



Toy Drive Q and A for Coordinators

Thank you for volunteering to be your agency's toy drive coordinator for the 2009 State Agency Toy Drive. Your efforts will help make the season brighter for needy children! The following Q & A will hopefully answer some of the questions you have.

Please contact the State Agency Toy Drive Coordinator to let her know that you are the coordinator for your agency.

Who is the State Toy Drive Coordinator?

Currently, that position is filled by Celeste Hari. She can be reached at the Public Utility Commission of Oregon at 550 Capitol St. NE, Salem, OR 97310. Her telephone number is (503) 378-6628 and email is celeste.hari@state.or.us. Questions regarding the Toy Drive should be directed to Celeste. If you are interested in this position yourself, please let Celeste know! (This is not a paid position in anything other than knowing you are doing a good thing.)

How do we find out about the State Employees' Toy Drive?

Agency Heads are sent a memo each Fall asking them to appoint a coordinator for their Agency. Agency Heads usually distribute the request to their managers asking for help to locate a Head Coordinator for the agency. The coordinator then spreads the news to the rest of the agency!

As my Agency Coordinator, do I have to do this alone?

You can, and you may be restricted to doing so, but it sure is easier (and more fun) if you get a small group to help you! This helps avoid burnout. Start right now! Get all departments to pitch in. Check with your Agency Head and Manager to see how much time you all can devote to this effort.

Where do the toys go?

The toys are designated only for the **Salvation Army's Toys for Joy program**. Some areas may call it something else but as long as they go to the Salvation Army, you are good to go.

Why the Salvation Army?

Good question. Many years ago, it was decided that the Salvation Army had the largest opportunity to reach more people throughout the entire state than did any other program. They have a presence in almost every community. Although the Salvation Army is Christian based, they do not require clients to "participate" in that faith. They do not discriminate based on faith or any other feature. While there are many worthy charitable organizations out there, the Salvation Army has a more far-reaching base than do other programs. They have a presence in almost every community in Oregon and are not targeted at a specific group other than low income. In February of 2009, the Salvation Army received an "A" from the American Institute of Philanthropy, a watchdog organization for charitable organizations.

Once the toys are at the Salvation Army, what happens to them?

The toys that are delivered to the Capitol in Salem are sent to a large sorting facility located in South Salem. The toys from our drive are included with those from other drives for the Salvation Army. Volunteers then sort everything by age and gender and arrange them on tables. Preselected Salvation Army clients are given a specific time and date to come and "shop".

What do you mean by "Salvation Army clients?"

In the late fall the Salvation Army takes applications for this program and there are cut-off deadlines for applications. The selected applicants are the clients referred to in the above question. State Employees have no involvement in the application or selection process for Salvation Army clients.

What if I know someone who needs help but the deadline for applying has past? Can I just give him/her toys or funds from the program?

No, you cannot take toys or funds donated to this program and give them away personally. Doing so would put you in a seriously precarious position. This program is set up for the Salvation Army distribution only. The best thing you can do for your friend is to direct him/her to the Salvation Army. They are set up to handle emergencies of this kind.



Our office is not near enough to Salem to deliver toys. Can we still participate?

Absolutely and please do!!!! If your office is not convenient to deliver toys to the Capitol, please contact your local Salvation Army office and arrange to take your collection there. The need is great no matter where you are located and I fear it will be especially great this year.

What about time used for the Toy Drive?

Work time used for the Toy Drive should be minimal. What this means is that anything that can possibly be done outside of normal work hours, should be done outside of normal work hours. Things like frosting cupcakes for bake sales, cutting up vegetables for a salad bar or making decorations should be done at home, not at the office during work hours! You cannot be compensated in any way for your time used outside of the office. Be sensible with your time so the program doesn't become a burden to your agency or that you begin to look like a full time fundraiser rather than a State employee.

Time spent during work hours must be approved by your Agency Head and manager.

What do we do to collect toy donations?

Get some large boxes and wrap them with appropriate wrap if you want. Put your Agency name on it too! There have been some very cute theme boxes come in! Cars, trains, castles and boats have all been themes for boxes. These boxes and containers will not be returned to you! Set the boxes in a community spot within your Agency with signs asking for toy donations. Try to emphasize the donation of toys rather than money. *Please avoid using recycle containers as they are often mistakenly picked up and taken away with the toys, never to be seen again!*

Can I accept check donations?

If someone wants to donate money, a check is the best way to do that! **All checks must be made out to the Salvation Army.** Checks to the Salvation Army should be collected and turned in to the State Coordinator or the Visitor's Center Kiosk at the Capitol if you are in the Salem area. If you are not in the Salem area, monies should be directly turned over to the local Salvation Army. The Salvation Army sends a receipt to the address on the check. For your own records and accountability, you should keep a record of any checks you receive on behalf of the Salvation Army. Just listing who wrote the check, the check number and the amount is sufficient in case of any questions.

What about cash?

It is best if you can avoid taking a cash donation from anyone. However, the reality is that there will be times when cash is donated and you will generate cash from events. Keep a full accounting for your records of cash donated and by whom, save your receipts from shopping with any cash, and the amount of any actual cash turned in for the Salvation Army. This gives contributors confidence that their donations are all going to the designated recipient and may protect you if any questions should arise. If your donor wants a receipt for cash, there are a couple of things to know:

1. **You cannot write a receipt that is valid with the IRS for cash donations.** This is so because the Toy Drive is not the entity that is the authorized 501(c)(3) charitable corporation, the Salvation Army is. If a cash donor wants an IRS receipt, they will need to either go buy toys with the money they want to donate and accept an "in kind" receipt or donate directly to the Salvation Army.
2. You CAN write "in kind" receipts for the toy donation. Receipts for "in kind" donations must be made out on your Agency Letterhead and signed by your Agency Toy Drive Head Coordinator (you). If you need to write a receipt on letterhead, it must include the number of toys or items donated and what those toys or items are. If it is a receipt for items donated to be auctioned at a silent auction, the same applies only instead of toys; you would indicate what was donated. All receipts must include a statement that the donation is to the Salvation Army's Toys for Joy Program via the State Employee Toy Drive located in Salem, Oregon. Adjust your receipt accordingly if you are located outside of the Salem area. This information is mandatory for the individual donor to claim a tax deduction for a charitable contribution. Please contact Celeste Hari (503) 378-6628 if you need further information regarding receipts.



What do I do with the check donations?

In Salem, bring them to the Capitol when you deliver your toys. The Visitor's Center kiosk will take them and they should give you a receipt for your records. This is not an IRS receipt, rather a receipt noting that you delivered money to the Capitol.

What do I do with cash donations?

Buy toys!!! However, if you have cash that has not been spent on toys, you should deliver it to the Capitol using the same procedure as noted in the previous question.

What can I do to boost participation?

Dream up some fun and creative ways to get people to participate but don't go into overdrive. There are so many good causes that we State Employees are asked to support and we want to avoid fundraiser burnout.

Here are a few suggestions: Bake sales, salad bars and other lunch bars, Guess-how-much-candy-in-the-jar, wreath decorating competition/sales, silent auctions, remote control car races, tricycle races, cake walks, the possibilities are limitless!!! You can also have a contest between your agency divisions to spur the donations on. Toys can be used as entry fees for some of these activities if you want. Be creative!

Keep a record of the funds received from each event held. Shop with the proceeds of your events. Make sure and keep all receipts and account for all funds brought in that are used for shopping.

What next?

Gather all toys up in the decorated boxes and deliver them to the Capitol between November 27 and December 18. It's nice to have a big pile on display for the tree lighting, which is scheduled for December 1. If you are allowed the time or after you are off of work, you could bring one early load to help out this initial display and then continue with your drive, bringing a second load over later!

Where do I put the toys at the Capitol?

Always ask someone at the Visitor's Center where to put the toys. Walkways must be left open to the restrooms, access to fire extinguishers, and to the drinking fountains. Heating vents must be left unblocked.

Once I have delivered everything, do I need to do anything else?

Yes. Please remember to sign in at the Visitor's Kiosk. Then go back to your agency and make sure to thank everyone for participating! If you have time on December 18, please come down to the Capitol and help load all of the toys. Help is appreciated and needed with this final task!

Are there restrictions to the type of toys we donate?

Well, yes there are a few! Items should be suitable for children ages 1-12. Toys should be new and in the box. Please let folks know that donations of guns/weapons of any kind or video tapes/DVDs/CDs other than those rated "G" cannot be accepted. Unfortunately, gift cards also cannot be accepted. If you receive one of these as a donation, please use it to buy more toys.

Toys should not be gift wrapped. Remind folks that if the toy they donate is battery operated, please include that battery in the donation. Sadly, stuffed animals are just not as popular these days so it's best if we can keep stuffies to a minimum. Donations of new clothing or other kinds of child-related practical gifts are always needed and appreciated.

REMEMBER: Your containers WILL NOT be returned to you!

