



PROJECT HARVEST

Background Information

The Harvest against Hunger AmeriCorps VISTA Program

Harvest against Hunger (HAH) has been named “one of the most effective AmeriCorps programs in the nation” – and with good reason. HAH is a collaborative program that places AmeriCorps VISTA members (known as Harvest VISTAs) in communities around the country to develop gleaning and produce recovery programs that support local hunger relief initiatives.

Harvest VISTAs engage local communities in a myriad of produce recovery models – each specifically built with local resources and opportunities in mind. Over the past seven years, nearly four million pounds of fresh, healthy produce has been recovered by 16,000 volunteers through Harvest Against Hunger’s efforts. And that’s just the beginning: Harvest VISTAs build programs that are both sustainable and scalable. The positive impact of these programs will benefit communities for years to come. This is the third year Harvest Against Hunger exists in Snohomish County. To distinguish the program, we call it Project Harvest.

Project Harvest

- The Harvest Against Hunger Program in Snohomish County, established in 2014
- The project’s primary goal is to improve access to fresh, nutritious produce options in Snohomish County Food Banks
- This program is designed with local resources in mind. It utilizes the transportation capabilities within the Snohomish County Food Bank Distribution Center located in Everett, WA and by recovers produce from local farms, farmers markets, orchards, and backyard fruit trees.
- Project Harvest helps to create solutions for farmers through surplus produce recovery programs including:
 - Gleaning from farms and gardens
 - Gleaning from farmers markets
 - Picking up surplus produce already in storage

Where does the gleaned produce go?

- Snohomish County Food Bank Coalition
 - Comprised of 21 partner food banks
 - Approximately 500,000 Snohomish County Citizens are provided with supplemental food resources annually through the coalition
 - Most needed commodity in food banks: **fresh produce**
 - Current produce recovery programs: local grocery chains
 - Produce is sometimes in great shape, other times shelf life very limited

Things farmers and growers should know:

- All produce is documented in pounds for growers' records
- Farmers are legally protected under the Good Samaritan Food Donation Act
- Volunteers always sign waivers prior to gleaning
- Everything will be documented by the Gleaning Coordinator (including volunteer hours and pounds of produce gleaned)
- Food donations are tax-exempt
- Volunteers are properly trained
- Gleaning Coordinators work with growers to create clear expectations and guidelines for gleaning events

Things Volunteers should know:

- A diversity of volunteer opportunities are available, including outreach and education, gleaning, and produce recovery at Farmers Markets.
- Gleaning events take place on farms, in home gardens, and at fruit trees in Snohomish County
- Gleans will last between 2-3 hours and volunteers harvest a vast variety of fruits and/or vegetables
- Volunteers should bring water, wear comfortable gardening clothing (that provides cover from the elements), clean closed toe shoes (standard agriculture practice to prevent spread of crop diseases)
- Volunteers will be trained when they begin their first shift
- Volunteers will need to provide their own transportation on most occasions

How can I become Involved?

- **Volunteer**
 - Participate in gleaning events on local farms, harvesting surplus produce
 - Pick up surplus produce at farmers markets on a regular basis
- **Donate Surplus Produce**
 - Donate crops that would have otherwise not been harvested
 - We will pick up your surplus produce already in storage
- **Plant a Row for Project Harvest this season**
 - Plan to cultivate a row or two of your garden for Project Harvest
 - You can harvest the produce for pickup, or call on the Glean Team to do the work for you
- **Have another idea about how you could help? We would love to hear from you!**

If you would like to get involved please contact:

Stephanie Aubert

Project Harvest Gleaning Coordinator

Desk Phone: 425-259-3191 x13058

Cell Phone: 603-726-1561

Email: saubert@voaww.org

