterers. Food is repackaged and frozen for distribution through emergency food boxes. You can volunteer to help repackaging the food by calling 503-234-1114.

### Learn More About Gleaning

- **Let's Glean!**, a toolkit from the United States Department of Agriculture.
- **Waste Not, Want Not**, a case study of Washington D.C. from the *Daily Beast*.
- **Food for ME: A Citizen Action Fact Sheet for Community Food Recovery**, from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension.