



Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"

TO: All Georgia School Nutrition Program Employees and Local Education Agencies

FROM: Ellen Steinberg, PhD, RD, LD, Food Safety Specialist, Georgia School Nutrition Program

DATE: September 14, 2018

RE: Food Donations to Non-Profit Organizations

The USDA encourages State agencies to support local education agencies (LEAs) in their efforts to increase students' consumption of nutritious foods and minimize food waste in their programs. As such, USDA memo SP41, CACFP13, SFSP15-2016, "The Use of Share Tables in Child Nutrition Programs," provides guidance for LEAs regarding options for managing food waste when students choose not to consume items they have selected. Assuming food and beverage items are pre-packaged and protected from intentional or unintentional contamination, the USDA allows food and beverage items to be reused in the following ways, depending on the Program's preference:

- Children may take an additional helping of a food or beverage item from the share table at no cost;
- Food or beverage items left on the share table may be served and claimed for reimbursement during another meal service (i.e., during an afterschool program when leftover from a school lunch); and/or
- Food or beverage items may be donated to a non-profit organization, such as a community food bank, homeless shelter or other non-profit charitable organization.

The current memo provides additional guidance specific to food and beverage items that are donated to a non-profit organization. When a School Nutrition Director decides to partner with a non-profit organization, there should be an explicit understanding and written agreement between the School Nutrition Program and the non-profit organization which clearly states that school nutrition employees are not responsible for the donated food. Additionally, a School Nutrition Director should ensure that the partnering organization has written operational procedures in place and that they adhere to the food safety practices necessary to protect the health of children who receive the donated items. Because the agency accepting the food and beverage donations assumes the responsibility of the donated items, they must have a written Operational Plan that describes how the food and beverages will be protected from food safety risk factors.

Helping Hands Ending Hunger INC. is an example of an in-school program that accepts food donations from schools and distributes the food to children in need. This program has a written Operational Plan that has been reviewed and approved by the Georgia Department of Public Health and complies with Chapter 511-6-1 of the Georgia Food Code. The Operational Plan expressly states that school nutrition employees have no responsibility for the food collected by the organization and sets forth food safety procedures necessary to protect the health of children who receive the donated items. As such, School Nutrition Directors wishing to partner with Helping Hands Ending Hunger INC. can be assured that this organization operates in accordance with USDA regulations and all applicable local and State health and food safety guidelines.