



EVENT PLANNING MANUAL

A food packaging event is a cooperative effort between Outreach and a sponsor. During the event, volunteers will assemble dried non-perishable meals to be distributed to the food insecure locally as well as internationally. To host an event there are several goods and services that Outreach will provide and several that the host is expected to provide. This document will guide the host through the process from beginning to end.

Planning of the Event

An initial meeting will be held between Outreach and the host to explore options and understand the process. If the host decides to hold an event, the host's leadership team (steering committee) should be identified as soon as possible. Outreach and the host steering committee will then begin the planning process. The host steering committee is responsible for determining the size of the event (see below) and working with the Outreach Event Coordinator, to determine the date of the event.

Size of the Event; Elements Common to all Events

The first decision to be made is to determine the size of the event that the host wishes to hold. This will be measured in terms of the number of meals to be packaged. Although our events use the same process everywhere we go, they are not one-size-fits-all. However, some basic elements are common to all events:

Packaging Lines

This is where all the action takes place assembling the meals!

- 2- 8' tables placed end-to-end with a chair at the end of each line
- 10 to 12 volunteers around each packaging line
- 250 square feet of space for each packing line

Calculating the number of meals/hours/volunteers

- One packaging line with ten volunteers will package roughly 2,000 meals per hour
- 5 lines with 50 volunteers can package 10,000 meals in an hour
- 10 lines with 100 volunteers can package 20,000 meals per hour

The length of the event can vary depending on the combination of meals and volunteers.

These two factors will also help to determine how many packaging lines and, therefore, how big a space will be needed.

Meal Varieties

Outreach offers ten unique varieties of highly fortified meals all designed in collaboration with *Iowa State University's Food Science Department*.

One or two varieties may be chosen, based on the size of your event: *Mac & Cheese, Cheesy Rice *Apple Cinnamon Oatmeal, *Oatmeal Raisin, Spanish Rice, Apple Rice, Rice & Raisin, *Pasta w/Tomato Basil, Minestrone Soup, and Rice and Bean Meal (*Microwaveable)

- There are six meals in a bag
- There are 36 bags in a box (216 meals)
- A box weighs 30 pounds (or less, depending on meal variety chosen)

Shelf Life

Outreach Oatmeal meals have a one-year shelf life, all others has a two-year shelf life.

Food Safety

Our Event Coordinators are [ServSafe® - Food Handler](#) certified.

Distribution of Finished Meals

You determine where the meals go. If you decide to use the meals locally, we encourage you to reach out to your local food bank/pantry and make sure they want/can handle the meals first.

- If you want the meals to be distributed internationally, then we recommend packaging only the Rice and Bean meal.

*Please note there is additional shipping cost for international meals

Site Qualifications

Depending on your location, ingredients and equipment will arrive on pallets. Off-loading and storing easily is important. These may be shipped directly to the venue ahead of your event. If we are shipping, we will need the contact information for the person receiving the delivery along with the receiving hours.

Some basic numbers

- One pallet is 42"x48"
- One packaging line needs two 8' tables end-to-end and a chair
- 6 feet between packaging lines (one packaging line requires 250 square feet of space)
- Six lines will need a standard 120 outlet with 3 prong ground (for Sealers)
- Space to hold the ingredients nearby (this will be determined based on size of event)

Premium locations

- Churches
- Schools/Colleges –cafeterias, gyms
- YMCA
- Senior Centers
- Event centers
- Hotels (Banquet Room)

Important Things to Look For

- How easy is it to unload the incoming materials and equipment?
- Can we move a loaded pallet jack into the packaging space?
- Overhead door
- Loading Dock

What kind of equipment is needed to move the material to the event space?

- Forklift
- Pallet jacks
- Flat carts
- Dolly

How easy it is for trucks to come in?

Can they unload straight out of trailer or do they need a lift gate?

When can the materials arrive? (a window of time is much better than a specific time)

Is there adequate space for parking for volunteers?

Are there enough restrooms and how close are they to the event space?

Does the facility have appropriate waste disposal and recycling?

Does the facility have the proper electrical outlets needed? (standard 120 outlets with 3 prong ground)

Does the local health department need to sign off?

Best Case Scenario

- Our truck(s) can back up to a loading dock level with the bed of semi-trailer
- A forklift or pallet jack can go on the truck, grab the pallet, then move the pallets to the location of your event

Challenges

- There is no loading dock and the truck must have a lift gate to unload
- Pallets won't fit through doors and must be unloaded by hand
- Floors that need to be covered (the building manager can assist you with any building requirements)

IN GENERAL, OUTREACH WILL PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING

- Event Coordinator
- All the necessary ingredients for the meals (macaroni, rice, soy, oatmeal, beans, vegetables and vitamins)
- Equipment to set up packaging lines (funnels, stands, scales, tubs, measuring cups and sealers)
- Electrical cords for sealers
- Bags and boxes for finished meals
- Training

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE TO BE PROVIDED BY THE HOST

- Financial funding for the event:
 - Payment of funds are due to Outreach Inc. before or at the event, unless mutually agreed upon by both parties.
- Facility to host the event
 - Large room for assembling the meals
 - Additional area for registration of volunteers
 - Electrical power to packaging lines (6 lines will need 1-120 outlets w/3 prong ground)
 - Public address system in the assembly room
 - 8' tables and chairs for assembling food packages
 - Garbage cans
- Registration Materials (highlighters, rubber bands, pencils/pens, name tags, markers, etc.)
- Volunteers
- Marketing and Advertising (Outreach can provide templates and recommendations)

The Keys to a Successful Event

Before the Event

Team meetings: We will let you determine how often to meet, but we do suggest that you have a project manager that keeps the Status Update Chart current (which we can provide). Look for a person who is detailed oriented.

Registration system: How do you plan on having people sign up for the event? We can help by providing an on-line registration platform; or, if you want to do it yourself, we suggest you use Eventbrite, a free, on-line registration system.

*In your communication with volunteers, please ask them to arrive a few minutes early so they can register.

PR/Media

- We provide a press release template for you to send out with the who, what, when, where, why and how
- Talking points – We can give you some basics regarding great social media messaging as well as talking to the media the day-of the event.

Set Up

Your assigned Event Coordinator will help to schedule a time to set up the event.

- **Packaging Lines** – set up tables for packaging and stock them with equipment and ingredients.
Here are some basic numbers:
 - Solicit one volunteer per line (10 lines = 10 volunteers for set up)
 - On average, it takes one person 45 minutes to set up one line
- **Registration Table(s)** - close to the entrance to register meal packaging volunteer prior to entering the packaging area
- **Sanitation Table(s)** -Health & Safety signage, hair nets, beard nets, aprons, hand sanitizers

Training

There needs to be a time set aside before the event to train the following:

Typically, you should schedule it one hour before the meal packaging begins.

Team Leaders - (one per packaging line) explain the responsibility of each job on the packaging line and to ensure that each job is performed correctly. This is a key role and is needed to be available for the duration of the event.

Heavy Lifters /Runners/Loaders (one per line/must be able to lift 50 lbs.) Keep ingredients filled on packaging lines
Collect finished boxed meals, load pallets with boxed meals, load pallets into trucks

The Flow of an Event

Registration

Volunteers arrive and register

Sanitation Prep

Volunteers are then directed to the next area where they will be given hair/beard nets and aprons.

Once these are on volunteers will be given hand sanitizer.

Team Leaders - Once volunteers arrive and register, the next step is to assemble them into groups of 10.

Team Leaders will escort the groups to their packaging line. ***Gloves will be handed out at packaging lines***

Master of Ceremonies /Disc Jockey -This can be one or two different people, but we encourage you to work with your PR/Media team in advance to give this person something to say.

Music - Upbeat music is an important part of making an event festive. We have a selection of songs we can bring with us, but prefer you use your own. Music, along with a good MC/DJ will make your experience more enjoyable.

Messaging

You will have a captive audience that wants to hear what you have to say

Information about the sponsoring organization

- Information about hunger (we will provide the stats)
- Sharing the impact of what the volunteers are accomplishing
- Updating meal count numbers
- Telling the volunteers where the meals are going
- Giving VIPs a shout-out or giving them the microphone

Here are two very important thing that we have learned in doing thousands of packaging events

- Once people start packaging they do NOT stop!
- It is important to take your time training and always let volunteers ask questions!

Staging Finished Product

- Choose a place and a method for the finished boxes to go once they are packaged.
- If you can, it is always fun to stack them in a highly visible area that groups can use for photo props.
- If finished product needs to go directly from the floor to an outbound vehicle, then make those arrangements in advance.
- Whatever the arrangement, assign one (1) person to keep a running tally of finished boxes.

Questions That Need Answers

- When will the food be ready to pick up?
- Will it be moved by hand, one box at a time?
 - Boxes are 10"x12"x14" and double walled, so they can stack easily
- Will it be moved by pallet? (we provide shrink wrap for the finished pallets)
 - The pallets that bring all the ingredients and equipment can be used for the finished meals
- Pallet – 42x48"
 - 5 or 6 layers
 - 11 boxes per layer
- Pallets with finished meals can weigh up to 1,800 pounds so make sure event floor can handle this weight

Clean Up

Clean up goes surprisingly quickly if you engage the volunteers that have been helping you package during the last shift. Our Event Coordinator will work with you to engage them in this process:

- Set up tables for the equipment to be sorted and stacked on.
- As the last shift finishes, we jump on the microphone and ask the volunteers to bring whatever equipment they were using to the equipment tables. (If they were weighing, they bring the scales, etc.)
- Ask the Team Leader, Heavy Lifters and Table Runners to stay an extra hour to help us clean up. Your Event Coordinator will need help with the finished product as well as placing all our equipment on pallets, shrink wrapping them and load onto trucks at the end of the event.

Picking Up Our Equipment

We will schedule a truck to come in after the event to load our items for return to our warehouse.

- We need to know available hours to pick up our equipment
- We will need the contact information (name, phone number and email) for the individual who will be making these arrangements at the event center

Post Event Paperwork (Event Coordinator will have you fill-out), Samples of Meals For Food Safe Protocol - Returned to Outreach Office

- Ingredient Inspection Sheet
- Packaged Meal Distribution Sheet
- 2 Samples of each variety of meal packed

BENEFITS OF INVOLVEMENT

- Provides a hands on project in which any age can participate
- Gives a practical way to address local as well as international hunger
- Builds unity in a community of people
- Facilitates leadership development, Team-Building
- Educates people about global hunger issues
- Promotes satisfaction as we empower people to change the world
- Engages advocacy of local and global hunger issues