

## Guidelines for soliciting in-kind food/drink donations for volunteer events

### **Assess your needs:**

Get all the details from the event, such as where it is being held, who is going to be attending, what type of activities you will be doing and what time of the day it will be happening. It would also be good to ask how long the event will last so you know what type and how much food and drink you will need.

### **Explore food/drink options:**

Once you know the details of the event then you can think about what type of beverages and food will be best to provide for your volunteers. For example, if it is a morning event then you could consider fruit, bagels and coffee versus a lunch time opportunity where pizza and soda might be more appropriate. Check with your volunteers for food restrictions or allergies and 'shop' accordingly.

### **Approach businesses:**

Now that you have the details of the event and you know what type of donation you need then you can target certain businesses for donations. It is acceptable to approach multiple businesses for similar requests, in case there are restrictions on the amount one company can provide. Start early, as many stores allocate this budget quarterly. This is also a good time to check with your in-house catering group, as they might already have connections with vendors. If you do not know where to start, walk around your local neighborhood, and talk to the store managers to see if they are willing to donate, even if you do not know if they have done it in the past.

### **Provide documentation:**

Ask the business to donate to your event with a formal letter, explaining your purpose and what you would like from them. Also attach your 501(c)(3) document for their tax records and tax deduction documentation.

### **Collect your donation:**

Some businesses might have certain timeframes on when you can get the donation from them, so work within those parameters.

### **Leave no footprint:**

Plan your event to be environmentally friendly. Provide recycling containers, recyclable supplies and ensure they are being used appropriately.

### **Make arrangements for any leftover food/drink or other supplies:**

The last thing you want to do is throw away any usable leftover food or drink. See if the nonprofit can use any remaining food/drink, and if they cannot, check to see if another nonprofit could use your perishable donation. As an example, after an awards banquet, the company made arrangements to donate floral arrangements the next day to a seniors' residential home.

### **Thank the business:**

This is very important. Thank the business within one week after the event, sharing outcomes and the impact their donation had on the event. Pictures or thank you's from the nonprofit or its clients are also great to include.