



# Meal Donation Program

*Thank you for nourishing the women in our shelters.*

## Quick Start: What You Need to Know

New to donating a meal? These six points cover the essentials.

1. Sign up at [sophiaway.org/nourish](https://sophiaway.org/nourish) - choose a shelter and a shift
2. Prepare a complete meal (main, side, dessert) for the number of women in the shift - cook the day of or the day before.
3. Bring food hot and ready to eat. The shelter kitchens can keep food warm but cannot cook or bake.
4. Bring the meal in disposable containers (foil trays work great). No need to bring plates or cutlery.
5. Arrive within the delivery window and call when you arrive so staff can meet you at the door with a cart.
6. Designate one person to handle the drop-off so everything arrives together.

## Meals Required

Meal	Helen's Place	Delivery time		Sophia's Place	Delivery time
Breakfast	40 total 2 x 20	6:30 – 6:45 am		21	6:30 – 6:45 am
Lunch	40 total 2 x 20	10:30 – 11 am		30	10:30 – 11 am
Dinner	40 total 2 x 20	6:00 – 6:30 pm		21	6:00 – 6:30 pm

## Shelter Locations

	Helen's Place	Sophia's Place
<b>Address</b>	8045 120th Ave NE, Suite 200 Kirkland, WA 98033 <i>Note: We share a building with New Bethlehem Place. Look for the Helen's Place door.</i>	3032 Bellevue Way Bellevue, WA 98004 <i>Behind St. Luke's Lutheran Church.</i>
<b>Call on arrival</b>	425.572.2178	425.896.7385

## Meal Guidelines

### Logistics

- Cook the day of or the day before, freshness matters.
- Prepare a complete meal: main dish, side dish, and dessert. Sandwiches with chips or a salad also work well.
- Food must be hot and ready to eat at delivery. The shelter kitchens can only hold food warm, they cannot cook or bake.
- Pack everything in disposable containers (aluminium foil trays are ideal). Paper plates and plastic cutlery are welcome but not required.
- Designate one person to handle the entire drop-off so all items arrive together.
- You may also purchase a complete meal from a restaurant and have it delivered directly to the shelter.

### Dietary Needs & Food Choices

- Our residents are older and may have health sensitivities. Choose easy-to-digest, broadly appealing meals.
- Spice: keep it mild. Offer hot sauce or chopped peppers on the side for those who want it.
- Include an ingredient list if possible as some women have allergies or dietary restrictions.
- Think variety: pasta with red sauce and pizza are the most frequently donated meals. We encourage you to explore other options!
- Breakfast and dinner should be served hot. Lunch can be hot or cold.

**Food safety:** Please follow Public Health Seattle & King County [food safety guidelines](#).

## Meal Ideas

Suggestions from donors and clients. Use these as a starting point or get creative!

## Breakfast

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

## Lunch & Dinner

- Taco bar — taco meat, shells or tortillas, cheese, sour cream, salsa, salad and fruit
- Potato bar — baked potatoes with fillings: butter, cheese, broccoli, sour cream, bacon bits, chilli
- Soups: hamburger, lentil, split pea, vegetable beef, minestrone, chicken noodle, broccoli cheddar
- Sandwiches (pulled pork, corned beef, grilled meat/veg, tuna) with coleslaw and fruit
- Hamburgers or hot dogs with french fries
- Spiral cut ham with scalloped potatoes and vegetables
- Chilli with cornbread and fruit salad
- Teriyaki chicken with rice and vegetables
- Meat and vegetable casserole with bread
- Shepherd's pie or pot roast
- Beef stroganoff or beef and potatoes
- Baked chicken or chicken wings
- Stir-fry, Korean BBQ, or other Asian-inspired dishes
- Salad bar

## Cooking for a Large Group

Preparing a meal for 20 to 40 people is doable. Here's how to make it easier.

### Team it up

- Make it a group activity; divide the meal into parts (main, sides, dessert) and assign each to a different person.
- One person should still handle the drop-off so everything arrives together.

### Tips from Chef Laura Taylor

Laura is a Certified Personal Chef, founder of [Honest to Goodness](#), and a long-time Sophia Way meal donor.

- Plan ahead. Write out your menu, calculate timing, and prep everything before you start cooking (chefs call this mise en place).
- Keep meals simple but flavourful. Use herbs, spices, and good stock rather than heavy salt or sugar.
- Think about dietary needs: offer gluten-free, dairy-free, or vegetarian options where possible.
- Consider build-your-own formats (taco bar, potato bar, salad bar) so women can customize their plate.
- Cook to the season: hearty stews and casseroles in winter; lighter tacos, grilled dishes, and salads in summer.
- Carbs (pasta, rice) are easy on digestion. This matters for residents managing diabetes or other conditions.
- Shortcuts are fine! Pre-made marinara, frozen pre-cut vegetables, and grocery store shortcuts save time without sacrificing quality.
- Bring a food thermometer to confirm dishes are at a safe serving temperature.
- Use disposable foil trays with lids — they go from oven to car to shelter with minimal fuss.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How do I sign up?

Sign up at [sophiaway.org/nourish](https://sophiaway.org/nourish) to choose a shelter, meal, and date.

### Can I sign up on a regular schedule?

Yes! To give others a chance, we ask that you sign up for no more than two weekend meals per month at each shelter. You can email [volunteer@sophiaway.org](mailto:volunteer@sophiaway.org) to arrange a regular schedule.

### Can I be an on-call donor?

Absolutely. When a slot needs filling, we'll email you 48 hours in advance. You're never obligated to say yes. Email [volunteer@sophiaway.org](mailto:volunteer@sophiaway.org) to be added to the on-call list.

### **Can I donate leftover food from a party or event?**

Please call the shelter first to check whether food is needed. Keep the food refrigerated or frozen and covered until delivery.

### **I made soup in a pot. Can I get my pot back?**

Yes, just ask staff to transfer it to a container when you arrive, and wait until they hand your pot back before you leave.

### **Can I serve and eat with the women?**

Mealtimes are a private, comfortable space for the women. We do have Shelter Assistant volunteer opportunities to help in the kitchen. Email [volunteer@sophiaway.org](mailto:volunteer@sophiaway.org) for details.

### **Can I get a tax receipt?**

Yes, send an estimate of your food costs and time to [volunteer@sophiaway.org](mailto:volunteer@sophiaway.org) and we'll email a receipt. If your employer matches donations, your contribution can go even further.

### **Can I post about my donation on social media?**

We'd love that! Please tag The Sophia Way so we can reshare! A few guidelines: take photos outside the shelter only; photograph staff only with their verbal consent; never photograph clients.

## **Ready to get started?**

Sign up at [sophiaway.org/nourish](https://sophiaway.org/nourish) or email us at [volunteer@sophiaway.org](mailto:volunteer@sophiaway.org)