VEAP is seeking volunteer van drivers!

Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People

Make a gift to VEAP on the biggest day of giving in Minnesota! Your November 14 gift will support nutritious food and a full suite of social services to help people living in your community. Donate online: veap.org/donate

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Before you put the turkey in the oven, stop by the Mall of America on Thanksgiving morning from 7 - 10 AM to join VEAP in a special walk to end hunger. Email Kial Nelson to learn more: kialn@veap.org

Of course we cannot support that many families, children, adults and seniors without the time and energy that our volunteers give to fuel our work. We’ve already eclipsed 45,000 volunteer hours from more than 2,100 community members! I love that VEAP brings people together here at our building and throughout Bloomington, Richfield, Edina and South Minneapolis. Thank you!

Joe McDonald, VEAP CEO
VEAP’s staff and volunteers work hard to ensure our community has access to fresh, healthy food. To reach everyone—including those without transportation or with limited mobility—VEAP’s Mobile Food Pantry is readily available to meet the need. We recently expanded our reach to include the Fort Snelling Upper Post Veteran’s Community. Currently the only residential building at Fort Snelling, Upper Post is a permanent supportive housing residency that prioritizes veterans who are currently experiencing homelessness. Although the site is a bit outside of VEAP’s service territory, we learned that many of the tenants at Upper Post were lacking access to nutritious food—and they were worried about having enough for the holiday season ahead. We’re pleased to share that with the support of our passionate volunteer corps, we recently held our first food distribution at Upper Post and delivered food directly to 27 enthusiastic residents! VEAP has made the decision to add Upper Post as a seventh monthly destination for our Mobile Food Pantry, fully loaded with fruits and vegetables, dairy, deli items and other food staples. We’ll be making a special visit just in time for Thanksgiving to ensure tenants have exactly the food they need for this special time of year. Everyone deserves the right to a warm meal with their family—especially those who have represented our country with their service. VEAP will continue to meet the needs of our neighbors, with both integrity and compassion. We appreciate your support!

Jana, a nursing student and business management professional, never thought she’d fall on hard times. But after experiencing depression and other health issues, she was suddenly in-and-out of the hospital and could no longer work full-time hours. VEAP became a lifeline for her. “I would have no way of putting food on my table without VEAP,” she says, “I simply could not make it on my own.” Jana visits our Food Pantry each month and receives support from our Social Services team to work on building a financial plan for her future. With the money she saves from visiting the Food Pantry, Jana can prioritize other expenses, like her medical bills. Jana remarks that VEAP volunteers have made her feel completely supported, “Everyone is so open. The volunteers truly have caring hearts, and they listen to me when no one else will.” Jana says she’s been inspired by all the positive energy she receives every time she visits VEAP and she’s even made cookies for the staff and volunteers as a thank you. She’s now feeling optimistic about her future. We’re rooting for you, Jana!

As a volunteer van driver, VEAP volunteer Diane Shepperd gives rides home from the Food Pantry to shoppers without transportation, and loves getting to know her passengers. “When you are in the van with people after they picked up food from the VEAP Food Pantry you really hear some stories. I had no idea that people right in our community, our neighborhood, almost right next door need help.” Food Pantry shoppers’ gratitude truly stands out for Diane, and as a volunteer driver, she’s learning what’s most important to them. “One gentleman told me about the meat he got from the pantry and how much he was looking forward to barbecuing. Food and family are important to him. He is a widower and his family means so much to him.” Diane highly recommends serving as a volunteer van driver: “It’s really nice and easy! And the commitment is very light.” Thank you for your service, Diane!

Learn more about how you can become a volunteer van driver: veap.org/volunteer

Did you know? All of VEAP’s shuttle vans are donations from Western National Insurance. This fall, they donated yet another van to our fleet! We are so grateful for their continued support.

Help support local families this Thanksgiving by making a donation to VEAP! Visit veap.org/donate to give online

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

“Especially this holiday season, you helped me feel ‘normal’ to be able to sit down at the family’s table knowing I did not have to go empty-handed. That feeling means everything!”

-Herb, Food Pantry shopper

Connecting veterans with food, just in time for the holidays

FOOD PANTRY AS A “LIFELINE”

This year alone, VEAP has

provided nearly $115,000 of financial assistance to

251 individuals like Jana.
Connecting veterans with food, just in time for the holidays

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“I would have no way of putting food on my table without VEAP,” she says, “I simply could not make it on my own.”

Jana visits our Food Pantry each month and receives support from our Social Services team to work on building a financial plan for her future. With the money she saves from visiting the Food Pantry, Jana can prioritize other expenses, like her medical bills.

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It’s been a busy and fruitful 2019 for VEAP. As we head into the holiday season, I am so thankful that we have supported more people than ever before through our food, transportation and social services programs. In our effort to reduce barriers to access to healthy food, our Mobile Food Pantry is now visiting seven sites throughout our service area, and has logged over 6,000 visits. Here at our on-site pantry, we’ve had more than 90,000 visits and distributed 3,058,815 pounds of food (more than 50% fresh produce) through September. And we’ve already helped more families avoid eviction and homelessness with our housing grants than we did in all of 2018.

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