

# Letter carriers will pick up food this Saturday

By Julie Muhlstein Herald Writer

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LOCAL NEWS LOCAL NEWS



Mother's Day isn't all we need to remember this weekend. Saturday is the annual [Letter Carriers Food Drive](#), a huge effort in Snohomish County and nationwide to restock food-bank shelves.

During [last year's](#) one-day drive, 277,263 pounds of food were collected. That accounted for about half the food received by the county's food banks in all of 2013, according to Sara Haner, communications and events manager for [United Way of Snohomish County](#).

Saturday's event comes at a time when donations which food banks received during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays are running out. Food collected Saturday will help local families in need through the end of the year.

Mail customers are asked to put out bags of nonperishable food on Saturday. Needs include canned fruits and vegetables; peanut butter, canned tuna and other protein-rich food; and cereal, granola bars and dried pastas. [Volunteers](#) are also needed to help sort food at four post offices — two in Everett, one in Edmonds and one in Lynnwood.

One person of every seven in Snohomish County is "food-insecure," according to Alex Heart, chief program officer for [Volunteers of America Western Washington](#).

Statistics compiled by the local United Way show that 10 percent of the county's population, about 67,000 people, lives at or below the federal poverty level,

which is \$18,310 per year for a family of three. That includes 4,900 seniors and 18,000 children under 18.

The Snohomish County Food Bank Coalition served 100,737 people in the past year, according to United Way. During the last school year, 33 percent of children in the county's public schools were in the free or reduced-price lunch program.

"We're honored to be part of such an important cause year after year," said Bob James, president of the Snohomish County Association of Letter Carriers, whose mail route is in Mountlake Terrace. This is the 22nd year of the Letter Carriers Food Drive, which [nationally](#) is also called the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive.

In Snohomish County, the food drive is organized by the National Association of Letter Carriers Local 791, Volunteers of America Western Washington, United Way of Snohomish County and the Snohomish County Labor Council.

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### How to help

To help with the [Letter Carriers Food Drive](#), leave nonperishable food in a bag at your mailbox Saturday. Mail carriers will distribute yellow bags for the drive this week. Volunteers are needed to sort food at post offices in Everett, Edmonds and Lynnwood. Information or to sign up: [www.voaww.org/Get-Involved/Special-EventOne-Time](http://www.voaww.org/Get-Involved/Special-EventOne-Time)

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