

ILLINI FIGHTING HUNGER

www.illinifightinghunger.org
Founded 2012

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Dear Community Partner,

Thank you for your interest in organizing a volunteer event to fight hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. Whether your project will serve your local community or a community overseas, we know you will find this experience both exciting and rewarding.

This document is our *Community Partner Handbook*, which provides much of the information you'll need for hosting an event. We hope you find it to be comprehensive, but please do not hesitate to ask us questions if you require clarification.

It is important to recognize that every meal-packaging event is unique. Large events are logistically demanding and may require large spaces, heavy equipment – such as forklifts – and detailed coordination. Small events, however, can be done almost anywhere and don't carry nearly the same demands on space and equipment. This reality about event organizing is the reason why we provide you with a liaison to work with you every step of the way. We do our best to equip all of our student leaders with everything they need to make your event as successful as possible.

The project you are considering is an important one. Somewhere in the world, one child dies every six seconds from hunger-related causes. Additionally, there is nothing quite like fighting starvation around the world and food insecurity at home that brings people of different backgrounds together.

So whether you're looking to make a difference in the fight against hunger, embark on a team-building exercise, bring people together through common action, or all of the above, we're happy to be working with you.

Thank you for partnering with us in the fight against hunger.

Sincerely,



Gregory Damhorst
Director, Illini Fighting Hunger

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Event Planning Overview

Illini Fighting Hunger is a team player – on our own, we don't have what it takes to hold a meal packaging event. But with your help, we can be successful together.

Here's what Illini Fighting Hunger provides to you:

- Responsible, trained leaders to guide and assist you in organizing an event
- The experience of organizing events all over the state of Illinois
- Through our license agreement with *Kids Against Hunger*, the ability to package a patented recipe that is trusted all over the world to fight malnutrition
- The tabletop equipment for a meal packaging project including a funnel, measuring cups, balances and heat sealers
- Training before your event and facilitation during your event



No matter how you originally got in touch with us, you were assigned a *community partner liaison* – a student leader who knows what they're doing when it comes to meal packaging. This person is your point of contact and is the individual to whom you should initially direct all your questions. Your liaison will help you through the process of determining how many meals you're going to package, how many of your volunteers will participate and when and how long the event will be.

Your liaison can offer you some idea of what an event will cost, but a more accurate estimate will be provided to you from the Illini Fighting Hunger Director once you and your liaison have settled on a rough estimate of the number of meals you'll be packaging. This estimate will factor in the cost of ingredients and supplies, shipping, and any other fees anticipated for your event. The amount of this estimate is due before the supplies for your event can be ordered.

The information in this document will make sure you are prepared to host an event. If you have questions, your liaison is your number one resource to get those questions answered. Your liaison is required to have at least one phone call with you within a month before your event to ensure that you are prepared.

Your liaison will schedule equipment setup (either the morning of or the day before your event) and he or she will be present at your event to facilitate. One or more additional Illini Fighting Hunger leaders may also be present on the day of your event to assist.

Your responsibilities are outlined in the sections that follow. Please read them carefully and don't hesitate to ask questions as you go.

Meal Packaging Projects

Never done a meal packaging project before? No problem. Here's your first introduction:

A meal packaging project is a volunteer event in which individual ingredients are combined into a six-serving bag and sealed shut to produce a fortified meal designed by food scientists to fight hunger around the world. This is accomplished through a team effort with ten volunteers who work as an assembly line. Most events have more than one packaging line set up – we've seen events with as many as 30 lines (more than 300 volunteers!) working at the same time. Finished bags of meals are packed in cardboard boxes and stacked on pallets to be shipped down the street or around in the world.

Take a moment to familiarize yourself with meal packaging by checking out the videos on our Youtube page: <http://www.youtube.com/illinifightinghunger>.



Project Costs

Event Cost

The cost of your project depends on many factors, including:

- Market price of ingredients
- Total volume of supplies and ingredients ordered
- Additional shipping, freight and logistics fees

We don't provide an event cost estimator in this document because of the potential fluctuation of event prices. Talk with your liaison about estimating event cost. Nearly every meal packaging organization we've aware of charges a flat rate between \$0.23 and \$0.30 per meal for a project. This is because their price rate must account for overhead costs like administrative fees, salaries for employees, and travel expenses. Illini Fighting Hunger is volunteer-run and is always working hard to make the same high-quality meals at lower and lower costs.

Required Donations

If you were provided with a detailed estimate for the cost of your event, you will notice that two required donations are included in the cost.

The *Kids Against Hunger donation* is required and part of Illini Fighting Hunger's license agreement with our parent organization. If you are packaging Kids Against Hunger meals, this fee is non-negotiable and must be paid by your organization.

The *Illini Fighting Hunger donation* is required for several reasons. This donation's primary purpose is to allow us to continue operating by purchasing office supplies, publicity materials, and event supplies that are not explicitly factored into the cost of your event but are still part of the costs of making your event happen. We may also use these funds to repair or replace our equipment as it suffers from wear and tear. If your organization is a religious organization, school or other nonprofit, you may be eligible for special rates on the IFH donation. This is handled on a case-by-case basis and special rates cannot be guaranteed.

Shipping and Receiving

Prepare to learn something about freight procedures for your event! (But don't worry, we'll tell you everything you need to know right here).

We're going to define two terms for your event just for clarity:

- **Delivery** –shipping of ingredients and supplies from our suppliers to your event
- **Pickup** – the shipping of final, boxes meals from your event to the receiving organization



Delivery

Several factors influence the cost of your delivery, including (but not limited to):

- Whether your facility has a loading dock (lift gate fees are charged if there is no loading dock)
- Whether your facility is a church, school, military base or prison
- Whether it is necessary to schedule a specific delivery appointment

Here are our recommendations for making delivery as smooth as possible:

- Hold your event at a facility with a loading dock
- Plan on receiving and storing the supplies up to a week in advance of your event – this prevents the need for a delivery appointment, which adds cost to your shipping
- Do not plan on scheduling a delivery appointment of your supplies the day before the event – freight companies are often delayed and your event may have to be postponed

Pickup

Illini Fighting Hunger is interested in producing meals at the lowest cost possible. While it is possible to have a freight company pick up your completed meals and deliver them to their final destination, we

prefer to avoid adding this extra cost. The pickup procedure is different in nearly every event we do, but here are some options you might consider:

- **Your meals are donated to a local agency** such as a food bank or food pantry:
 1. *You deliver* – volunteers from your organization deliver the meals directly to the agency (consider renting a truck, or using vans and pickup trucks accessible to members of your organization). This is possible with many smaller events.
 2. *Agency pickup* – many food banks or pantries are equipped to pick up donations. Talk to the agency about this possibility. The Eastern Illinois Foodbank in Urbana, IL will often provide pickup service.
 3. *Freight pickup* – call a local freight company and have your meals picked up and delivered to the receiving agency. **It is your responsibility to make pickup arrangements in this scenario unless if your Illini Fighting Hunger liaison has agreed to make arrangements for you.**
- **Your meals are donated internationally** to a feeding partner around the world:
 1. *A partner of Illini Fighting Hunger* – Illini Fighting Hunger may be able to send your meals to one of our feeding partners in another country. It is likely that we will offer this option when we first speak about your event, but please don't hesitate to ask. Shipping internationally through an IFH partner will likely increase the cost of your event as your organization will be responsible for pick-up costs. However, we occasionally may be able to partner with agencies that will pay for all or a portion of shipping from your event to the feeding partner to which you are donating.
 2. *A partner of your organization* – if your organization partners with an NGO or ministry overseas, you may send your food to this agency *provided that Illini Fighting Hunger approves*. It is not appropriate to drop meals in a foreign country without a responsible, experienced, legal organization to distribute. Additionally, passing through customs can be quite difficult if you're not working with an experienced partner. *If your organization already donates medical supplies or other non-food items overseas, please be aware that shipping food is significantly more difficult*. For these reasons, we recommend that you work within one of our existing partnerships. However, if you are approved to donate to one of your organization's existing partners, **it is your responsibility to work with your international partner to arrange and pay for pickup and shipment overseas.**

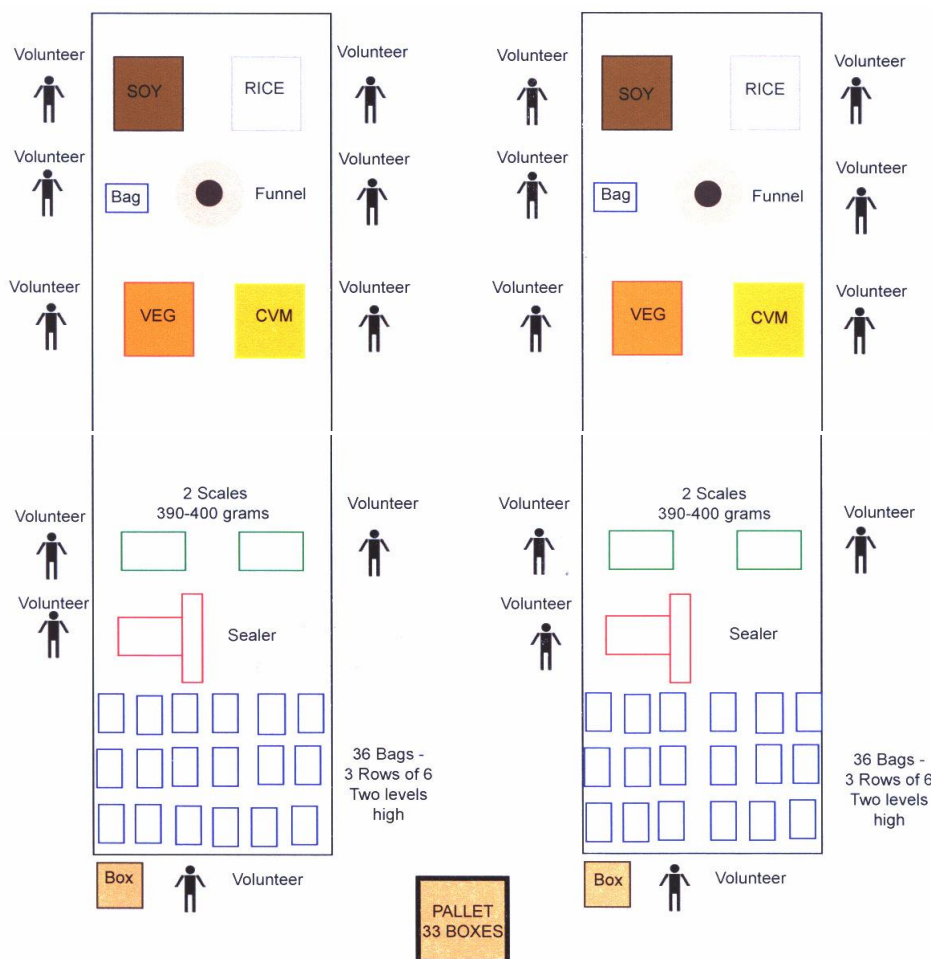
Facility

As the host organization, it is your responsibility to provide a facility for your event. If you're local to Champaign-Urbana, we can help you book a facility on campus. However, the cost of renting that facility (usually minimal) must be covered by your organization. Sorry, your event cannot be held outdoors because of food safety and hygiene issues.

Your facility must meet several requirements to host an event:

Tables and Chairs

Packaging events are organized into packaging "lines" or "stations" (you may hear the terms used interchangeably). Each line requires two (2) 8-foot tables and four (4) chairs. A diagram of two packaging lines is provided below:



There are four 8-foot tables depicted in the diagram below – two for each line. Two chairs (not diagrammed) are placed on either side of each line next to the scales and sealer.

Supply Staging

Your supplies will arrive on 4' x 4' wooden or plastic pallets or "skids." You will need to provide the space to stage these supplies before, during and after your event. If you are hosting a very large event, it

is recommended that you have a forklift available for the event. Illini Fighting Hunger does not currently have access to a forklift or forklift operators and these resources must be arranged by your organization.



Smaller events (fewer than 50,000 meals) can typically be handled with a pallet jack (no forklift necessary). If you are local to Champaign-Urbana, we may be able to help you borrow a pallet jack for your event. **A pallet jack is highly recommended for every event.**

There really is no set limit above which it would be necessary to have a forklift available. We can help you determine the need on a case-by-case basis and it may be influenced by the nature of your facility and the ambition of your volunteers!

Cleaning up

We recommend holding your event in a space that is not carpeted. Gymnasiums and multipurpose rooms make excellent locations for an event. It is still possible to hold an event on a carpeted space, but please be aware that rice, soy (roughly the size and consistency of granola cereal), dried vegetable flakes, and vitamin powder (a very fine, yellow powder) will likely be spilled during the event. If your facility is carpeted we recommend placing tarps down on the floor in the packaging area.

Ultimately, your organization is responsible for cleaning up the facility. We recommend the following equipment for efficient clean-up:

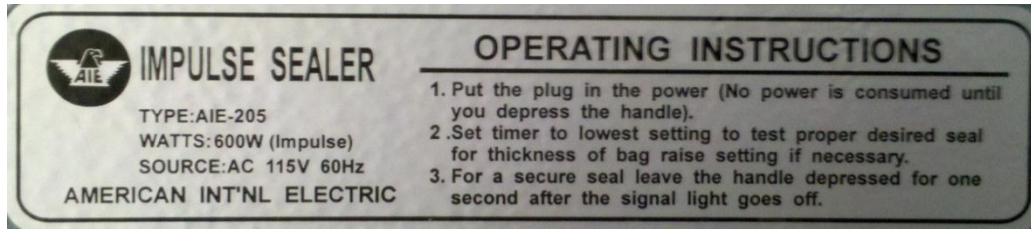


- Large brooms or mops
- Large garbage cans
- Access to a large garbage dumpster
- Access to a large recycling receptacle
- Vacuum cleaner (if facility is carpeted)

Illini Fighting Hunger washes equipment that contacts food product before and after every event. In most scenarios, we ask that you provide the space and 2-3 volunteers to wash the equipment the night before your event (typically during setup the day before). Our procedure requires three sinks (dish soap; rinse; bleach) and a space for the equipment to air dry overnight. If setup for your event is happening the same day as your event, we will likely do pre-washing for you.

Electrical

While our electronic balances are battery-powered, our heat sealers plug into the wall. Typically we set up an event by connecting a 25' extension cord to the wall receptacle. At the end of this extension cord, we attach a power strip. In the power strip, we'll place an additional 10' extension cord and one heat sealer with the 10' extension cord leading to another power strip. We'll do this to connect up to 5 or 6 heat sealers to one receptacle, although we prefer to keep as few heat sealers as possible on a single circuit.



It is important that you consider the electrical needs of your facility before your event. As indicated on the label above, one heat sealer draws 600 W. Our heat sealers are impulse sealers, however, and they only draw current for three (3) seconds during the sealing process. If multiple sealers are plugged in to the same circuit, it is very unlikely that they will all be drawing current at the same time.

If you have concerns about the electrical needs of your facility, please speak with your Illini Fighting Hunger liaison. We are certain that we can be creative and make something work that fits your facility.

Facility Requirements Summary

Here is a summary of our facility requirements:

- Space large enough for your packaging event including packaging lines and supply staging
- Necessary number of tables and chairs
- Method for garbage disposal and cardboard recycling
- Electrical outlets
- Pallet jack

Facility Recommendations Summary

Here is a summary of our facility recommendations:

- Loading dock
- Not carpeted (or use tarps if it is carpeted)
- Location for hand washing
- Forklift
- Kitchen or dishwashing area where equipment can be cleaned before and/or after the event

Donating your meals

Think about where you'd like to donate your meals. Food insecurity is a real issue in the United States, while hundreds of children are suffering and dying from malnutrition every day around the world. Illini Fighting Hunger supports both local and international distribution. For local distribution, consider contacting a local food bank or food pantry. International distribution is logistically more difficult, but Illini Fighting Hunger may be able to provide you with possible feeding partners who will receive your meals and distribute them to hungry people.

If your organization has an existing relationship with an NGO or ministry overseas, Illini Fighting Hunger will allow you to donate your meals to that effort *provided that the receiving feeding partner is approved*. Ask your Illini Fighting Hunger liaison for information if you are interested.

If you are in the Champaign-Urbana area, consider donating to:

The Eastern Illinois Foodbank

2405 North Shore Drive
Urbana, IL 61802-7221
(217) 328-3663

Illini Fighting Hunger has an existing relationship with the Eastern Illinois Foodbank and will notify them of your intent to donate if you wish to do so.

Promoting your event

If your event is open to volunteers from the community, Illini Fighting Hunger can help you promote your event. We can even provide an online registration system for you to have volunteers sign-up.

With your permission, we'd also like to broadcast photos and other information during and after your event through our social media outlets. This helps us to spread the message of volunteers fighting hunger. We recommend that you have your volunteers sign our photo release as a part of registration before your event or check-in at the event.

Social media

Be sure to connect with us:

- Website: www.illinifightinghunger.org
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/illinifightinghunger
- Twitter: www.twitter.com/ifighthunger

Meal packaging events are also a great way to grab attention in the community and raise awareness for your organization as well as the hunger issues you are addressing. Here are some ideas for drawing attention to your event:

- Broadcast information and pictures live while your event is taking place using Twitter and Facebook.
- Issue a press release before your event.
- Invite newspaper reporters and radio talk show hosts to your event.
- Take video of your event and post it to Youtube, Vimeo, or some other online video hosting website. You might consider having an amateur or professional vide editor polish the footage into a fun 1-2 minute recap.

Tips for issuing a press release

Never issued a press release before? No problem. Try some of the following steps to successfully issuing a press release:

1. Gather contact information for media outlets in your community. Consider newspapers, local magazines, television news, radio talk shows and news shows, and public radio and television. Remember that radio and television stations may have multiple programs to alert about your event including evening news, morning news and talk shows, and community outreach programs. We recommend looking for e-mail addresses, fax numbers and Twitter information.
2. Draft a press release on your organization's official letterhead. Give it a succinct, descriptive and attractive headline in large bold or capital letters and a sub-headline in smaller font that gives more detail. Write the body of the press release providing information about your event and your motivation the way you would like to see it described in a newspaper article. Provide quotations from leaders or participants that could be directly quoted by a reporter even without requiring them to contact you directly. Make it short and sweet so that it fits on one page.
3. Include contact information at the end of the press release including e-mail address(es) and phone number(s). Identify the primary contact and be sure they are prepared to comment on the event to reporters.
4. Include an invitation to reporters to attend the event and take photos or conduct interviews.
5. Distribute the press release 2 days before your event. Don't issue it too soon or it will get lost among other news and media outlets may forget about it. Send the release in an e-mail with the recipients BCC'ed or undisclosed (remember e-mail etiquette!) and attach a PDF for easy printing and posting. You may want to fax the press release in addition (or as an alternative) to e-mail. Finally, consider posting the document to your website or on a free hosting site like Google Drive or Dropbox. Make the document publicly available and share the link through social media outlets like Twitter and Facebook.
6. Meet the individual reporters who respond and follow-up with an e-mail or via social media after the event, thanking them for covering your event and providing them with any final details such as total number of meals packaged or number of volunteers that participated.

There are many additional resources and guides for writing press releases online that you can access by searching "How to write a press release" on Google or Bing. For a guide on formatting a press release, view a sample of a press release that received a successful response [here](#). (Note, this is provided as an example and does not describe a meal-packaging event).

At your event

We have a few recommendations and tips to make your event both fun and successful!

When your volunteers arrive, we recommend having them sign in. We like to use one sign-in sheet that doubles as a photo release form. Upon check-in, have volunteers put on nametags, wash or sanitize their hands, and put on a hairnet. What you need for check-in:

- Nametags

- Markers & Pens
- Sign-in Sheets (download from IFH [here](#))
- Hairnets & Hand Sanitizer (provided in your supplies order)

Next we'll arrange your volunteers into groups and provide instructions for meal packaging. We recommend the following equipment:

- Microphone/PA System
- Projector
- Laptop

During the event, you may want to play music softly in the background while volunteers package. Arranging a PA system that can play music off of a laptop is recommended. Are you packaging meals to be distributed by one of our feeding partners in another country? Then try to get some music that is culturally relevant to the country you're helping out. Here are some more tips to make your event more productive and fun:

- Announce milestones to the whole group, such as every 1,000 meals packaged.
- Encourage each table to cheer each time they complete a full box of meals.
- Make it a competition! Which group can package the most meals? (Quality control is a must, however!)

Meal packaging events are unique and valuable volunteer experiences because they allow tens and hundreds of people to work together in the same place. We recommend taking advantage of this opportunity with some of the following tips:

- Provide your volunteers with discussion questions while their packaging (announce them over the PA system, print them on cards at the packaging tables, or project them on a screen).
- Hang a large blank banner and provide markers to have volunteers write down their thoughts when arriving and leaving the event. For example, the question "Why do you serve?" has been both discussion-provoking and inspiring.
- Keep your volunteers in their packaging groups and, once the packaging is complete, have them sit down together to discuss their motivation for serving others, to share stories of service which they find inspiring, or come up with your own discussion questions!



Some successful reflection activities that are easy to incorporate into a meal-packaging event

