

Community Fridges Toolkit

Community Fridges emerged in Boston and other cities as a community-led effort to help meet the growing food needs in their communities due to the COVID-19 pandemic and pre-existing gaps in food security. In order to ensure that these efforts can continue in a safe and accessible way, we pulled together the following **guidelines** and **resources** regarding Community Fridges.

Guidelines

Please be aware of the following guidelines related to community fridges. The guidelines below balance public safety, health, and accessibility concerns:

- Community fridges are permissible only on private property, with the permission of the property owner, such as a cafe, grocery store, community garden, or other sites.
- Fridges should be placed on hard, non-porous surfaces away from trash disposal and storage.
- Items, including fridges, are not allowed on the public way (public streets, sidewalks, etc.). Further, extension cords are not permitted to extend over the public way.
- The City of Boston does not offer a permit for the operation of a community fridge, so organizers and owners of the private property where the community fridge is located should be aware of the food safety and liability risks associated. Please note: If the City of Boston finds that there is a public health or public safety violation, the property owner will have to address these issues.
- Fridge operation and maintenance must adhere to [current State guidelines](#) regarding COVID-19 precautions, as well as [current City of Boston guidelines](#).
- Food safety standards should be met to ensure the safety of all participants. Some resources around food safety are included below:
 - [Food Donation Guide](#)
 - [Food Safety Basics](#)
 - [Food Sorting Guidance and Model Consumer Commodity Salvage Code](#)
 - [Safety Tips for Donated Food](#)
- To better understand potential liability risks, we recommend that you:
 - Consult The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act of 1996, determine if it applies to you, and manage your community fridge in line with the guidelines.
 - Review the [State food safety guidelines and regulations](#), determine what applies to you, and manage your community fridge in line with the guidelines.

If you have already started a Community Fridge, or are interested in setting one up, please reach out to the [Office of Food Access](#) with questions about how to operate a fridge while adhering to the above guidelines.

Below are a few resources that may help as you consider starting a community fridge:

- Finding funding or donations to start and maintain a community fridge:
 - Local mutual aid organizations
 - Local restaurants, farms and grocers
 - Local non-profits and food banks
- Community fridge organizations that offer key questions to consider and suggest protocol for how to safely manage food donations:
 - [Freedge](#)
 - [Love Fridge](#)
 - [HUBBUB How-To Guide](#)

Other food resources:

The Office of Food Access has printed material about additional food resources that can benefit some of the residents visiting Community Fridges. Please let us know if you would like this information available at your fridges, and the Office of Food Access would be happy to mail it to the point of contact.

- [Office of Food Access webpage](#) - Information on various food sites across Boston along with other food resources
- [Apply for SNAP benefits \(food stamps\)](#) - Do you need help buying fresh, nutritious food? You may be eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps.
- [Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline](#) - SNAP application information and other food resources
- [Department of Transitional Assistance \(DTA\)](#) - DTA assists and empowers low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, improve their quality of life, and achieve long term economic self-sufficiency.
- [Pandemic EBT \(P-EBT\)](#) - P-EBT provides financial assistance to help families with children who were receiving free and reduced-price school meals pay for meals.
- [Women, Infants, & Children Nutrition Program \(WIC\)](#) - WIC is a nutrition program that provides healthy food, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, referrals to healthcare and other services to all kinds of families: married and single parents or legal guardians of a child under 5, working or not working.
- [The Greater Boston Food Bank](#) - The Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB) partners with 500+ hunger-relief agencies, including food pantries, community meal programs and other food assistance providers throughout the nine counties and 190 towns and cities across Eastern Massachusetts.