

FRESH

RESCUE

Retail Partnership Guide

Helping New Hampshire businesses rescue safe food, reduce waste, and support neighbors across the Granite State.

Local & National Partners

**Grocery | Farms | Restaurants & Cafés | Specialty Markets
Convenience | Wholesale**

2026 Edition

FRESH RESCUE



WHAT IS IT

Fresh Rescue at the NH Food Bank?



Fresh Rescue is the New Hampshire Food Bank's retail food rescue program. Through Fresh Rescue, we partner with grocery stores, farms, restaurants, specialty markets, wholesalers, and national retail donors to safely recover food and grocery items that are still usable but may no longer be sellable.

Some Fresh Rescue donors are part of Feeding America national retail partnerships, often called Blue Receipt donors. Others are local New Hampshire businesses that want a trusted, simple way to donate. In both cases, the NH Food Bank helps coordinate safe handling, local agency connections, reporting, and issue resolution.

BENEFITS, SAVINGS, & WASTE DIVERSION



Disposal Cost Savings

Savings: Fresh Rescue helps turn food that may otherwise increase trash volume and disposal costs into measurable community impact, supporting both waste-reduction goals and stronger local partnerships.

Waste Laws & Fines

RSA 149-M:27.V: NH Food Waste Ban: Any person/business producing over 1 ton of waste a week are prohibited from disposing in a landfill or incinerator. Penalty: fines may apply

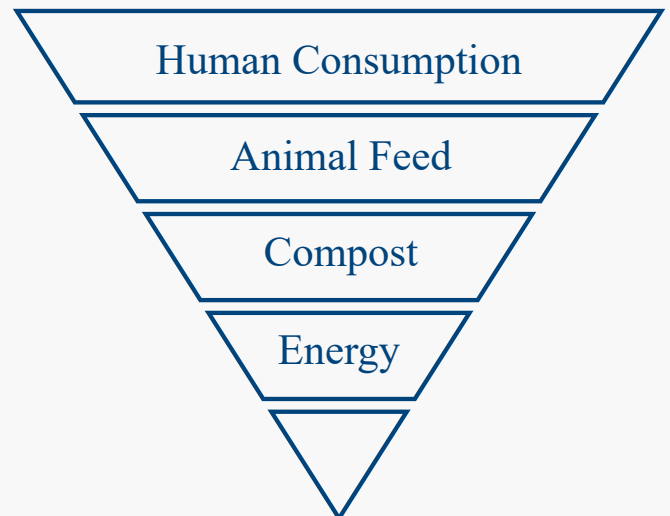
Tax Benefits and Liability Protection

Enhanced Tax Deduction: Feeding America provides the most beneficial and comprehensive tax-credit system for donated goods.

Liability Protection: The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act provides liability protection for good-faith food donations that meet applicable safety standards.

Food Waste Priority

By Law



1 Ton/2000lbs = *

Provided Meals:

1,667 Meals

Tax Deduction:

\$2k - 4k

Emissions avoided:

3.4 metric tons CO₂e

Disposal Savings:

\$90

*Approximate Estimations

Why Partner with Fresh Rescue?

Fresh Rescue is a mutual-benefit partnership: your business helps keep good food in New Hampshire communities, and the NH Food Bank helps make the process simple, safe, trackable, and worthwhile for your team.



Safe Donation Guidance

We help your team understand what can be donated, how it should be stored, and when to contact us for support. We can work alongside your company's existing donation SOPs or provide Fresh Rescue's standard guidelines when local procedures are needed.



Donation Reporting & MealConnect Receipts

Donation activity is tracked through MealConnect, giving national and local donors a clear reporting pathway and access to donation receipt records. This helps support impact tracking, corporate reporting, and donation receipt documentation.

⚙️ Coordination Off Your Plate

Think of Fresh Rescue as an extension of your team. NHFB coordinates local partner connections, pickup schedules, overflow concerns, missed pickups, issue resolution, and compliance follow-up so your staff has one clear place to turn.



Impact Tracking & Recognition

We track donation pounds, categories, and trends so your business can see the difference your donations make. Each year, we celebrate retail partners through our annual Retail Appreciation event and highlights partner impact through social media recognition.



Tools, Signs & Staff Support

We provide practical tools such as donation signs, backroom posts, category guides, and simple staff reminders. Our goal is to make donation routines easy to follow across departments and shifts.



Dedicated Partnership

You are not just dropping off a donation into a system — you are joining a statewide effort. We stay connected to your team, support the local partners receiving your donations, and help keep the partnership reliable, safe, and worth celebrating.

Which Donation Path Fits Your Business?

National Donor:



You are part of a corporate or Feeding America-connected donation program. The Fresh Rescue Team helps support local activation, donation flow, agency pickups, reporting, compliance, and issue resolution so your store can meet program expectations with confidence.

Independent or Local Retailer:



You are a New Hampshire business looking for a reliable and community-minded donation pathway. We help review what products may be donated, provide simple guidelines, and connect your store with the right local food pantry, meal program, or pickup option.

Farm or Grower:



You may have surplus produce, seconds, seasonal overflow, or storage-limited product that could still support local food access. We help determine the best distribution pathway based on product type, volume, timing, transportation, and available local partners.

Restaurant / Cafe / Foodservice:



You may have prepared foods, packaged meals, bakery items, catering surplus, or other time-sensitive donations. We help review food safety, packaging, labeling, storage, and pickup options before donations begin so the process is safe and workable.

One-Time / Seasonal / Overflow Donor:



You may not need a weekly pickup but still want a responsible option when excess food becomes available. We can help coordinate one-time, seasonal, or overflow donations when product type, timing, storage, and local capacity allow.

PREPARING DONATIONS

Every donor is different, but the Fresh Rescue setup process is simple: identify what can be donated, create a clear storage routine, connect with the right pickup pathway, and keep communication open.

ACTIVATION STEPS

TIPS



TRAIN EMPLOYEES

Make sure the right staff know what qualifies for donation, where to place it, and who to contact with questions.

Fresh Rescue can work with your company's existing donation SOPs or provide our standard Fresh Rescue guidelines, signs, and quick-reference materials when local procedures are needed.



ASSIGN DESIGNATED SPACE

Create clear, consistent donation zones in your cooler, freezer, dry storage, receiving area, or farm/production space.

Clearly marked donation areas help every shift know what is being saved, where it belongs, and how it should be stored until pickup.



ACTIVATE DONATION PATH

Once your team is ready, Fresh Rescue will help determine the best pickup pathway for your business.

Depending on your product, volume, location, and schedule, this may include a weekly agency pickup, a local partner connection, NHFB coordination, or an overflow/seasonal response option.



BUILD A ROUTINE

The strongest donation programs become part of the normal daily rhythm.

Align donation pulls with pickup times, keep products separated by storage need, and contact Fresh Rescue when volume changes, pickup issues come up, or your team needs support.



CELEBRATE YOUR IMPACT!

Every safe donation helps reduce unnecessary waste and support local food access.

Fresh Rescue tracks donation activity, shares impact updates, recognizes retail partners, and celebrates donor impact through our annual Retail Appreciation event and social media highlights.

Donor Status:

Enabled:

Your location is approved for Fresh Rescue and may donate as needed, by request, or when product is available. This is often the first step before a regular schedule is established.

Active:

Your location has a regular pickup schedule with an assigned Fresh Rescue partner. This is the goal for donors with consistent product, as routine pickups create stronger reliability and greater impact.

Want Store Access to MealConnect?

Managers and owners may request access to their store's MealConnect profile.

With store access, you may be able to:

- Review donation reports connected to your location
- Monitor pickup and reporting activity
- Send alerts when larger or urgent donations need pickup
- Better understand your store's Fresh Rescue impact

To request access, contact the Fresh Rescue Team.

WHAT CAN BE DONATED?

Fresh Rescue accepts a wide range of safe, usable food and grocery items. Donation eligibility may vary by store policy, product type, packaging, temperature needs, and local partner capacity. When in doubt, contact the Fresh Rescue Team before setting up a new category.

 Bakery	=	Bread, pastries, cakes - in-store bakery
 Produce	=	Fruits, vegetables, herbs
 Dairy	=	Milk, yogurt, cheese, butter
 Protein	=	Meat, poultry, seafood, tofu, eggs
 Prepared	=	Deli salads, sandwiches, hot/cold bar
 Beverages	=	Juice, bottled drinks, water, seltzer
 Mix	=	Dry groceries, snacks, condiments
 Nonfood	=	Hygiene items, paper goods, pet food

DONATION QUALITY & GENERAL MERCHANDISE

Please Do Not Donate:

- Open, leaking, or visibly contaminated
- Moldy, spoiled, unsafe, or temperature-abused
- Recalled or outside your store's donation policy
- Mixed with trash, broken glass, chemicals, or unsanitary items
- Unlabeled when labeling is required for safe distribution

Have a general merchandise program?

The Fresh Rescue Team can help connect your store with a local partner when capacity and product type allow.

Nonfood & General Merchandise

Fresh Rescue is primarily a food and grocery donation program, so nonfood donations are not always part of a regular pickup.

However, many essential items are highly valued by local food pantries and meal programs, including:

- Toiletries and hygiene products
- Feminine care products
- Paper goods
- Diapers and baby care items
- Cleaning supplies, when safe and sealed
- Pet food and basic pet care items

If your store has a general merchandise donation program, the Fresh Rescue Team can help determine whether there is a local partner able to receive those items.

How Good Food Gets More Time

Some products may no longer be sellable, but that does not always mean they are no longer usable. When food is pulled early, stored correctly, and picked up safely, Fresh Rescue can help extend its usefulness and move it to local partners.

Date Codes Matter

- **Sell By / Pull Date:** Usually a store-side date. Product is likely still usable when handled properly.
- **Best By / Use By:** Often speaks to peak quality, not safety.
- **Expiration Date:** Only some items should not be distributed after this date: infant formula, baby food, medicines, and vitamins.



The Fresh Rescue Rule of Thumb:

Safe, Sealed, Stored, & Something you would still eat.

Example: Meat & Protein

Store Pulls Product

Product is pulled before it becomes unsafe or outside store policy.

Product is Frozen/Labeled

Protein is frozen, dated, and kept separate from thawed product.

Pickup Maintains Cold Chain

Fresh Rescue partners use coolers, thermal blankets, refrigerated vehicles, or other approved equipment.

Product is Stored Safely

Frozen protein can be held longer when it remains continuously frozen.

Local Partner distributes to neighbors

The product moves to a food pantry, meal program, or other approved local partner.

The earlier product is pulled and protected, the more options we have to use it safely.

Protein

Best pathway: pull on time, freeze, label, keep frozen.

Frozen protein gives local partners more time and flexibility for safe distribution.

Bakery

Best pathway: donate same day or freeze if holding longer.

Freezing bakery can extend usefulness and reduce unnecessary discard.

Prepared Foods

Best pathway: coordinate first.

Prepared foods must be packaged, labeled, protected from contamination, and kept at safe temperatures from prep to pickup.

Dairy

Best pathway: keep cold and move quickly.

Some dairy products may remain usable beyond store pull dates when properly handled.

Produce

Best pathway: pull before spoilage.

Fresh produce that is donated early can be sorted, cleaned, cooled, and distributed before quality declines.

Fresh & Local Donation Partners

Farms, growers, specialty markets, bakeries, and local producers help Fresh Rescue bring more variety, freshness, and local pride into New Hampshire food access.

We Love Local!

Local Donations Can Look Different — That's Okay.

Whether donations are seasonal, occasional, or part of a regular weekly routine, the Fresh Rescue Team can help identify the safest and most useful pathway.

Farms & Growers



Great fits: surplus produce, seconds, field overflow, short-season harvest, storage-limited product.

We help with: timing, volume, pickup location, distribution pathway, and local partner matching.

Specialty Markets & Local Stores



Great fits: packaged specialty foods, dairy, bakery, produce, prepared retail items, short-dated grocery.

We help with: donation guidelines, storage routines, pickup schedules, and reporting.

Bakeries & Local Producers



Great fits: bread, rolls, pastries, packaged goods, frozen items, overproduction, seasonal surplus.

We help with: freezing guidance, packaging expectations, pickup timing, and connecting donations to the right partner.

You have surplus. → We help coordinate. → Good food stays local.

Local products matter.

Fresh Rescue helps keep New Hampshire-grown, New Hampshire-made, and locally sourced food connected to the communities around it — supporting local businesses while helping neighbors access fresh, useful food.

Restaurants, Cafés & Prepared Food

Prepared food is possible — but it works best when we plan it first.

Prepared food donations often need to go to partners that can safely handle, store, reheat, serve, or repurpose food. This may include soup kitchens, shelters, meal programs, community kitchens, or other approved prepared-food service sites.

Because these donations are more time-sensitive, the Fresh Rescue Team helps review the product type, packaging, timing, storage, and receiving partner before pickup begins.



Good Donation Fits

- Packaged meals
- Sandwiches, salads, and café items
- Bakery and day-old products
- Catering surplus
- Soups, sides, and prepared dishes
- Frozen prepared foods
- Unopened bulk ingredients or foodservice products

What We Need to Know

- What was prepared or purchased?
- When was it prepared?
- Has it been kept hot, cold, or frozen?
- Is it individually packaged or bulk?
- Are ingredients or allergens available?
- Does it have nutrition facts or original labeling?
- How quickly does it need to move?

Best Pathway

Prepared food donations usually need a planned pickup window, a clear receiving partner, and temperature control from prep to pickup.

Prepared Meals	→	Soup Kitchen / Meal Program
Day-Old Bakery	→	Pantry or Meal Site
Bulk Ingredients	→	Community Kitchen / Prepared Food Agency

Contact Fresh Rescue before starting recurring prepared food donations so we can match the product with the right partner and pickup schedule.

Local, Franchise & National Donors

Fresh Rescue can support many types of retail donors, but the setup depends on how your business makes donation decisions.

Donor Type	What This Means	How Fresh Rescue Helps
Locally Owned Business	Donation decisions are usually made by the owner or local manager.	We help create a simple donation plan, local pickup pathway, and reporting setup.
Franchise Location	A local owner may operate the store, but brand or corporate rules may still apply.	We help clarify the right process and support safe, consistent donation routines.
Regional / National Company	Donation policies may be set by district, regional, or corporate teams.	We support local activation, store communication, reporting, and issue resolution.
Blue Receipt Donor	The donor has a Feeding America-connected national donation agreement.	We help maintain local compliance, reporting, agency coordination, and MealConnect documentation.



Small store. Big impact. Same Fresh Rescue support.



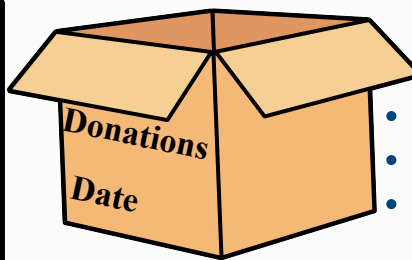
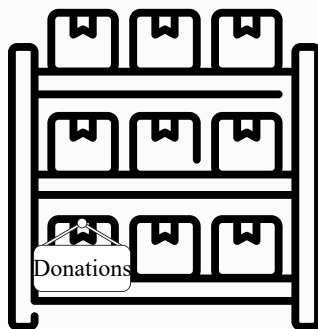
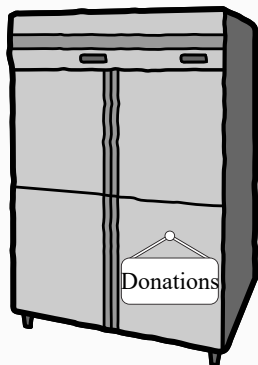
Local businesses do not need a national donation department to participate. Fresh Rescue helps provide the structure: clear guidance, local partner connections, reporting support, pickup coordination, and recognition for the food you help keep in New Hampshire communities.



Packaging & Storage Tips

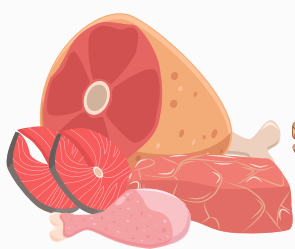
Use this guide to quickly stage donations for safe storage and pickups
Please refer to your store's internal policies for full procedures and requirements.

Labeling & Signs: Clearly label all donation **boxes** and **locations** so they can be identified, stored correctly, and picked up efficiently.



- Include date
- Keep labels visible
- Separate from regular product

Freezer Storage



Protein*



Bakery



All Frozen Products

- **ALL PROTEIN** should be frozen before leaving the store
- **BAKERY** should be frozen if held more than 1 day
- **DO NOT** freeze produce
- **Mixed boxes** → freeze if they contain frozen items

**DO NOT mix frozen and thawed meat*

Refrigeration Storage



Dairy



Produce



Cold Beverages



Prepared Food

- Keep all items in cooler until pickup
- Do not leave product at room temperature

- Remove visibly spoiled items (mold, leaks)
- Mixed boxes → follow most perishable item

Dry Storage



Dry Goods



Home Goods

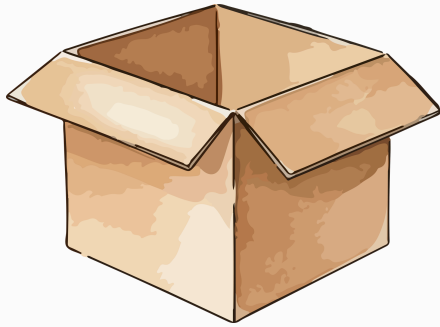
- All items must be **sealed and labeled**
- Outer damage is OK, **inner packaging must be intact**
- Do not donate open or leaking items
- **Store in designated receiving area**

Pallet Storage & Stacking Tips

Use this guide to safely stage larger donations for pickup

Before You Stack:

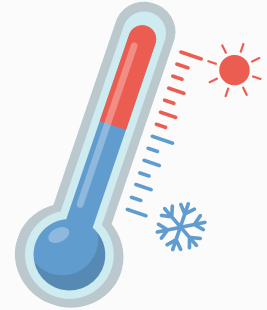
Clean Boxes Only



Label Everything



Separate by Type



Stack Smart:

Open Containers on Top

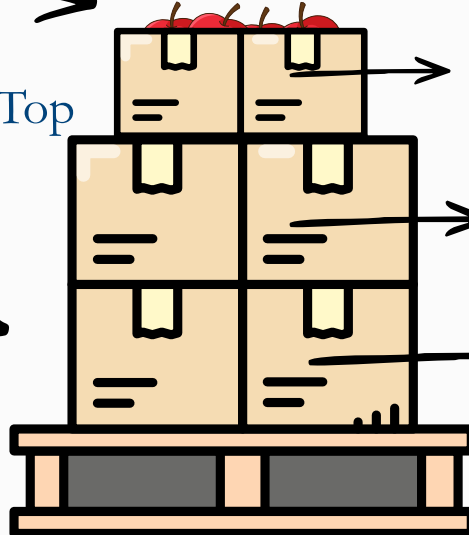


Produce, Bakery, & Lighter Items

Refrigerated & Dry Goods

Frozen & Heavy Items

No Overhang & Tightly Stacked



Do This:



- Heavy items on bottom
- Lighter items on top
- Stack flat and even
- Keep boxes fully supported
- **Caution: Stack GLASS with care**

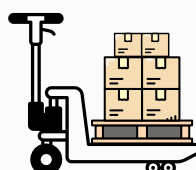
Avoid This:



- Overstacking too high
- Crushing bakery or produce
- Leaning or uneven stacks
- Loose or shifting boxes

Non-Food Items:

All Non-Food Items must be stored separately in their own box



SUPPORT, PARTNERSHIP & GRATITUDE



Hi! I'm Hudson Wells, the Fresh Rescue Program Manager with the New Hampshire Food Bank, a member of the Feeding America network.

My role is to make your store's donation process as simple, safe, and successful as possible. I help train staff, monitor donation quality, match you with local agencies, and ensure that both your team and your donations are recognized for the difference they make.

Think of me as your connection point between your store, Feeding America, and our local partner agencies. I'm here to problem-solve, celebrate wins, and keep everything running smoothly so you can focus on what you do best—serving your customers and community.

CONTACT

Hudson Wells

Fresh Rescue Manager

Hudson.Wells@NHFoodBank.org

603-669-9725 ext. 4536

603-866-0442 - TEXT

**Become a
Retail Partner**



WHEN TO CONTACT

Please reach out if you experience any of the following:

- Missed or late pickups
- Equipment issues (freezer, cooler, or temperature concerns)
- Large or unexpected donations that may exceed storage space
- Schedule changes or staff turnover
- Questions about reporting or MealConnect
- Ideas for recognition or stories worth celebrating!



THANK YOU!

Your partnership makes Fresh Rescue possible. Each tray, crate, and carton you donate helps neighbors access food right here in New Hampshire while advancing sustainability and corporate responsibility goals nationwide.

Together, we're proving that doing good is good business.

Thank you for supporting your neighbors, reducing waste, and leading the way for others to follow.