



United Way of Greater Houston

DO IT YOURSELF!

BREAKFAST BAGS

FOR SENIORS



For homebound seniors or families in shelters, they may not have family and friends to talk to or send them greeting cards. Receiving a greeting card for a special occasion or “just because” can make a person feel less lonely and know that there are people in the community who care for them! The volunteer project lead can select a client focus for the cards such as seniors, children, or veterans, and select a theme for the Breakfast Bags such as Valentine’s Day, Veterans Day, birthdays, or a winter holiday.

SUPPLY LIST

Approximate cost per bag is **\$1-\$2**, depending on current vendor options, prices, and items selected

The list provided below is a standard list of acceptable items for breakfast bags. Depending on which partner agency you are matched with, there may be additional nutrition requirements or requests. United Way staff will help you finalize a customized supply list as needed.

<p>PEANUT BUTTER CRACKER PACKET one packet per bag</p>	<p>OATMEAL PACKET one packet per bag</p> <p>Any flavor is acceptable.</p>
<p>BOX OF RAISINS one box per bag</p>	<p>SOFT GRANOLA BAR/BREAKFAST BAR one bar per bag</p>
<p>MINI WATER BOTTLE one 8oz bottle per bag</p> <p>Optional to include</p>	<p>BROWN PAPER BAG one per bag</p>
<p>MARKERS variety of colors</p> <p>Use to decorate each bag.</p>	<p>TAPE OR STICKERS</p> <p>We recommend using stickers/tape to close the bags to allow for easier accessibility</p>

VENDOR AND SUPPLY OPTIONS

Bag making supplies can be found at a variety of online and in-person stores. Prices can vary widely throughout the year and at different stores. Below is a list of vendors:

- [Amazon Wishlist](#) and [Walmart shopping list](#) of recommended supplies
- **Costco, Sam’s Club or other big box stores** to buy items in bulk
- **H-E-B, Kroger, or Target** or other local grocery stores.

One way to engage your coworkers and decrease the overall cost of project supplies is to encourage people to buy one or more of the items on the list as part of a supply drive. This can be a meaningful way for volunteers to involve their families and allow people who are unable to attend the packing session to participate. Please inspect all donated food items for damaged and expired goods.

If you do host a supply drive leading up to the project, it can be difficult to estimate the incoming supplies ahead of time. You may need to supplement collected donations to offset low participation or missing items. There are also times when your colleagues will exceed your expectations. Be prepared for either situation.

PROJECT TIPS

- Clean and prepare your project space.

United Way advises all volunteers to abide by the [CDC health and safety guidelines](#) when shopping for, preparing your select projects, and delivering completed kits to agencies. Here are some specific guidelines for how to participate in Days of Caring safely

- **Days of Caring Safety:**

- Please wash your hands before starting to prepare the volunteer project(s) and ensure your workspace and all materials have been disinfected.
- Use online ordering for supplies (shopping lists provided) or use social distancing while shopping for project supplies.
- When delivering your completed kits to an agency, wear a mask and follow the listed instructions. Each agency has procedures in place to ensure their safety and yours

- **Estimated time per bag**

Each paper bag takes 5-10 minutes to decorate. Assembly of 100 breakfast bags typically takes 15 minutes, depending on the number of volunteers present.

- **Quality check**

Remember to check for expiration dates and damaged goods for all the food items used. This is a task you can ask volunteers to help with to add tasks to your project time.

- **Item/supply count**

Prior to the project time, coordinators should ensure there is one (1) of each food item per breakfast bag.

SET UP TIPS FOR ONSITE PROJECTS

- **Set-up two areas**

Set up a volunteer workspace for decorating the bags and an assembly area for placing the items in the bags. The food items can be unboxed and placed in a bin for easy access.

- **Decorating area**

Coordinators should place the brown paper bags, markers, stickers, and other bag decorating supplies in caddies on tables for volunteers to utilize. Volunteers may decorate all the bags first before assembling the bags at the next station.

- **Assembly area**

There are at least two methods you can use to place the food in the bags:

Assembly Line style

This is the most efficient method and takes the shortest amount of time.

- Volunteers should choose a position around the assembly line. This process works best when there are two lines simultaneously moving at once, one on each side of the table.
- The first position of volunteers is responsible for opening the brown paper bags and then passing them to the first food item. As the process moves along, each volunteer positioned at the assembly table will put their designated food item in the bag, then pass the bag to the next volunteer.
- Once all items have been put into the breakfast bag, the last volunteer will fold the top of the bag over one time and place a piece of tape or sticker to close the bag, keeping the items from spilling out.
- All breakfast bags should be placed in boxes as they are completed.

Individual Assembly style

This style will take a bit longer but allows for more spacing between volunteers.

- Lay out the supplies along a table with the bags at one end, supplies in the middle, and tape at the end, similar to the set-up for an assembly line.
- Each volunteer can walk down the line, filling a bag and placing completed bags in a box.
- This method may allow for greater social distancing and hygienic conditions by limiting the number of people touching each bag.



When your breakfast bags are complete, United Way staff will work with you to coordinate delivery of the breakfast bags to a community partner. This may require someone from your organization dropping off the completed kits at a mutually agreed upon time.

Questions or issues? Contact your United Way representative or the Volunteer Engagement Team at DaysofCaring@unitedwayhouston.org.