



## GO Teams Guides: Free Little Pantry

A little pantry is an easy way for neighbors to help neighbors by providing free food and hygiene supplies. To set up a little pantry, you pick a location, stock it with supplies, and get the word out. Then it's open to anyone in the neighborhood to take what they need and leave what they can. There is a lot more information at the [Free Little Pantry](#) website.

### Tips to Get Started

- **Pick a location.** Find a location for your small pantry that is easy and safe to access. Approach several host sites and go with the most enthusiastic. Community buy-in goes a long way toward a successful little pantry.
- **Follow local laws.** Pay attention to whether the location you picked is on public or private property. You need to get permission for private property and may need to get permits for public property. There may also be laws related to giving away bottled water or food. In some places it is simply not possible to create a little pantry legally. If this is the case for you, it may be time to get involved in advocacy.
- **Build your pantry!** There are few options for what to use as your pantry itself. If your team has handy members, you could build your own pantry. Here is [one construction option](#) from the Free Little Pantry website. If you don't have any members to build the pantry themselves, consider approaching community groups such as a woodshop class at a local school or scouts troop to see if they'd be interested in making it a group project. Local carpenters might be willing to donate their time and/or materials to your cause.



Southeastern Virginia Atheists, Skeptics & Humanists's Free Little Pantry



You can also upcycle items like old shelving units with doors that can be converted with small adjustments. Old newspaper vending boxes are a great option particularly because they are designed to be water tight. Call your local paper to see if they have any for sale or are willing to donate to the cause.

- **Stock up.** What to stock your pantry with can be an overwhelming question. There are four easy things to keep in mind when deciding on stock:

1. Additional items of the staples you already buy
2. Shelf-stable foods
3. Food in sealed containers
4. Food that can handle extreme temperatures

Some examples of good foods to include depending on the season are protein bars, dried fruit, rice, dry beans, pasta, water bottles, and shelf-stable soy milk.

- **What else?** Your little pantry doesn't need to stock only food. Consider including items that are essential, yet expensive such as first-aid supplies, menstruation products, dog/cat food, diapers, and toiletries.



- **Get everyone involved.** Make [food drives](#) for your pantry a regular part of your community's activities. See if there are other organizations in your community that would do a drive to



benefit your little pantry. Don't forget about GO Team grants (for Silver and Gold Level teams) as a potential funding source to fill holes that your drives don't fill.

- **Get the word out.** Folks will find your pantry on their own, especially if you have a good location. But it doesn't hurt to get the word out in other ways. Consider making a Facebook page or other social media accounts dedicated to your pantry. You can also put up flyers around your community near your pantry.
- **Put yourselves on the map!** The mini pantry movement has a [map and listings](#) of free little pantries all across the world. Putting your pantry on the map will help folks who need it find it.
- **Keep it going.** Most little pantry operators will find that not only is food being taken, but that food is also being left without any effort by them. However, before you launch be sure to have a plan to make sure it's checked on regularly either way. Don't try to keep it stocked at all times. You won't be able to do that and having an empty pantry from time to time may encourage your wider community to step up.

For more ideas check out GO Teams fundraising idea guides on our [resources](#) page!

## Questions or Concerns?

If you need help with planning your event or have additional questions, the best way to contact GO Humanity is to use the [contact webform](#), which enables us to track the resolution of your question.