

Guidance for Providing Food and Drink at Polling Locations

The information provided below is a general overview of considerations for providing food and water at polling locations. Individual states and counties have differing rules regarding these activities, so you should consult your local election officials to ensure compliance with local regulations.

Know the rules before you go

- Ensure that 501(c)(3) organizations can hand out water and food at polling locations.
- Determine where you are legally allowed to stand and hand out food and water (these areas will likely be clearly marked at polling locations)

Preparing for the polls

- Bring food that is nonperishable, individually packaged, and free of common allergens.
- Wear comfortable shoes and clothing. Do not wear clothing with a political message or candidate's name. Check the weather before heading out!
- Check with local voting rights coalitions or your local election officials to determine which polling locations are likely to have the longest lines

Guidance

- Stay outside of polling place restricted zones. These areas are typically marked with a sign. If you have questions about the restricted zone around your local polling place, you can ask a poll worker for more information.
- Offer food and drink to anyone and everyone at a given polling location whether or not they are going to vote, have voted, who they intend to vote for, or their political affiliation. The food must be offered to everyone.
- Do not talk to anyone about voting. Focus on providing the food and drink, not on keeping people in line. Pizza to the Polls recommends saying, "Are you hungry?" or "Are you thirsty?", **not** saying things such as, "I'll give you some pizza if you vote," "If you vote for Candidate X, you can have some water," or even "Are you voting today?" or "Please stay in line to vote."

- Provide an equal, reasonable amount of food and drink to the people at your polling location. For example, give a water bottle and granola bar to each person. Do not give a box of granola bars to one person.
- Remain politically neutral in your verbal communication and behavior. Do not advocate for or against or discuss any candidates, political parties, or movements at any time.
- Keep your distance from protests or other political activity.
- Be sure to dispose of food waste in trash cans, and encourage people consuming food to do the same.
- If you feel unsafe at any time, leave the polling location.
- If you are asked to leave the area or given other instructions by a poll worker, police officer, or other official, please promptly comply with their request without protest — even if you disagree with their request.

Many of the guidelines above were drafted based upon the [“Guidelines”](#) page of Pizza to the Polls, a nonprofit organization that provides pizzas at polling locations with long lines.