

CHECKLIST FOR SETTING UP NEW FRIDGES

- ❑ **BUILD A TEAM** Connect with your local community organizers and/or a mutual aid network in your area. Identify other organizers and networks of people who can support your community fridge initiative. Ideally your team should consist of **several members who are born and raised in the neighborhood** you wish to set up a fridge in.
 - ❑ Establish a **point person** who can be responsible for delegating tasks to the rest of the team and being the main point of contact for that team, along with an
 - ❑ **alternate point person** if they become unavailable
 - ❑ Add other **dedicated team members** who are committed to checking up on the fridge on a regular basis
 - ❑ Check in with existing **local mutual aid organizations** who have already established connections in the neighborhood and offer your help to them
- ❑ **MODES OF COMMUNICATION** Decide how your group will communicate and begin strategizing with your group on how to spread the word, how to easily get others involved. Additionally, if there is an issue with the fridge, whether that is low stock or power is out, how will you report those issues?
 - ❑ Your group has the option of joining the **Slack** (a messaging service) that LA Community Fridges has set up where you can create a channel/chat specifically for your neighborhood's fridge
- ❑ **DISCUSS THE LOGISTICS** Where will the food come from? Who will pick it up? Who has a bike or a vehicle? How will you obtain cleaning supplies to help keep the fridge clean? There are many tasks required to collectively maintain the community fridge, from collecting food, reaching out to businesses and community mutual aid networks, to cleaning, restocking, sharing information, making art and more. Make a detailed plan.
- ❑ **REACH OUT TO FOOD DONORS** Much of the food shared has been through food rescue, including dumpster diving and non-charitable food donations (i.e. food that a grocery store cannot or is not planning to sell such as produce with cosmetic blemishes or food near it's best-buy date). In order for a fridge to be continually active, look for businesses in your area who can commit to making recurring donations, like on a weekly basis for example. You are not obligated to "shout out" any businesses who make donations. Donations should be made with the goal of helping out the community and diverting food waste, not for the sole purpose of getting good PR. Some good businesses to reach out to are
 - ❑ local grocery stores
 - ❑ Bakeries
 - ❑ cafes
 - ❑ catering companies
 - ❑ Restaurants

- ❑ Coordinate **regular pick-up times** with any businesses who agree to donate, connect them with a community volunteer
- ❑ **ESTABLISH A SCHEDULE** Assign tasks to people in your group depending on your skills and resources.
 - ❑ Daily check-ins to report levels of stock
 - ❑ Cleaning schedule
 - ❑ Regular drop-offs of donated food from nearby businesses
- ❑ **HOST LOCATION** Decide on a location for the fridge. Make considerations that account for electricity, weather and accessibility. Ideally, we would like to work with a long standing neighborhood business that is not a gentrifying business, a place where **all people in the community, including unhoused residents**, will feel comfortable gathering and accessing. LACF does not set up fridges in locations that collaborate with law enforcement because that creates an unsafe environment for our community members. Ensure that the business or residence interested in hosting has enough space where the fridge won't block the sidewalk or cause unnecessary extra trouble for those with disabilities navigating the sidewalk. Some additional questions to consider are:
 - ❑ **Is the host location close to or within walking distance to unhoused encampments?** Is it in a high traffic area easy to access?
 - ❑ **Is the host location already close to any other community fridges?** (View current fridge locations [here](#)).
 - ❑ **Is the host willing to donate the cost of the electricity for the fridge?** Although some volunteer groups have offered to pay for the electric costs of hosting a fridge (estimated to be roughly \$30/month), it is expected that the host will be able to donate the electricity cost for fridge use because we try to operate on a donations and volunteer basis as much as possible.
 - ❑ If the host is a business, **who are the business owners? How are they involved in the community and what is their role in the community?** Although a community fridge is not meant to be used as a means to increase traffic to a store and gain good PR, we assume that it can lead to a slight increase in business to that store. Therefore, we try to **prioritize hosts that are BIPOC-owned stores and are not gentrifying the neighborhood they reside in**. This also helps ensure that all community members feel welcome to access a fridge, for it seems like gentrifying businesses, although usually acting in good faith and mean no harm, can unknowingly create an environment that feels unwelcome to long standing community residents.
 - ❑ LACF does not support or collaborate with any organizations that support or work with law enforcement or any government bodies. **Does this host share LACF's values of keeping all community members safe?**
 - ❑ **Are people at this location able to give permission or consent to set up the fridge?** Some business owners or residents are not owners of the property you intend to set up a fridge on, so it is best to get at least verbal permission from an owner, landlord, or property manager directly. If there are worries about liability, let them know

that the fridge will be operated independently from the property/business. More information on liability insurance can be found on the [Freedge website](#).

❑ Ensure that you're chosen host reads and agrees to these [Host Guidelines](#).

❑ **ACQUIRE A FRIDGE** It is easy to acquire a fridge for little to no cost, we have had luck searching Craigslist, neighborhood message boards such as Nextdoor, or even just finding fridges left out on the street that are free to take. We have also had luck acquiring fridges by putting out a call for fridge donations on social media or simply spreading the word to neighborhood residents. We can also help connect you with people who have reached out to LA Community Fridges offering to donate their fridges, send an email to lacommunityfoodshare@gmail.com to get connected to an already donated fridge.

❑ Figure out how to **transport the fridge**. Ask someone with a large vehicle such as a truck or van to help. Do not expect that the donor/seller of the fridge you are going to acquire can provide their own transportation.

❑ Acquire any necessary accessories such as **extension cords** for your fridge's host. Try to provide these yourselves, do not expect that the host has extra extension cords just lying around.

❑ Make sure it can be plugged into an outlet without overloading the circuit.

❑ We recommend doing any **painting or decorating** of the fridge before publicly launching it receiving donations. Why? (A) So that it can be finished and out of the way before people start using it, it can be difficult with some paints taking a long time to dry with community members also trying to access the fridge for food. (B) Your fridge could get swiped if not properly marked! An unmarked fridge on a sidewalk can easily be mistaken for someone giving it out free for the taking. We have more guidelines on what is good to paint on a fridge [here](#).

❑ **SPREAD THE WORD** Let folks in your community you have an active free fridge up and running! Make it clear you can "take what you need and leave what you don't."

❑ Print fliers and posters to post around the neighborhood to let those who don't have internet access know where the fridge is located. Try to include visual aids such as a basic map for those who can't read and any necessary language translations that are primarily spoken by your neighborhood's residents in addition to English.

❑ **MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM** Work together to keep the fridge clean and stocked. This requires daily coordination, follow-ups, food rescue, pickup and delivery to the fridge.

❑ Find the best way to stay in contact with your team and other community members, whether through Slack, Instagram, email, text message, or another service.

❑ Stick to your schedule of cleaning and stocking. This is an ongoing project that requires sustained attention, do not assume that because you have dropped off a free fridge it will magically stock or clean itself.

❑ Constantly keep in touch and communicate with residents in the neighborhood who use your fridge!

❑ Accept criticism without pushback. Make adjustments to your fridge set up as necessary. Again, listen to your community and respond to community needs.