

# Virtual Food Drives vs. Food Drives

You may wonder why a Virtual Food Drive is the preferred donation option over giving your local food bank food collected through a food drive.

## Why?

- **Better Food for Clients** – Food banks need to distribute food that is healthy and packed with nutrition. Much of the food that is received through food drives is neither. Although the intent of the food drive coordinator is to provide good food, very often they are not in control of what is actually donated. As a result, an odd assortment of food is received that cannot easily be turned into a healthy meal and cannot be distributed evenly and equitably across their client base, leaving some clients with good food and others with what is left over.
- **Healthy Food Can Be Purchased** – Financial donations allow healthy food to be purchased, often at a deep discount. The food most often removed from dinner tables during financially challenging times is fresh and perishable food, milk, dairy and proteins. This is the type of food that does not come through food drives and needs to be purchased by food banks.
- **Costs** – There are actually costs associated with receiving food from food drives. In many cases much of the food has to be disposed of due to broken packaging, dented cans, or food that is expired or well past the best before date. Responsible disposal of this requires depackaging, recycling and composting – resulting in costs.
- **Labour Intensive** – The support required for food drives is labour-intensive and is an inefficient use staff or of volunteer hours. Each item needs to be inspected for best before or expiry dates and sorted by food type. Food banks would also much rather have volunteers doing more fulfilling work such as distributing food to clients.
- **Better Buying Power** – Food banks can often buy more food and better food than consumers due to their buying power and their industry, retailer and farmer relationships.
- **Equitable Distribution** – Food banks aim to provide the same food to clients regardless of when they visit the food bank. This helps relieve anxiety and ensures clients do not have to change their schedule, leave work, etc. just to be first in line to receive the ‘best’ food. The assortment of food from food drives does not allow for this.
- **Menu Planning** – Food banks also aim to provide food which any of us would be proud to put on our own table. This often requires planning ahead to ensure they have industrial food donations or purchases that will constitute proper meals. Food from food drives does not allow for the creation of proper, healthy meals.

**Support your local food bank by a Virtual Food Drive: [bcvfd.foodbank.bc.ca](http://bcvfd.foodbank.bc.ca)**