

Onion Bag Food Drive Program Plan

For Michigan Knights of Columbus Councils

This program supports the **Knights of Columbus Food for Families initiative** under the *Faith in Action – Family Programs*. Councils invite parish families to take home large red mesh “onion bags,” fill them with non-perishable food items, and return them to benefit a local food pantry. The effort promotes charity, family involvement, and community support for those facing food insecurity.

Councils may tailor this plan to the needs and size of their parish. The program also qualifies for **Supreme Council rebates** (\$100 per 1,000 lbs. of food donated or \$500 in monetary donations, up to \$500 per council per fraternal year) and counts toward the **Columbian Award**.

Step-by-Step Execution Plan

1. Appoint a Program Chairman

The Grand Knight appoints a chairman—such as the Family Director or Community Director—to lead the drive. Form a small committee of **4–6 Knights and family members** to assist with planning and operations.

2. Obtain Pastor Approval

Meet with the pastor **6–8 weeks in advance** to present the program.

Explain:

- Parishioners receive an empty mesh bag with instructions.
- Bags are filled with suggested non-perishable items and returned on collection weekend.

Request:

- Permission to distribute bags after Masses.
- Space for collection (parking lot, narthex, etc.).
- Support through bulletin notes, pulpit announcements, or parish communications.

3. Partner with a Local Food Pantry

Contact a nearby food pantry, food bank, or soup kitchen.

Discuss:

- Their most-needed food items (typically non-perishables; avoid glass).
- Capacity to accept donations on the designated drop-off date.

Obtain:

- A **signed receipt** for all donations to qualify for Supreme rebates.

4. Purchase Red Mesh Bags

Use **50-lb capacity red mesh onion/potato bags** (breathable polypropylene with drawstring). These are durable, visible, and reusable.

Suggested bulk suppliers (300–1,000 bags, approx. \$0.60–\$0.70 each):

- Glacier Valley Enterprise – glacierv.com
 - Deebree – deebree.com
 - Globe Bag Company – globebag.com
 - Sandbaggy – sandbaggy.com
- (Or purchase through Amazon and similar retailers.)

Estimate **one bag per 2–4 parish families** (e.g., 200–500 bags for a mid-sized parish).

5. Set Dates, Times, and Locations

Choose dates aligned with a parish season of giving (Lent, Advent, etc.).

Example Schedule:

- **Bag Distribution:** Two consecutive weekends after all Masses
Example: March 1–2 and March 8–9, 2026
- **Collection Weekend:** One weekend, 2–3 weeks later
Example: March 22–23, 2026
- **Collection Site:** Church parking lot (drive-through style) or near main entrances
- **Times:** After all Masses, with optional extended hours (e.g., 9 AM–1 PM)

Adjust based on parish needs and calendar.

6. Promotion

Begin **four weeks before distribution**.

Use:

- Bulletin announcements and pulpit messages
- Parish website, email blasts, and social media
- Posters and flyers with K of C branding

Encourage Knights to wear **K of C apparel** for visibility.

7. Execution

Distribution Weekend

- Knights greet parishioners and hand out bags with attached instruction letters.
- Briefly explain the drive and collection date.

Collection Weekend

- Set up a drive-through drop-off station.
- Weigh or sort donations on-site when possible.
- Load items for delivery to the designated food pantry.

Delivery

- Transport donations to the food pantry.
- Involve families and Knights—photos are encouraged for council and parish communication.

8. Reporting

Submit:

- **Form #10057 (Food for Families)** to Supreme for rebates
- **Form #10784** for program credit toward the Columbian Award

Support and Resources

Use K of C branded promotional materials from:
supplies.kofc.org

If needed, councils may:

- Allocate funds for bag purchases
- Hold a small fundraiser to offset costs
- Recover expenses through Supreme rebates

For additional guidance, contact your **District Deputy, Diocesan Program Director**, or the **Michigan State Family Director**.

Vivat Jesus!

Example Letter to Include with Bags

(Place on council letterhead or attach as a bag insert.)

Knights of Columbus Council [Number] – [Parish Name] Parish Onion Bag Food Drive – Helping Feed Local Families in Need

Dear Parishioner,

Thank you for participating in our **Onion Bag Food Drive**, organized by the Knights of Columbus in partnership with **[Local Food Pantry Name]**. Your generosity helps support families in our community who are facing hunger.

Please fill the enclosed **reusable red mesh bag** with non-perishable food items.

Suggested Items (No glass containers, please):

- Canned vegetables, fruits, soups, tuna, or chicken
- Pasta, rice, dry beans
- Peanut butter, jelly
- Cereal, oatmeal
- Shelf-stable milk or boxed meals

Your contribution makes a meaningful difference. Last year, Knights across Michigan collected **millions of pounds of food** through drives like this!

Please return your filled bag on:

[Drop-Off Dates]

Time: **After all Masses or 9:00 AM–1:00 PM**

Location: **[Church Name] Parking Lot (drive-through collection)**

If you are unable to fill a bag, monetary donations are welcome.

Checks may be made payable to:

Knights of Columbus Council [Number] (Memo: *Food Drive*)

Thank you for your generosity and for living our faith through charity.

Vivat Jesus!

[Grand Knight Name]

Grand Knight, Council [Number]

[Contact Email/Phone]