RAPID FOOD RESCUE

Partner Donation & Food-Safety Packet

Simple instructions for grocery, convenience-store, deli, bakery and restaurant partners

1 NO HOT FOOD AT PICKUP

• RFR does not accept food while it is hot.
• Prepared food must be safely cooled before pickup.

2 KEEP COLD FOOD COLD

• Refrigerated donations: 41°F or below.
• Frozen donations: keep frozen.

3 LABEL & PROTECT

Lablpreparedfodsbfore RFR pckup, if item is not easily identifiable.• Package food to prevent contamination.
• Label prepared foods before RFR pickup if the item is not easily identifiable.

When in doubt, keep the food safely stored and contact RFR before discarding it.

RapidFoodRescue.org • rapidfoodrescue@gmail.com • (509) 209-9392

Keep this packet where employees who handle donations can easily find it.

What RFR Partners Can Set Aside

Food must be wholesome, protected from contamination, and stored at a safe temperature until pickup.

GOOD DONATION CATEGORIES

- Commercially packaged grocery surplus
- Fresh produce that is still wholesome
- Dairy and refrigerated foods kept cold
- Frozen foods that have remained frozen
- Unserved restaurant/deli surplus that has been safely cooled
- Bread, rolls, bagels, muffins and other suitable bakery items
- Shelf-stable cans, boxes, jars, dry goods and snacks
- Prepared foods from licensed food establishments when safely handled and labeled

DO NOT SET ASIDE FOR RFR

- Food that is still hot at pickup time
- Food with an unknown or unsafe temperature history
- Recalled food
- Moldy, spoiled, leaking or contaminated food
- Bulging cans or severely damaged/rusted containers
- Food returned by a customer or contaminated by customer handling
- Infant formula or baby food past its labeled date
- Food that your establishment is required to discard under a time-control procedure

RFR may decline any item when its source, storage history, packaging or condition cannot be verified as safe.

Employee Quick Sort: Where Does It Go?

Use this page as the everyday staff reference.

FREEZER

- Food already frozen
- Safely cooled burgers, taquitos, burritos and breakfast sandwiches
- Safely cooled pizza, chicken, cooked meats and hot-case entrées
- Safely cooled cooked rice, pasta and other sides when appropriate
- Bread, rolls, bagels and tortillas when freezing is practical
- Muffins, cookies, brownies and suitable pastries

REFRIGERATOR / COOLER

- Milk and cream products
- Yogurt
- Cottage or ricotta cheese
- Sour cream and cream cheese
- Eggs
- Refrigerated deli salads
- Cut fruit
- Cheesecake, cream pies and custard-filled bakery items
- Any chilled food that is not appropriate to freeze

SHELF-STABLE / DRY

- Canned foods
- Dry pasta, rice and beans
- Cereal and oatmeal
- Sealed snacks and crackers
- Peanut butter and dry pantry goods
- Shelf-stable beverages
- Unrefrigerated bread or bakery items that are safe at room temperature

Never leave refrigerated donations at room temperature while waiting for RFR.

Hot-Case / Cooked Food: Prepare It Before RFR Pickup

E amples: burgers, taquitos, burritos, pi a, hot dogs, corn dogs, chicken, ings, breakfast sand iches, soups, chili, rice, pasta and hot sides.

RFR DOES NOT PICK UP HOT FOOD — but eligible hot-case food may be moved directly into the freezer for rapid cooling when it is pulled safely.

1

Keep it safely hot until you are ready to remove it from service.

Do not let food sit at room temperature hile deciding hat to donate.

2

If your store rotates hot-case food every 3 hours for quality/freshness, it may go directly into the freezer.

This applies hen the food has sta ed safel hot-held at 135 F or abo e and is pulled before an required food-safet discard time. Place it in shallo pans, a single la er, or smaller portions so it cools quickl . Do not lea e it sitting at room temperature.

3

Meet Washington cooling limits.

Cool from 135 F to 70 F ithin 2 hours, and to 41 F or belo ithin 6 hours total.

4

Once it reaches 41°F or below, package and keep it frozen for RFR pickup.

If the item is not suitable for free ing, cool it safel and keep it refrigerated at 41 F or belo until pickup.

5

Label it before pickup, if needed.

Include the item name, date, storage instruction, and partner name. Add allergen/ingredient information hen a ailable.

IMPORTANT: If the marked time is only a quality/freshness rotation, safely hot-held food may be cooled or frozen for RFR. If the marked time is a required food-safety discard time, the food must be discarded and cannot be donated.

After Cooling: Freeze It or Keep It Refrigerated?

At RFR pickup, prepared food should already be frozen or held at 41°F or below.

FREEZE AFTER IT HAS BEEN SAFELY COOLED

- Burgers and cooked meat sandwiches
- Taquitos, burritos and corn dogs
- Pizza
- Cooked chicken and wings
- Breakfast sandwiches
- Cooked meats and many deli entrées
- Soups, chili, rice, pasta and casseroles when packaged for freezing
- Bread, rolls, bagels and tortillas
- Muffins, cookies, brownies and freezer-suitable pastries

KEEP REFRIGERATED — 41°F OR BELOW

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Cottage or ricotta cheese
- Sour cream
- Cream cheese
- Eggs
- Refrigerated deli salads
- Cut fruit
- Cheesecake, cream pies and custard/cream-filled bakery items
- Other foods your establishment does not freeze for donation

Do not freeze food to “fix” unsafe handling, spoilage, or an unknown temperature history.

Bakery Donations: Store Them by Food Type

Bakery items do not all need the same storage.

CAN BE FROZEN

- Bread and rolls
- Bagels and buns
- Tortillas and pita
- Muffins
- Cookies
- Brownies
- Many plain cakes or pastries without cream/custard fillings

KEEP REFRIGERATED

- Cheesecake
- Cream pies
- Custard-filled pastries
- Whipped-cream desserts
- Other bakery products sold or labeled as refrigerated

ROOM-TEMP / DRY STORAGE

- Shelf-stable bread or rolls awaiting same-day pickup
- Cookies and crackers that are normally shelf-stable
- Other packaged bakery items that do not require refrigeration

Discard bakery items that are moldy, contaminated, wet/damaged, or have a refrigerated filling that was held unsafely.

Restaurant & Deli Donations

RFR can work with licensed food establishments to rescue safe, unserved surplus food.

FOODS THAT MAY BE SUITABLE

- Unserved prepared entrées
- Cooked meats and poultry
- Soups and chili
- Rice, pasta, potatoes and cooked vegetable sides
- Sandwiches and wraps kept safely cold
- Salads and cold deli items kept at 41°F or below
- Bakery products
- Commercially packaged products and ingredients
- Prepared surplus that has been cooled, packaged and labeled correctly

RESTAURANT / DELI RULES

- RFR does not accept food while hot.
- Cool cooked TCS food using your approved food-safety procedure.
- Keep refrigerated food at 41°F or below.
- Keep frozen food frozen.
- Protect food from contamination during cooling and storage.
- Do not donate customer plate returns or contaminated food.
- Follow any required discard time when using time instead of temperature control.
- Provide ingredient/allergen information when available.

Label Prepared Food Before RFR Pickup

A simple label helps RFR safely transport, store and distribute donated food, that would otherwise be identified.

PUT THIS ON THE LABEL

- Food / item name
- Partner or donor name
- Date prepared or pulled from service
- Date cooled / frozen, if applicable
- KEEP FROZEN or KEEP REFRIGERATED
- Ingredient or allergen information when available
- Optional: quantity / number of containers

RFR DONATION LABEL

ITEM:	Chicken taquitos
PARTNER:	Example Market
PREP / PULL DATE:	10 / 08 / 2026
COOLED / FROZEN:	10 / 08 / 2026
STORAGE:	KEEP FROZEN
ALLERGEN INFO:	See original label / ingredient list

Attach securely to the container or outer bag/box.

Stop: Do Not Donate These Items

When safety is uncertain, contact RFR before setting the food aside.

DO NOT SET ASIDE

- Hot food that has not been safely cooled
- Food with unknown time/temperature history
- Recalled food
- Moldy or spoiled food
- Leaking packages or bulging cans
- Severely damaged/rusted containers

ALSO DO NOT SET ASIDE

- Food contaminated by customers or plate returns
- Food with signs of pests or contamination
- Infant formula or baby food past date
- TCS food held outside safe temperatures too long
- Food past a required discard time under your time-control procedure
- Anything your establishment cannot verify as safely handled

Freezing does not make spoiled, contaminated or temperature-abused food safe.

Shelf-Life After Package Date — Refrigerated Foods

Use only for ordinary grocery-rescue donations that were unopened and properly stored. These are general quality/safety reference times from the RFR Food Date Donation Guide.

DAIRY & EGGS

- Milk, plain/flavored — 1 week
- Butter — 1–3 months
- Buttermilk — 1–2 weeks
- Yogurt — 7–14 days
- Kefir — 1 week
- Sour cream — 7–21 days
- Cream cheese — 2 weeks
- Cottage/ricotta cheese — 1 week
- Soft cheese — 1 week
- Hard cheese, unopened — 6 months
- Hard cheese, opened — 3–4 weeks
- Shredded cheese — 1 month
- Processed cheese slices — 1–2 months
- Half-and-half — 3–4 days
- Eggs in shell — 3–5 weeks

MEAT / POULTRY / SEAFOOD

- Beef/veal/lamb/pork cuts — 3–5 days
- Ground meat — 1–2 days
- Raw sausage — 1–2 days
- Smoked sausage/patties — 7 days
- Bacon — 1 week
- Hot dogs, unopened — 2 weeks
- Hot dogs, opened — 1 week
- Lunch meat, unopened — 2 weeks
- Lunch meat, opened/store-sliced — 3–5 days
- Cooked poultry/fried chicken — 3–4 days
- Raw fish/fillets — 1–2 days
- Cooked fish — 3–4 days
- Smoked fish — 14 days
- Fresh shellfish — 1–2 days
- Shucked shellfish — 1 day

Shelf-Life After Package Date — Pantry, Frozen, Bakery & Deli

Times are after the package code date unless noted. Continuously frozen food remains safe indefinitely; freezer times below are mainly for best quality.

CANNED & PANTRY

- Low-acid cans — 2–5 years
- High-acid cans — 12–18 months
- Dried beans — 1–2 years
- Dry pasta — 2 years
- White rice — 2 years
- Brown rice — 1 year
- Flour — 6–12 months
- Cereal/oatmeal — 6–12 months
- Cake/bread mixes — 12–18 months
- Crackers — 8 months
- Peanut butter — 18 months
- Cooking oil — 1 year
- Dried fruit — 6 months
- Tea bags — 18 months

FROZEN & BAKERY

- Frozen foods at 0°F — safe indefinitely*
- Frozen raw fish — 6–8 months quality
- Frozen breaded fish — 3–6 months quality
- Frozen ice cream — 2–4 months quality
- Frozen fruit — 4–6 months quality
- Frozen vegetables — 8 months quality
- Frozen pizza — 1–2 months quality
- Frozen bread/bagels — 2–3 months quality
- Commercial bread, shelf — 2–4 days
- Commercial bread, fridge — 7–14 days
- Tortillas/pita, shelf — 2–4 days
- Tortillas/pita, fridge — 4–7 days

DELI & PREPARED

- Deli main dishes — 3–4 days
- Rotisserie/fried chicken — 3–4 days
- Meat/egg/poultry/fish salads — 3–4 days
- Vegetable deli salads — 3–5 days
- Cooked rice/potato/veg sides — 3–4 days
- Cut fruit, opened — 4 days
- Cheesecake — 1 week
- Fresh pasta — 1–2 days / use-by
- Tube/cookie dough — use-by date only
- Baby food/infant formula — never past date

*Provided the food remained continuously frozen and was not temperature abused.

Partner Contacts & Food-Safety References

Keep this page with the packet for managers and food-safety leads.

CONTACT RAPID FOOD RESCUE

- Phone: (509) 209-9392
- Email: rapidfoodrescue@gmail.com
- Website: RapidFoodRescue.org
- Contact RFR when you are unsure whether a food is suitable for donation or when you need to coordinate pickup/storage.

REFERENCE BASIS

- Washington State Department of Health — Charity Food Donations
- WAC 246-215-03515 — Cooling
- WAC 246-215-03520 — Cooling methods
- WAC 246-215-03525 — Hot/cold holding
- WAC 246-215-03530 — Time as a Public Health Control
- USDA FoodKeeper / FSIS guidance
- Second Harvest Grocery Rescue guidance
- RFR Food Date Donation Guide

RFR partner policy: no hot food at pickup. Prepared food must already be safely cooled.

Updated October 2026 • Designed for partner staff training and posting.