

# Girl Scouts Feeding New York Challenge



Food insecurity is the lack of access to affordable and nutritious food. This issue existed long before COVID-19; however, the pandemic exposed and deepened inequities that continue to affect many families today. While some communities are beginning to recover, the lasting economic and social impacts of the pandemic continue to make it difficult for many families—and especially older adults—to consistently access healthy, nutritious meals. Donations to a food bank or spreading awareness about food insecurities are just a few of the many ways to help with this growing problem. Being part of Girl Scouts Feeding New York is a way to help with food insecurity.

## NEW YORK STATE STATISTICS ABOUT HUNGER AND FOOD INSECURITY:

- Statistics from Feeding America’s annual Map the Meal Gap study show a staggering **12–13% surge in the need for food assistance across New York State.**
- Across **New York State**, more than **2.7 million students** are now eligible to receive **free breakfast and lunch** at school, as part of the state’s universal school meals program.
- Across **New York State**, nearly **650,000** children are living with food insecurity
- Across **New York State**, food banks and hunger-relief organizations typically serve over **2.5 million food-insecure New Yorkers** each year, reaching roughly **1 in 8 residents** statewide.
- Feeding America’s most recent Hunger in America study for New York State found that approximately 78% of food-insecure clients purchase inexpensive, less nutritious foods just to make ends meet.

## A LIST OF SUGGESTIONS FOR HEALTHY FOOD DRIVE DONATIONS:

### TOILETRIES:

Toothpaste  
Toothbrush  
Mouthwash  
Washcloths  
Soaps/Body Washes  
Deodorant  
Lotion  
Shampoo/Conditioner  
Razor/Shaving Cream  
Feminine Hygiene Items

Whole Grain Pasta  
Low-Sodium Pasta Sauce  
Peanut Butter or Other  
Nut Butters  
Rolled Oats  
Canned Fruit in Juice  
(Not in Light or Heavy Syrup)  
Canned Vegetables  
(Low-Sodium)  
Low-Sodium Soups  
Canned Tuna/Chicken  
Brown Rice/Instant Brown

Shelf Stable Milk and Milk  
Substitutes  
Popcorn Kernels  
(Not Microwave Popcorn)  
Canned Stews (Low-Sodium)  
Cold Cereals  
(Whole Grain, Low-Sugar)  
Olive or Canola Oil  
Canned Tomatoes  
(Low Sodium or No Salt)

Disinfectant Wipes/Sprays  
Sanitizer  
Gloves/Masks  
Paper Towels  
Toilet Paper

### PET SUPPLIES:

Cat Food (Wet/Dry)  
Dog Food (Wet/Dry)

### BABY ESSENTIALS:

Baby Formulas  
Diapers  
Baby Wash  
Baby Oil/Lotion  
Diaper Rash Ointment

### NON-PERISHABLE

**GOODS:**  
Canned Beans/Dried Beans

Rice  
Quinoa  
Nuts/Seeds/Dried Fruits

### HOUSEHOLD ITEMS:

Laundry Detergent  
Dish Detergent  
Cleaning Sprays

## PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING RESTRICTIONS ON DONATIONS:

- Food must be within best by date
- No visible signs of tampering (Cans with bulging edges, leaking cans, etc.)
- No homemade items, only store bought with existing label of what the product is (i.e. no unlabeled canned or Tupperware full of anything)

# National Service Project: Fighting Hunger

## Instructions for Troop Leaders:

More than 50 million adults, kids, and families in the U.S. continue to experience food insecurity—that is, a lack of consistent access to nutritious food needed to live an active, healthy life. Although the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic has passed, its lasting economic effects, along with rising costs of living, mean that food insecurity remains a challenge for many families today. This reality may include members of our own communities, friends and family, or even members of our troops, making this a sensitive and important take-action issue for Girl Scouts.

As Girl Scouts, we can help build stronger, more resilient communities. Through this challenge, troops can learn about food insecurity, engage in service, and take meaningful action to support families locally and globally.

## Here's how your troop can get started:

- 1. Discuss food insecurity in the U.S. and globally.** Using the discussion guide below, lead your girls in a conversation about food insecurity, keeping in mind that they could be experiencing food insecurity themselves. You may want to reach out to troop families ahead of time to let them know about the discussion topic.
- 2. Ask your girls how they want to make an impact.** You may choose to participate in Girl Scouts Feeding New York patch challenge, write thank-you notes to food bank workers, or support families globally by partnering with UNICEF to provide nutritious food to children.

## There are lots of ways for your troop to get involved.

### 1. Host a food drive.

- Need some help getting started? We've created a few resources to get you going. Check out [GSNC.org](https://www.gsnc.org) for the Girl Scouts Feeding New York patch challenge description, which includes guidelines, email templates and a sample flyer.
- Create a troop plan as to how to collect two pounds of food per girl.

**\*\* Your plan needs to follow the current Girl Scouts Feeding New York Safety Tips.**

### 2. Thank a Food Bank Hero!

- Food bank staff and volunteers are on the front lines of combating hunger and food insecurity—and they'll be working especially hard during the holiday season.
- Write to a Food Bank Hero to show your troop's appreciation and send encouragement for the vital work they do.
- Mail your troop's thank-you notes to your local food bank to be shared with staff—handwritten cards are guaranteed to bring a smile to these heroes' faces.
- Visit Feeding America's or Island Harvest's website for inspiration or to send a thank-you virtually.

## Once your troop has participated in Girl Scouts Feeding New York patch challenge remember to:

- Inspire others to give back! Post a photo of your project to your social networks using the hashtag #GirlScoutsGiveBack. Be sure to tag @girlscouts and @girlscoutswny too!
- Complete GSUSA's survey so your troop's impact can be counted in our national service projects.
- If you wish to recognize your troop's participation with a patch, we recommend this Girl Scouts Give Back patch which can be purchased through our Fun Patch catalog.
- For donations directly brought to the GSWNY Council, we will give out a free patch. There are limited quantities, first come to first serve. Contact your local shop to order.



# Troop Discussion Guide— Hunger and Food Insecurity:

If we want to secure a brighter, more equitable future for all children, combatting food insecurity is an important first step. As you get ready to engage your girls in a potentially sensitive discussion, we also recommend checking out **Six Ways You Can Foster Respectful Conversations Within Your Troop.**

## Helpful Definitions:

- **Food security:** When people have physical and economic access to as much nutritious food as they need to live a healthy, active life
- **Food insecurity:** When a person or family is without reliable access to a sufficient amount of affordable, nutritious food. Food insecurity is one way we can measure and assess the risk of hunger.
- **Hunger:** a personal, physical sensation of discomfort caused by wanting or needing food

## Discussion Questions:

- Think about one reason why access to food is important. Will you share your answer with the troop?
- Can you think of any examples of programs that provide food to people? (for example: food drives, meals on wheels, school meal programs, etc.)
- How is food insecurity different from hunger?
- Why is it important to us as a troop to help families and individuals who might be experiencing food insecurity?
- We can't always know how others are feeling or what challenges others may be experiencing, including who in our communities might be suffering from food insecurity. How can we express compassion and support to others, regardless of if we know their personal circumstances?
- Why is it important to care for our own community? How do we wish to support others around the world who might be food insecure as well?
- How has COVID-19 changed your view on the importance of supporting our community? What increased challenges do you think COVID has caused to people's lives across the country?  
\*(Especially for older girl troops)
- How can we, as a troop, help others? What actions feel most meaningful for us to do? What is achievable for us as a troop?
- If your troop wants to think bigger, brainstorm some solutions to systemic food insecurity. What are some actions that we can take in the future—as a troop, or as a greater community—to help more people have access to food?



# Girl Scouts Feeding New York Challenge



**F**ood insecurity is the lack of access to affordable and nutritious food. Although food insecurity was a problem long before the COVID-19 pandemic, its lasting effects have continued to make this issue worse for many families. One myth about food insecurity is that people battling hunger are unemployed; however, almost half of the people receiving emergency food services live in households with at least one working adult. Nearly half of those affected by food insecurity are children under the age of 18, and the elderly population also continues to struggle with access to consistent, nutritious food.

Donations to a food bank or spreading awareness about food insecurity are great ways to help with this growing problem. Being part of Girl Scouts Feeding New York is a great way to help fight food insecurity.

## Complete four out of the six listed activities.

*\*Please note there are non-donation options for anyone who may not have the resources at this time to donate.*

1. Reach out to a local food pantry and find out the different ways you can support them. Together with your family or troop, make a plan to offer support.
2. Look up what basic items should be in your kitchen pantry. What are the necessary items, and what are some extras or “nice to haves”? Come up with one or two recipes using those pantry items for an upcoming family dinner.
3. Write a letter to a local elected official advocating for more resources to help combat food insecurity in your community.
4. Discuss the family food budget with your family. Discuss ways you can save money as a family and come up with some cost-saving recipes that everyone enjoys.
5. Donate non-perishable food item(s). Our goal is at least two pounds per Girl Scout.
6. Create a Girl Scouts Feeding New York support card to accompany your donation.

## More ways to continue learning and bring awareness about food insecurity.

- Make a post on your social media account regarding food insecurity.
- Set an empty plate at the dinner table as a reminder of those who are dealing with food insecurity.
- Meet with your troop to discuss food insecurity in your community.
- Give up soda or a sweet treat for a week and estimate the cost and donate that money to a food pantry.

## Here are some badges if you're interested in learning more about food.

**Girl Scout Brownie:** Snacks

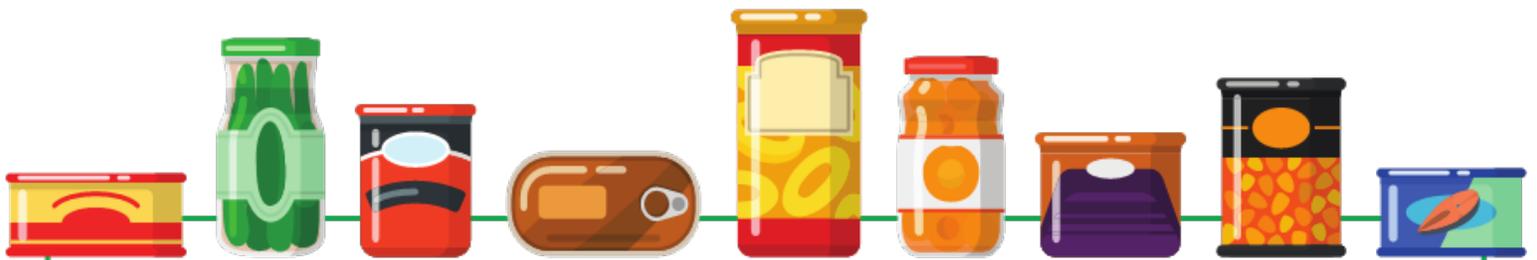
**Girl Scout Junior:** Simple Meals

**Girl Scout Cadette:** New Cuisines

**Girl Scout Senior:** Locavore

**Girl Scout Ambassador:** Dinner Party

For more about food insecurity, visit [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)



Girl Scout Troop \_\_\_\_\_'s food drive to benefit \_\_\_\_\_

How we're collecting food:

What foods can you donate?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Please do not donate:

- Food that needs to be refrigerated
- Food that is expired or close to expiring
- Homemade food, including leftovers and baked goods
- Food with packaging concerns or fragile packaging (like glass)
- \_\_\_\_\_

Questions? Contact \_\_\_\_\_ for more information.

Want to learn more about Girl Scouts of Western New York? Go to [gswny.org](http://gswny.org).

◆ Brought to you in collaboration with Girl Scouts of Nassau County.



Please enjoy this donation for your family. Girl Scouts offers you support during these challenging times. When the world needs us, Girl Scouts come through!

