



Meal Donation Program

Thank you for providing nourishing meals for women at our shelters.

This document has information and guidelines to help make donating meals easy, clear, and meaningful.

	Helen's Place			Sophia's Place		
	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Meals Needed	40 total (two slots of 20 each)	40 total (two slots of 20 each)	40 total (two slots of 20 each)	21	30	21
Time of Delivery	Between 6:30 and 6:45 am	Between 10:30 and 11 am	Between 6 and 6:30 pm	Between 6:30 and 6:45 am	Between 10:30 and 11 am	Between 6 and 6:30 pm
Location	8045 120th Avenue NE, Suite 200 Kirkland, WA 98033 Note: We share a building with "New Bethlehem Place" Please be sure to deliver to the door to "Helen's Place". Delivery: Please call 425.572.2178 and a staff member will bring a cart out to take the food from your car. You may also use the call box to the right of the door to call down a staff member.			3032 Bellevue Way Bellevue, WA 98004 (behind St. Luke's Lutheran Church) Delivery: Please call 425.896.7385 and a staff member will bring a cart out to take the food from your car.		

Guidelines

- Please follow the [food safety guidelines](#) from Public Health, Seattle and King County
- Cooking a meal
 - The meal must be prepared on the day of donation or the day prior
 - Please prepare a complete meal (main dish, side dish, dessert) for the number of women selected to ensure they all receive a full meal. A meal could also be composed of sandwiches with chips or a salad
- Restaurant meals: you may, if you wish, purchase and deliver a complete meal from a restaurant or purchase and arrange to have the restaurant deliver the meal to the shelter
- Meals must be ready-to-serve and ready-to-eat. There is not enough time to warm up the food so please bring the food ready-to-serve. The meal must be in disposable containers (aluminum trays are a good option). Paper plates and plastic cutlery are welcomed but not required.
- Please only have one person coordinate the entire meal drop off so items do not show up at different times

Good to Know

- The kitchens at Helen's Place & Sophia's Place are warming kitchens. We cannot cook or bake; we can only keep the meal warm until it is served
- The population we serve is older and vulnerable, so please choose easy-to-digest meals. If possible, include an ingredient list, as some of the women have dietary restrictions or allergies.
- Many women are unable to eat spicy food for health reasons or personal preference. Please provide food that has little to no spice so everyone can enjoy it. Offer items such as chopped peppers, hot sauce, or other spicy condiments on the side, allowing individuals to adjust their spice level as desired.
- We ask that you provide variety and inclusivity in your meal selections, keeping the cuisines and dishes neutral and broadly appealing.
- Meal guidelines:
 - The general preference is for meals that include bread, a meat protein, sides, salad, and dessert.
 - Dinner and breakfast should be prepared as hot meals.
 - Lunch may be hot or cold (for example: sandwiches or salads).
 - Specialty meals, such as Indian or Asian dishes, are enjoyed occasionally.
 - Please note that pasta with red sauce and pizza are very commonly donated. We encourage you to explore other ideas using our menu suggestions below.

Meal ideas suggested by donors and clients

Breakfast

- Pancakes and sausage with fruit
- Bacon egg and cheese sandwiches
- French toast casserole with fruit
- Ham and scalloped potatoes
- Grits/ polenta bar
- Breakfast burritos
- Breakfast casseroles and hash browns
- Quiche with fruit
- Bagels, muffins or english muffins with toppings with fruit

Lunch / Dinner

- Taco bar: two people can bring 4 lbs of taco meat; others can bring shells/tortillas and cheese/sour cream/salsa; salad and fruit; dessert (optional)
- Potato bar: russet potatoes or a mix of potatoes with various fillings. Butter, cheese, broccoli, sour cream, bacon bits, scallions, chili. Potatoes can be wrapped in foil, baked in advance and kept warm. Add a salad
- Salad Bar
- Soups: hamburger soup, lentil, split pea, vegetable beef, minestrone, chicken noodle, broccoli cheddar, vegetable, etc.
- Mexican / Chinese / Thai / Stir-fry
- Sandwiches with coleslaw and fruit - pulled pork; grilled meat/vegetable; corned Beef and swiss cheese; tuna
- Hamburgers / Hot dogs and french fries
- Spiral cut ham with scalloped potatoes and vegetable
- Chili with corn bread and fruit salad
- Teriyaki chicken with rice and vegetable
- Meat and vegetable casserole with bread
- Fish and white rice
- Beef and Potatoes / Beef Stroganoff
- Baked Chicken / Chicken Wings
- Shepherd's Pie
- Pot roast
- Beef or pork fridge rice
- Korean BBQ

Making Meals for a Large Group

- Make it a group activity with family, friends, or colleagues.
- Plan the meal (a hot main dish, one or two side dishes); break it up into smaller pieces and have one person make a part of it
- Please have one person make the drop off so items do not show up at different times

Tips by Chef Laura Taylor on cooking for large groups

Laura Taylor is a Certified Personal Chef and has her own business [Honest to Goodness](#). She is a long-time supporter of The Sophia Way and donates meals regularly.

- Be organized – plan ahead and make lists; work out the time it takes to cook the dishes; keep dietary restrictions in mind and focus on nutrition
- A common culinary term is *mise-en-place*, which means everything in its place. It's more than about being organized, it's a mindset. Get everything ready before you start assembling –it makes it simpler, quicker, easier
- Clean environment – before you begin, wipe down and sanitize all surfaces in the kitchen. Wear gloves when handling raw meat, poultry, and seafood. Clean as you go

Menu planning

- Think of simple but flavorful dishes that appeal to all. Don't over salt or over sugar dishes – there are many herbs, spices, and stocks you can use to build up flavors.
- Keep dietary restrictions in mind, especially when cooking for vulnerable communities. Also, think about gluten-free and dairy-free dishes, and vegetarian meals as many are now adopting a meat-free diet.
- Look at build-your-own-meal as an option where women can create their meal with what works best for them.
- Have a colorful meal that is rich in antioxidants – greens, red sauces, roasted vegetables, etc.
- Cook to the seasons – in the colder months, make hearty stick-to-your-ribs kinds of stews, casseroles, chicken pot pies – dishes that are flavorful and creamy. In the summertime, make light and refreshing meals – taco bar or a build-your-own salad.
- Carbs (pasta and rice) are more easily digested than protein or fiber. It also helps balance out the sugar if people are diabetic.
- Heart healthy cooking oils – for high heat cooking I use avocado, grapeseed or coconut oil. For sautéing, I usually use olive oil.
- I'm a huge fan of taking shortcuts as long as it does not sacrifice quality and nutritional value. For instance, I will buy Marinara sauce and add flavoring. I also use frozen or pre cut vegetables or vegetable blends that you can get at grocery stores.

Catering tools

- Thermos-pens to ensure everything is cooked to the proper internal temperature
- Cathay Pacific Catering sells catering crates – cardboard boxes with Styrofoam inserts that help transport food in a safe temperature way, cleanly and safely.
- Get disposable-lidded foil pans – great for transporting food and heating

FAQs

How do I sign up?

[Sign up here](#) to donate a meal.

Can I sign up for a regular donation schedule?

Yes! However, we ask for your consideration in giving more people the opportunity to donate on the weekends. Please sign up for a maximum of two meals a month at each shelter for weekend slots. Email volunteer@sophiaway.org if you would like to sign up for regularly scheduled meals.

Can I be an on-call donor?

We appreciate your willingness to be an on-call donor. When needed, we will email you 48 hours before with a meal request. Remember, you don't have to say 'yes' every time you get a call. Please email volunteer@sophiaway.org to be added to the list of on-call donors.

How should we package the food for delivery?

Please bring the food in disposable containers (aluminum trays are great).

I made soup and would prefer to transport it in the pot. Can I get my pot back?

Yes, when you drop off please ask the staff to transfer it to a different container immediately. Don't leave before getting your pot back.

Do I need to bring paper plates, serving utensils etc.?

No, it is not necessary to bring these items.

Can I donate excess food? (After a party at my home or workplace)

Please call the shelters to check if food is needed and to coordinate delivery. Please keep the food frozen or refrigerated and covered, until delivery.

Can we serve and eat with the women?

We ask that mealtimes be a special time for the women to dine together. We do offer volunteer opportunities to assist in the kitchen during meals. Please email volunteer@sophiaway.org for details about a Shelter Assistant.

Can I get a tax receipt?

Please send us an estimate of the cost and the time taken to make the meal, and we will email a tax receipt. If your employer matches donations, you can double the value of your donation!

May I post on social media about our donation?

We would love for you to share about the meal you donated. Please tag The Sophia Way so that we can reshare. Some guidelines:

- take pics at drop-off **outside** the shelter (photography is not permitted inside)
- pictures of shelter staff must be taken only with their verbal consent
- please never take photos of clients