

Growing Together Iowa:

**Gleaning Video Training
Supplemental Resources**

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These resources will be available in the Growing Together Community Donation Gardening Toolkit (<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/localfoods/community-donation-gardening-toolkit/>)

Resource A: Gleaning FAQ

What is “gleaning?”

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines gleaning as: “...the act of collecting excess fresh foods from farms, gardens, farmers markets, grocers, restaurants, state/county fairs, or any other sources in order to provide it to those in need.”¹ This definition perhaps more accurately describes food recovery or food rescue. While these efforts are related, gleaning often involves building a relationship with the farmer and the farm, where rescuing produce from a grocery store for donation does not². What that can mean is going out to the farm and harvesting the produce or collecting remaining produce at the end of a farmers’ market. It is important to remember that gleaning involves collecting high quality produce that is fit for human consumption.

What form can gleaning take?

Gleaning can take a variety of forms. A large gleaning group in Vermont, Salvation Farms, got its start working with just one farmer.³ They had a strong relationship with the farmer, and they wanted to start small. Other gleaning groups, including Feed Iowa First in Cedar Rapids, have a large network of farms they glean from when produce is available.⁴ Gleaning can also happen at farmers’ markets. For more information on gleaning from farmers’ markets, please see Resource E.

Why is there produce available to glean on farms? Doesn’t the farmer need to sell all of the produce?

Boston Area Gleaners estimates that up to 20% of food grown on farms is never harvested.⁵ A variety of factors can lead to this situation:

- Farms are exposed to all of the elements, and with more extreme weather events, they may plant more than they know they can sell to mitigate risk.
- A market may fall through, leaving a farmer with more produce than she or he can sell.
- The produce may be difficult to market but still good to eat. Think of a twisted carrot, a turnip that is slightly too large, or peppers that are too small and won’t have a chance to mature before the fall frost.

¹ United States Department of Agriculture. (2010). *Let’s Glean! United We Serve Toolkit*. Retrieved April 2019 from: https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda_gleaning_toolkit.pdf

² Laurie J. Beyranevand, Amber Leasure-Earnhardt, and Carrie Scrufari, *Models for Success: A Set of Case Studies Examining Gleaning Efforts Across the United States*. Center for Agriculture and Food Systems, Vermont Law School. South Royalton, VT. January 2017.

³ Salvation Farms. (2019). Retrieved March 2019 from <https://www.salvationfarms.org/>.

⁴ Feed Iowa First. (2019). *Don’t Waste Donate*. Retrieved April 2019 from <https://www.feediowa1st.com/>.

⁵ Boston Area Gleaners. (2019). *Gleaning is harvesting surplus farm crops, preventing waste & nourishing local families*. Retrieved April 2019 from <https://www.bostonareagleaners.org/>.

As Theresa Snow, Executive Director of the gleaning initiative Salvation Farms in Vermont, puts it, “It’s not really the farmer’s fault when there is food loss on farms. Gleaners help move food into the community when farms can’t afford to.”⁶

When do folks glean, and what kinds of produce can be gleaned?

Any type of produce can be gleaned, it’s just a matter of what the farmer has available when. Crops that need to be picked daily or multiple times a week, like zucchini, tomatoes, cucumbers, and eggplant, are often gleaned to maintain fruit production when the farmer has a gap in his or her market.

Weather events can also result in gleaning opportunities. If a frost is coming unexpectedly, farmers might call a gleaner to harvest what they know they won’t be able to sell. If heat causes premature bolting in greens like lettuce, bok choy, or spinach, farmers might call a gleaner to prevent widespread loss.

Production practices can also lead to gleaning opportunities. For example, if a farmer needs to till a crop under to plant another crop but there is still produce in the field, s/he might call a gleaner to harvest the area before tilling. If they have extra land, farmers will sometimes plant a low-maintenance crop like winter squash for a gleaning group to come harvest later in the season.

Where can gleaned produce be donated? What considerations should folks make when deciding where to donate the produce?

Fresh produce is in high demand at local donation sites. Some common donation sites include food pantries, food banks, schools, community centers, and congressional meal sites.

The terms “food pantry” and “food bank” are often conflated, but they actually mean different things. Food pantries distribute food directly to clients, whereas food banks are warehouses that store food for distribution to food pantries and other donation sites. Because of the relatively small scale of gleaning initiatives, and because there are more food pantries than food banks in Iowa, it is more likely that gleaners will work with a food pantry than a food bank.

To view a state-wide map of donation sites that have received produce from Growing Together projects in the past year, visit the Growing Together Community Donation Gardening Toolkit at: <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/localfoods/community-donation-gardening-toolkit/>

It is important to discuss the gleaning project with the donation site personnel before the first glean. Discussing details like access to refrigeration, hours and frequency of operation, and the needs and preferences of clients at the donation site can help your group determine where to bring the gleaned produce. Resource B will help gleaners think through some of these details.

⁶ Laurie J. Beyranevand, Amber Leasure-Earnhardt, and Carrie Scrufari, *Models for Success: A Set of Case Studies Examining Gleaning Efforts Across the United States*. Center for Agriculture and Food Systems, Vermont Law School. South Royalton, VT. January 2017.

Why is food safety so important? In my garden, I don't always use the practices outlined in the Growing Together food safety video (<https://youtu.be/WTqn1NDoQM0>) and I've never had a health problem. After all, I'm using organic practices.

It is always important to follow food safety best practices when growing or gleaning produce for donation. Although these practices may differ from what you do in your home garden, this food is being eaten by folks who represent a wide range of ages and health statuses. Consider that clients at the donation site might not have health insurance, or might not be able to take time off work to get the care they need without stressing other areas of their budget.

Utilizing organic practices is an excellent way to keep chemicals out of the environment. However, just because a farm or garden uses organic practices does not automatically mean the produce is safe to eat. Like conventional farms, organic farms can still be susceptible to outbreaks of E.coli and salmonella, which are preventable by washing hands and using other food safety best practices, and which have nothing to do with chemical usage.

Although it is true that donors are protected from liability by the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, it does not protect donors in cases of gross negligence. It is important to follow food safety best practices to make sure the safest, most delicious produce is donated.

What is the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, and why is it important?

The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act was passed by President Clinton in 1996 to encourage farms and retail outlets to donate food without fear of criminal or civil liability should the food later be found to have caused harm. This act protects food donors when they donate to a non-profit except in instances of gross negligence or misconduct.⁷ Farmers and other food donors may be wary of donating fresh produce if they are unaware of this act, so it is an important act for gleaners to be able to explain to project collaborators.

Should our gleaning group help the farmer with farm tasks unrelated to gleaning to thank them for their time and donation?

Sometimes, gleaning groups will offer to help farmers with tasks unrelated to gleaning like weeding or harvesting for market. While this can be a great way to build a positive relationship with farmers and thank them for their donation, it is important for volunteers who are gleaning with a particular organization to stay in line with the guidelines of that organization. If the organization you are volunteering with prohibits volunteers from this kind of activity, volunteers should communicate that to the farmer before the first glean. While farmers will not necessarily expect volunteers to help with tasks outside of gleaning, it is always a good idea to discuss expectations beforehand. Outside of helping with farm tasks, small gestures can also strengthen

⁷Feeding America (2018). *Protecting our Food Partners: The Federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act*. Retrieved April 2019 from: <https://www.feedingamerica.org/about-us/partners/become-a-product-partner/food-partners>

collaborations between project partners. For example, if the gleaning group has a website or an active newsletter, they can list the farms they partner with and thank them for their donation.

Resource B: Brainstorm – Plan & Connect!

Before your start to glean, consider who your group should connect with. Making connections in the planning stages of the project, rather than after the project has already started, can help build a strong foundation for the collaborative initiative.

Consider...	Notes
<p>What donation sites are in your county? Some common donation sites include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food pantries & food banks • Schools • Community Centers • Congressional meal sites <p>To view a state-wide map of donation sites that have received produce from Growing Together projects in the past year, visit the Growing Together Community Donation Gardening Toolkit at: https://www.extension.iastate.edu/localfoods/community-donation-gardening-toolkit/</p>	
<p>What produce growers are in your county?</p> <p>Use the Iowa State University Farm, Food and Enterprise Development CSA directory to find a farm near you: https://www.extension.iastate.edu/localfoods/iowa-csa-directory/</p>	
<p>What volunteers will participate in the project? How will your group attract volunteers?</p>	

Resource C: Gleaning Checklist

Different gleaning operations will require different supplies. Talk amongst your team about what will and won't be applicable in your situation. But please note that the key concepts outlined in the food safety video linked here (<https://youtu.be/WTqn1NDoQM0>) should always be followed.

- Handwashing supplies
 - Portable sink, soap, and paper towels
- Sanitized harvest tools
 - May include knives, scissors, or loppers
 - Check in with the farmer about what crop(s) are available to harvest
 - For greens, you should bring knives or scissors
 - For winter squash, bring clippers or loppers
 - For tomatoes, just bring your hands!
 - If you're unsure what tools to bring for the job, the farmer may have suggestions.
- Sanitized harvest totes, crates, buckets, or bags
 - What you harvest the produce into depends on what you're harvesting. Potatoes can be packed in milk crates. Tomatoes should be packed in shallow harvest totes. Greens can be bunched or bagged, and packed in crates or cardboard boxes.
- Rubber bands or twist ties
 - These are useful to bunch kale or collards, for example.
- Sanitizer solution
 - Be sure to dilute whatever solution you're using per the sanitizer instructions. For example, every gallon of water only needs 1 tablespoon of bleach when sanitizing items that come in contact with food.
- Clean vehicle to transport produce
- Coolers, ice packs, or a cooled vehicle
 - This will help keep produce at a safe temperature before it reaches its final destination.
- Record-keeping supplies
 - Blank record-keeping templates
 - Scrap paper
 - Pens
 - Clipboard
 - Scale to weigh harvested produce
 - Volunteer sign-in sheet
- On-farm safety
 - First aid kit
 - Close-toed shoes and weather-appropriate attire
 - Sun protection
 - Earplugs (in case heavy equipment is in operation near the group)

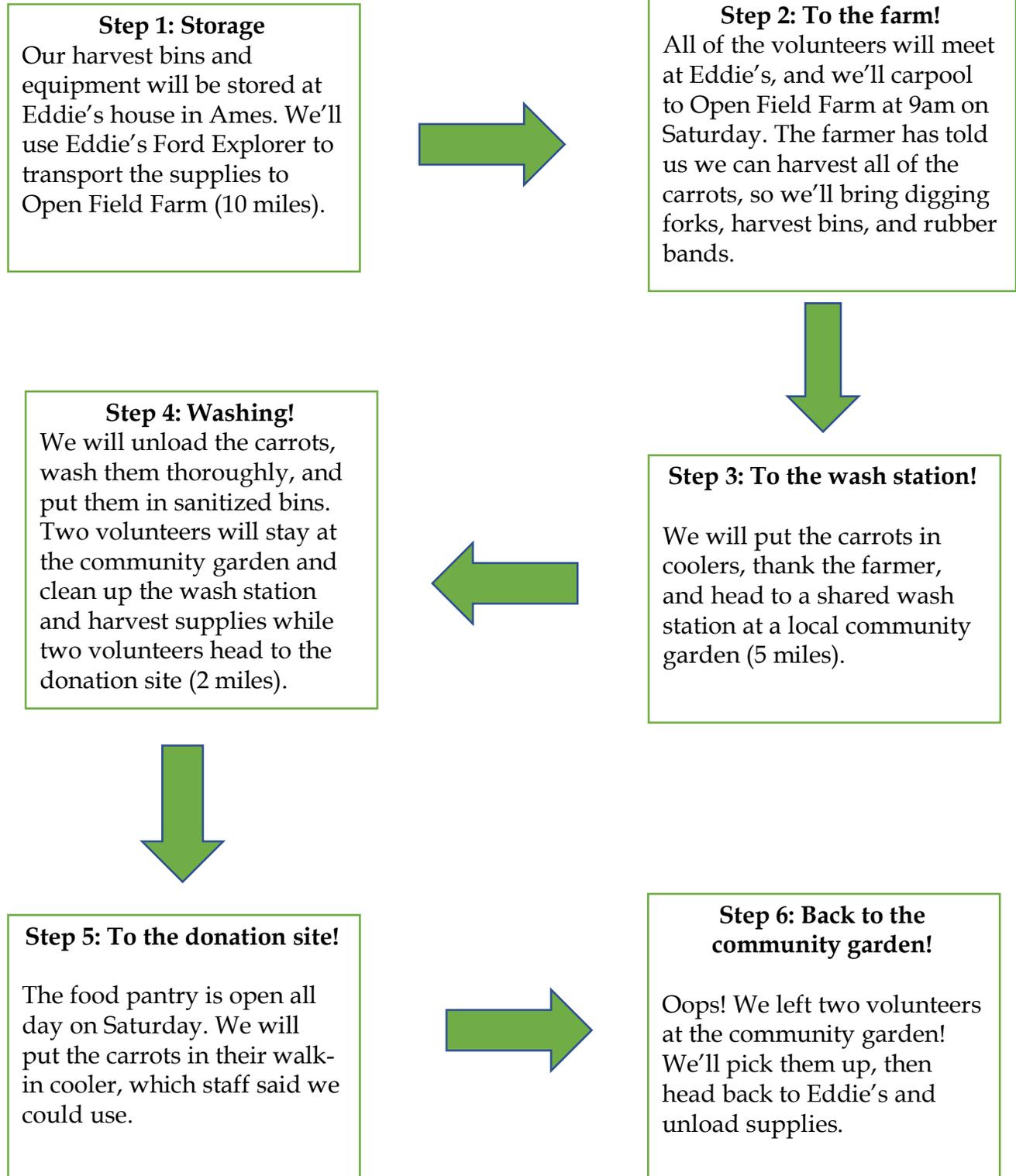
*Be sure to check in with the farmer ahead of time to discuss any special safety considerations on his/her farm.

Resource D:
Brainstorm - Transportation!

How will the produce move from the farm to the donation site?

Questions to consider:	Strategy:
Where will the gleaning supplies be stored?	
<p>What vehicle will be used to transport supplies to the farm, and produce from the farm?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have access to a refrigerated truck? If not, what steps will you take to keep the produce at a safe temperature? • Is the vehicle clean and covered? • Will folks carpool to the farm? If not, how much parking is available at the farm? 	
<p>Where will the produce be washed?</p> <p>(Keep in mind - you should not assume the farmer will allow you to use his/her facility to wash produce without checking.)</p>	
<p>Where will the produce be donated?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the donation site's hours? • Do they accept fresh produce? • What is their storage capacity? • Contact info for donation site staff? 	

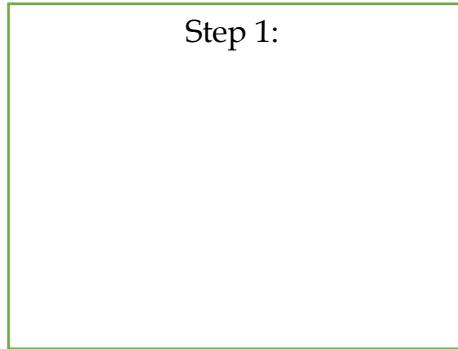
Sample Transportation Plan



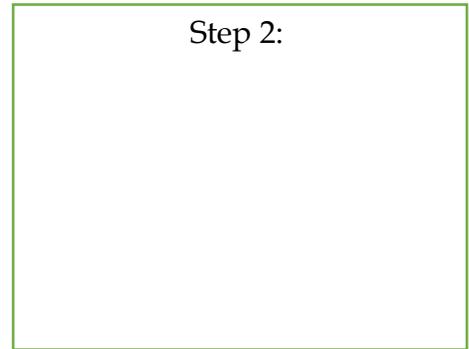
Make a Plan!

Using your brainstorm sheet, develop a transportation plan.

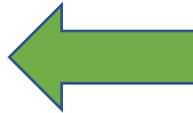
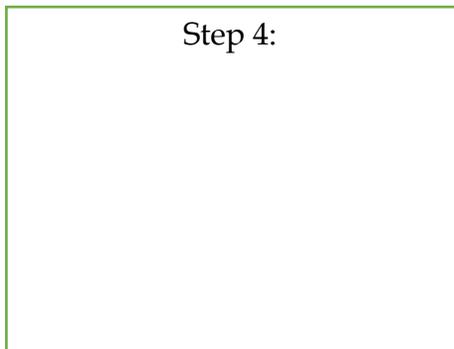
Step 1:



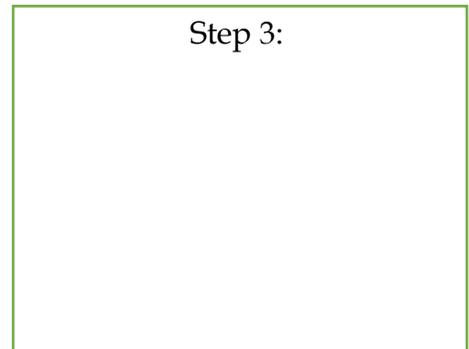
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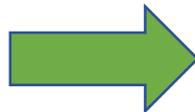
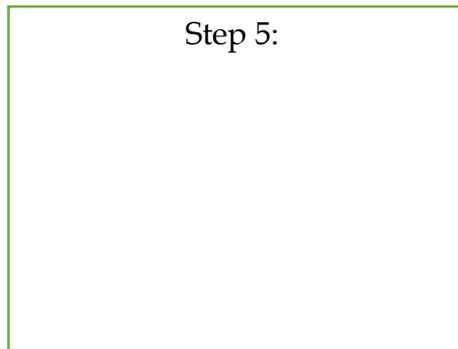
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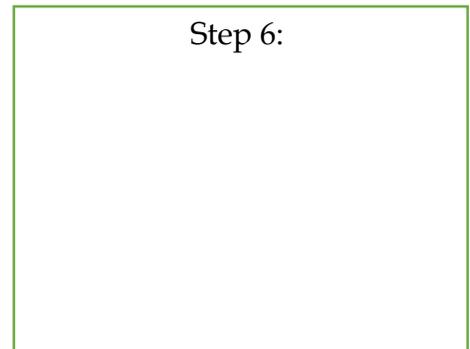
Step 3:



Step 5:



Step 6:



Resource E: Gleaning Produce from Farmers' Markets

Farmers and community volunteers across Iowa are coming together to address food insecurity in their communities by gleaning produce from local Farmers' Markets. Volunteers with Table to Table, a non-profit food rescue organization in Iowa City, partner with Iowa City Farmers' Market vendors to donate produce that is left at the end of the market to local pantries and community centers.⁸

Farmers and Master Gardeners in Buchanan County also work together to glean extra produce from the Independence Farmers Market. In 2018, vendors donated over 700 pounds of produce to the Independence Area Food Pantry through this gleaning initiative. Master Gardener and Horticulture Program Coordinator Ashley Sherrets and Local Foods Coordinator Sarah Kielly answered the following questions about this collaborative gleaning project in Buchanan County.

How did this project come about?

Ashley approached Sarah with the [Growing Together] mini-grant application idea and Sarah shared that produce from farmers market vendors was being composted after each market. Vendors wanted an outlet for that produce to be used rather than being composted. After brainstorming and talking with the food pantry board, we came up with a plan to collect the excess produce at the end of each farmers market and transport it to the food pantry.

Who is involved in the project?

Ashley Sherrets, Ag/Hort Program Coordinator/ MG Coordinator
Sarah Kielly, Local Foods Coordinator
Independence Area Food Pantry
Buchanan County Master Gardeners
Independence Farmers Market vendors

What kinds of produce have you gleaned? Has the donation site offered any feedback on the donated produce?

The produce collected was mostly vegetables such as: rhubarb, asparagus, onions, radishes, zucchini, cucumbers, peppers (sweet and hot), potatoes, tomatoes, purple/green beans and herbs. We donated raspberries a few times as well. According to the pantry director, the produce donated from our program was fresh and looked so much better than the produce being received in bulk donations from commercial sources; therefore, it was picked up more readily at the food pantry. Most of the produce was used, but as happens during the growing season, when there was a plethora of zucchini and cucumbers from our gleaning, it was also being donated by other sources and excesses could not always be distributed.

What aspects of this project have been most successful?

⁸ Table to Table (2019). *Partners*. Retrieved April 2019 from <https://table2table.org/#partners>.

The farmers' market vendors were happy to have a good use of their excess, unsold produce, which they also did not have to take back home. The Master Gardeners were impressed by the value of produce donation, filling a need in our community as well as reducing waste. It also changed past resistance by the Buchanan County Master Gardeners towards a food donation program. They are looking forward to continuing to glean in the future, and will even forego reimbursement for mileage from grant funds. From the food pantry director, we learned that clients were preserving produce through canning and freezing because it was high quality.

What aspects of this project have been most challenging?

The most challenging aspect has been finding weekly volunteers to glean, weigh and transport the produce at each farmers' market. Even though value was identified, not all of my Master Gardeners volunteered, and often it was the same few volunteers transporting after market. Another challenge we faced was the market's location being impacted by flooding. This resulted in not having access to our supplies and needing to improvise in order to donate the produce.

What items/materials did you need to get started with this gleaning project?

We purchased all our materials for the project: digital scale, stackable bins, food-grade liners for bins, food safety supplies such as gloves, sanitizing wipes, and signage identifying the project. We also purchased bin cleaning supplies and batteries for the scale. For the food pantry we purchased recipe cards and publications from the Extension store to give patrons ideas on how to use produce.

What should Master Gardeners and community volunteers be aware of before starting to glean from a local Farmers' Market?

We recommend assessing volunteer interest before starting this program. We also recommend communicating expectations with the food pantry beforehand, making sure they can give you access to the pantry, adequate space for produce to be safely stored and ideas of what pantry patrons will use. This type of program, once established, is easy to do and maintain, and people should take this as a beginning step towards produce donation in their community.

Additional thoughts?

No matter how big or small the donation is, it will still make a difference and add up quickly. Adding in additional ways to receive produce such as community gardens, plant an extra row, or a community produce donation awareness campaign could be opportunities to increase supply available to be donated for the pantry. Projects like these are easy to advertise and increase awareness of ways to collect healthy produce for Iowans in need.

Interested in starting a gleaning initiative at a Farmers' Market in your area? Consider these steps to get started:

- *Research* - Find a farmers' market near you using the USDA National Farmers' Market Directory tool.⁹
- *Brainstorm* – what organizations or individuals might you partner with to get this project started? Possible connections are boundless! You might start with local farmers, community volunteer groups like Master Gardeners and 4-H, and local food pantries or community centers.
- *Take stock* – what resources do you have, and what would you need, to get started gleaning from a farmers' market? If your project will involve Master Gardeners, consider applying for a Growing Together mini-grant to fund necessary equipment – like food-safe produce bins and farmers' market tabling supplies.¹⁰
- *Additional resources* - Check out the Growing Together Gleaning Training available at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBsBPVfxix-rL-MbAsdSgQfOWCxWXpbcc>. While this training is geared toward folks who seek to glean produce directly from farms, some information from the training can also be applied to gleaning from farmers' markets. For even more information on gleaning, don't miss Resource F for a list of additional resources – and good luck! 😊

⁹ United States Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Service. (2019). *Local Food Directories: National Farmers Market Directory*. Retrieved April 2019 from <https://www.ams.usda.gov/local-food-directories/farmersmarkets>.

¹⁰ Iowa State University Extension and Outreach: Master Gardener Program. *Growing Together*. (2019). Retrieved April 2019 from <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/announcements/growing-together>.

Resource F: Additional Resources for Gleaners

Gleaning guides & case studies

Food Recovery Network. (2015). *Food Recovery Network's Guide to Gleaning*. Retrieved February 2019 from: <https://www.foodrecoverynetwork.org/gleaning>

This gleaning guide is aimed at volunteers interested in gleaning from farms for donation to local food pantries. It outlines steps necessary to start a gleaning group. The guide also offers some information on storing and transporting produce.

Hundhammer, M., & Murphy, B. (2011). *Bulletin #4301, Food for your Community: Gleaning and Sharing*. Retrieved February 2019 from: <https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/4301e/>

This extension publication from the University of Maine offers an overview of considerations for aspiring gleaners, including clear communications with potential farmer donors and anticipating and addressing farmers' concerns. The publication also covers basic infrastructure and capacity needs of a gleaning group and includes video profiles of community gardeners.

Laurie J. Beyranevand, Amber Leasure-Earnhardt, and Carrie Scrufari, *Models for Success: A Set of Case Studies Examining Gleaning Efforts Across the United States*. Center for Agriculture and Food Systems, Vermont Law School. South Royalton, VT. January 2017.

This detailed collection of gleaning case studies is a must-read for anyone looking to build or expand a gleaning initiative. It includes a comprehensive table of best practices for gleaning groups (pp. 8-11) and profiles of existing gleaning groups across the United States.

Salvation Farms. *Community-Based Gleaning: A How-To Guide Prepared by Salvation Farms*. Retrieved March 2019 from: <https://www.salvationfarms.org/resources/#gleaning-guide>

Put together by the seasoned gleaners at Salvation Farms in Morristown, Vermont, this guide offers information for beginning and experienced gleaners. The guide covers how and when to pick common vegetables (pp. 14-15), good record-keeping habits, and tips to building strong partnerships with farmers.

United States Department of Agriculture. (2010). *Let's Glean! United We Serve Toolkit*. Retrieved January 2019 from: https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda_gleaning_toolkit.pdf

This toolkit, created by the USDA in 2010, offers a quick run-down on the basics of gleaning, providing an overview of steps to take when starting a gleaning project.

Legal information on food donation

Center for Agriculture & Food Systems: National Gleaning Project. (2019). *Legal & Policy Resources: A curated, searchable database of gleaning-related federal and state laws, legal and policy resources, and research organizations*. Retrieved February 2019 from: <https://nationalgleaningproject.org/legal-policy-resources/>

The National Gleaning Project, run by the Center for agriculture & Food Systems, is an excellent resource for gleaners. Their legal and policy page is searchable by state, providing information about both federal and state laws and regulations. Elsewhere on their website, they maintain a map of gleaning and food recovery organizations across the county. Consider adding your project to the map!

Feeding America (2018). *Protecting our Food Partners: The Federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act*. Retrieved March 2019 from: <https://www.feedingamerica.org/about-us/partners/become-a-product-partner/food-partners>

Feeding America provides information on their website that breaks down the Federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, which protects folks from liability when donating to a food pantry, except in instances of gross negligence.

Produce handling & food safety

Jauron, R. (2002). Harvesting and storing vegetables. *Iowa State University Horticulture Guide: Home Gardening*. Retrieved March 2019 from: <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/4064>

This Iowa State Extension publication offers information on both harvesting and storing fresh produce. It contains a detailed table of storage temperatures for different vegetable crops (p. 2).

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach: Farm, Food and Enterprise Development. (2019). *Community Donation Gardening Toolkit*. Retrieved April 2019 from: <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/localfoods/community-donation-gardening-toolkit/>

The Growing Together Community Donation Gardening Toolkit contains information related to growing, gleaning, and donating fresh fruits and vegetables. Here you'll find information on food safety practices relevant to donation gardening and gleaning from farms and farmers' markets.