

## Gleaning Crops to Feed the Hungry

"When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest... Leave them for the poor, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord may bless you in all the work of your hands." (Lev 19:9 and Deut 24:19)

Gleaning, a custom mentioned throughout the Old Testament, is one of the earliest forms of welfare where the poor collects leftover crops from farmers' fields. Gleaning still finds modern applications today in serving the poor and preventing food from going to waste.

### PROJECT DETAILS

#### Steps

1. Gather contacts and resources on farming, trucking, packaging, and food storage.
2. Decide on how often you wish to hold the gleaning event (e.g. weekly from April to November or twice a month), then recruit and organize volunteers accordingly. You will need two major teams: one to glean from farms, and one to sort, process, and prepare the bounty.
3. Set a realistic goal of how many crops you would be able to collect, and find a place to process and store them until they are distributed. Cold storage facilities or places to refrigerate food are important.
4. Determine if the food would be given to local food banks, homeless shelters or directly to the hungry and needy. Think about specific individuals in your church or community that need the food: single parents, senior citizens, breadwinners who are between jobs.
5. Coordinate transportation, drivers, and volunteer teams to hand out the food. The food distribution could be a day trip for the church's youth group or other ministry groups.

#### Resources

Here are examples of gleaning organizations around the States:

1. Mid-Atlantic Gleaning Network at Alexandria, VA <http://www.midatlanticgleaningnetwork.org/>
2. Harvest Against Hunger at Seattle, WA <http://www.firstharvest.org>
3. Ag Against Hunger at Salinas, CA (<http://www.agagainsthunger.org/>)

#### Hunger Relief Agencies

1. America's Second Harvest is the nation's largest domestic hungry relief organization. Here, you can locate food banks in your area <http://feedingamerica.org/>
2. World Hunger Relief, Inc. is a Christian organization based in Waco, TX that helps alleviate hunger locally and in places like Haiti, Central Asia, and El Salvador <http://worldhungerrelief.org/>