

# C O L L E C T I V E A I D C F R I D G E + P A N T R Y

## Community Fridge & Pantry Starter Toolkit

A Complete Guide to Launching Mutual Aid in Your Neighborhood

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### Introduction

This toolkit is designed for anyone who wants to start a community fridge or pantry—no nonprofit, no big budget, just community care. Whether you're one person or a small group, you can create impact. If the government won't feed its citizens, then the citizens will feed each other.

We are working on a map so we can let community members know where every fridge/pantry is. Let us know when you're set up, so we can link yours too! We can also add your location to our WhatsApp so volunteers can go there as well and check in.

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### **1** Understanding the Mission

Community fridges and pantries are acts of **solidarity, not charity.**

- No questions, no judgment.
  - No policing, just providing.
  - Food is a right, not a reward.
  - *“Take what you need, leave what you can.”*
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### **2** Building a Small Support Team

You only need 2–3 people to start:

- **Coordinator** – Handles location, donations, logistics
- **Maintenance Lead** – Keeps fridge clean and stocked
- **Communications Lead** – Manages Instagram/updates.

Start small. Grow naturally.

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### 3 Finding and Securing a Location

Ideal features:

- Public + 24/7 accessible
- Safe and visible
- Electrical outlet (for fridge) or covered space (for pantry) - enclosures can be built, similar to the one seen below (the Solidarity Fridge, in Las Vegas). You can source the help for this too if it is not your skill.



Potential host partners:

- Local cafés, churches, tattoo shops, barbershops
- Community centers or generous homeowners

### Sample Ask Script:

“Hi! I’m starting a free food resource for our neighborhood. It’s a community-run fridge/pantry to feed anyone in need—no money, no questions. Would you be willing to host the fridge on your property?”

- **Electricity:** You can offer to pay for it and raise donations for it; most places where these are set up donate the electricity. It’s usually ~\$30/month.
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## 4 Getting Your Fridge or Pantry Set Up

### Fridge

- Find used via Marketplace, Craigslist, and donations
- Clean thoroughly + test electrical safety

### Pantry Shelf/Cabinet

- Weatherproof outdoor cabinet or heavy-duty shelves
  - Add a door or a curtain if outdoors
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## 5 Funding & Supplies

You *don't* need a grant. Start with:

- Amazon or Target wishlist (gift lists hide your address but ship directly to you)
- Social media sponsor posts: “\$25 stocks the fridge for a day”

- Partnerships with bakeries, farmers, and grocery stores
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## **6 Safety & Guidelines (Post These Clearly)**

### **✓ Acceptable:**

- Sealed pantry goods
- Fresh produce (uncut)
- Store-bought packaged meals
- Hygiene items
- We have a full list here.

### **⊘ Not Allowed:**

- Raw meat or fish (unless frozen, labeled, and dated).
  - Alcohol
  - Opened or home-cooked foods
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## **7 Signage & Fridge/ Pantry Rules**

### **Main Sign:**

FREE COMMUNITY FRIDGE / PANTRY  
Take what you need. Leave what you can.  
No shame. No judgment.

Include an additional language(s) predominant in your city.

### **Rules Sign:**

- Do not leave open or expired food

- Respect neighbors and the space
  - Use at your own risk (giving out food is covered by the [Good Samaritan Food Act](#))
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## 8 Daily/Weekly Maintenance

- Check for spoilage
- Clean spills & sanitize handles
- Restock + note needs

Create a volunteer sign-up via Google Sheets, WhatsApp community, or QR code.

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## 9 Outreach & Awareness

- Launch an Instagram or community page
- Post stocking updates & needs
- Share impact stories and gratitude posts

### Name Ideas:

- *[City] Community Fridge*
  - *Take Care Pantry*
  - *Neighbors Helping Neighbors*
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## 10 Growth & Expansion Ideas

- Add hygiene kits, diapers, and formula

- Add “Blessing Box” for winter gear
  - Host seasonal drives (Back-to-School, Holiday Meals)
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## Templates Included (To Build Next)

-  Host Request Letter
  -  Donation Ask Script (for stores)
  -  Disclaimer Sign (Use at Your Own Risk)
  -  Donation Transparency Template (for funds tracking)
  -  Printable Sign Pack
  -  Starter Social Post
  -  Volunteer Schedule Template
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## Final Reminder

You don't need permission to feed people.

This is community care in action—quiet revolution.

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*Toolkit by Collective Aid OC – Fueling everyday activists.*

**See templates below**

## **Template: Host Request Letter**

Hello [Business/Organization Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I'm working with neighbors to start a free Community Fridge/Pantry. It will provide access to food and essentials to anyone in our area — no money, no questions asked.

We are looking for a host location that:

- *Is publicly accessible*
- *Has space for a fridge or small pantry*
- *Ideally has electrical access (for a fridge)*
- *Believes in supporting our local community*

We will handle all stocking, cleaning, and maintenance. Your support would simply be allowing the fridge/pantry on your property.

This project strengthens our community, reduces food waste, and helps neighbors facing food insecurity.

While PR is not the goal of this, your business will get exposure as we promote the pantry/fridge. We would also love if you promote having the fridge/pantry on premises.

Can we schedule a time to talk more? I'd love to partner together.

Thank you, [Your Name] [Phone/Email] [Social Handle/Website (optional)]

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## **Template: Donation Ask Script (for Stores/Partners)**

Hi [Name],

I'm reaching out from a community-run fridge/pantry project serving people in our neighborhood who need access to food and essential items.

We are seeking:

- *Fresh produce*
- *Packaged foods*
- *Baked goods*
- *Hygiene products*

Even small, regular donations make a massive impact.

Would you be willing to donate surplus items weekly or monthly? We'll handle all pickup and organization.

Thank you for helping us take care of each other.

Gratefully, [Your Name] [Contact Info]

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## **Printable Disclaimer Sign**

**COMMUNITY FRIDGE / PANTRY** Take what you need. Leave what you can.

**Use food at your own risk.** This space is community-supported. We do not guarantee the safety of food items.

Be respectful of neighbors & property.

No shame. No judgment. Just care.

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## **Donation Transparency Template**

**MONTH:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>DATE</b>	<b>DONATION TYPE</b>	<b>AMOUNT / ITEMS</b>	<b>DONOR (Optional)</b>	<b>USED FOR</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
MM/DD	Cash / Goods	\$ or item list	Name or Anonymous	Stocking / Cleaning / Supplies	—
MM/DD	Cash / Goods	\$ or item list	Name or Anonymous	Stocking / Cleaning / Supplies	—
MM/DD	Cash / Goods	\$ or item list	Name or Anonymous	Stocking / Cleaning / Supplies	—

Total Donations This Month: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Spent on Community: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Remaining Balance: \$\_\_\_\_\_

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## **Printable Sign Pack**

### **Main Identity Sign**

**FREE COMMUNITY FRIDGE / PANTRY** Take what you need. Leave what you can. Neighbors caring for neighbors.

### **Rules & Safety Sign**

Sealed, unexpired pantry goods only  Fresh produce (uncut)  Hygiene products welcome

No raw meat or fish  No opened or homemade foods  No alcohol

Clean up after yourself. Keep it respectful.

### **“How to Support” Sign**

Want to help?

- Donate sealed food or fresh produce
- Restock when you can
- Share our page & wishlist

Follow us: @\_\_\_\_\_ Donate: \_\_\_\_\_ Wishlist:  
\_\_\_\_\_ QR Code goes here

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## **Social Launch Post Template**

 We're launching a Community Fridge & Pantry! 

Food is a right — not a privilege. To combat food insecurity and support our neighbors, we're opening a free, 24/7 food resource.

🌟 Take what you need 🌟 Leave what you can 🌟 Help spread the word

 Location: [Address]  Opening: [Date]  Neighbors supporting neighbors

*DM us to volunteer, donate, or partner. Let's take care of each other.*

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## **Weekly Maintenance Checklist**

**This Week:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Volunteers This Week:*

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2.

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3.

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