

# Resources for Project Organizers

1. Food prep guidelines
2. Donation solicitation letter template
3. Custom flyer



If you need these documents as an electronic document, please contact:

Erica Young, Volunteer Coordinator

[eyoung@caseytrees.org](mailto:eyoung@caseytrees.org)

202-349-1907

# Providing Food for Volunteers

## A Community Tree Planting Guide

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### How much food should we provide?

The amount of food depends on the amount of volunteers. The Volunteer Coordinator should know the number of volunteers needed for your event one month before the planting season begins. Please connect with her to get a volunteer estimate.

### What type of food **NEEDS** to be provided at plantings?

We want to be sure we are inclusive of food needs at plantings. Please be sure to provide the following options:

1. At least 2 **vegan** options (food that does not contain animal products or bi-products – meat, eggs, milk, honey etc.)
2. At least 2 **gluten free (GF)** options (gluten is a protein that is found in grains such as wheat, barley and rye i.e. flour)
3. At least **25%** of the food provided should be **vegetarian** (free of meat)
4. **Coffee** is a necessity for our volunteers!

### What has been done for breakfast and lunch in the past?

Previous groups (depending on budget) have done an array of things. Some options include:

1. Purchasing yogurt, bagels and cream cheese, donuts, granola bars, and fruit at a grocery store. Certain varieties of bagels, cream cheese and granola bars are GF and vegan friendly. Quinoa salad is always a good GF and vegan friendly food option.
2. Ordering premade (at least 24 hours before the event) food at Starbucks, Panera Bread, Dunkin Donuts, etc.
3. Soliciting donations for food from local businesses; soliciting donations from local grocery stores.
4. Asking neighbors to provide a dish, so the lunch is potluck-style.
5. Asking neighbors to donate, so you can purchase food.

### How do I solicit donations from businesses?

1. Look up local restaurants and food options, or contact the Volunteer Coordinator and she can connect you with past Project Organizers who may be able to assist.
2. Visit their business and ask for the manager. Explain that Casey Trees is donating X amount of trees and you are responsible for providing food for the volunteers.
  - a. **Letter of Interest-** When you visit be prepared to provide them with an official letter of interest. Casey Trees has already created a letter and if you are interested in getting a copy for your project, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.
  - b. **Start early-** When soliciting donations, it is best to do this at least 1 month before the event.

- c. **Be prepared-** Be sure you know how many volunteers to expect for the day and let them know that they are welcome to send a representative on the morning-of. We will also be sure to publicly thank them for their contribution on social media and at the event.
  - d. **Get the manager's contact information-** This will allow you to follow-up with them about your request.
  - e. **Ask the manager when they work-** You'll want to follow-up with them when they are on-location.
3. After discussing the event with the manager, follow-up with them via phone and email one-week later.

***Keep In mind:***

- Businesses and grocery stores in Virginia and Maryland often do NOT donate to events and non-profits in DC. Remember to stay as local as possible to that business.
- Create a plan now.

## What food options deliver for lunch?

The following businesses have delivered lunch at Casey Trees events and also have gluten free, vegetarian and/or vegan food options:

1. Papa Johns
2. Roti
3. Panera Bread
4. Bittersweet Catering

## Where Do I Find GF and Vegan Friendly Food?

1. **Restaurants-** Most restaurants (Starbucks, Panera Bread etc.) have GF and vegan options that are not always listed on their menus or only available by special request. It is always best to talk with a store associate directly before ordering.
2. **Grocery stores-** such as Giant and Harris Teeter, have special sections devoted to gluten free and vegan food.
3. Stores such as Yes! Organic Market and Whole Foods have a plethora of vegan and gluten free food products.

## Questions?

1. **Erica Young**, Volunteer Coordinator [eyoung@caseytrees.org](mailto:eyoung@caseytrees.org)  
202-349-1907
2. Feel free to ask Erica to put you in touch with a project organizer who has provided food for volunteers in the past.

Dear [VENDOR NAME]:

This spring, [GROUP NAME] is coordinating a Community Tree Planting in collaboration with Casey Trees and we are inviting neighborhood businesses to support the re-treeing of [SITE NAME] with an in-kind donation of food and beverage to welcome and thank our volunteers on the day of the event.

And we hope [VENDOR NAME] will participate.

Event snapshot:

- Date and time: [DAY, DATE YEAR]  
8:30 a.m. Registration  
11:30 a.m. Lunch
- Location: [SITE NAME] at [ADDRESS OR CROSS STREET], [CITY NAME]
- Volunteer count: [VOLUNTEER COUNT]
- Number of trees: [TREE COUNT]
- Needs: Light breakfast items: bagels, pastries, fruit, etc.  
Lunch items: pizza, sandwiches, burritos, etc.  
  
Drinks: coffee, juice, milk

Please note that we want to make [VENDOR NAME] supporting the Community Tree Planting as easy as possible so we are happy to pick up the donated items at your preferred time. And to acknowledge your contribution, [GROUP NAME] will acknowledge [BUSINESS NAME] during welcoming remarks and provide you with a gift receipt following the planting.

On behalf of [GROUP NAME], thank you in advance for your contribution and support of what will be an incredible event. We know that you receive many requests so we appreciate your time and consideration.

I will reach out to you in the coming days to gauge your interest and answer any questions you may have about the event. In the interim, you can reach me directly at [EMAIL] OR [PHONE NUMBER].

Kind regards,

[FIRSTAND LAST NAME]  
[GROUP NAME]

**Project Organizer note:**

**When speaking with businesses, please be clear that your group is the one receiving and acknowledging the donation and not Casey Trees.**