

Volunteer Gleaning FAQs

Contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 816-921-1903 or info@aftertheharvestkc.org.

What is gleaning?

Farmers often have produce left over that they can't sell and don't wish to throw away or turn under, so instead of letting it go to waste, they donate it, and then, with the help of After the Harvest, feed hungry people. Gleaning is picking what's left in farmers' fields *after the harvest* and delivering it to food banks (like Harvesters--The Community Food Network), pantries, shelters and community kitchens.

What produce do you glean and when?

We pick apples, pears, beans, kale, tomatoes, berries, squash, corn and more from May-November, depending on the weather. If it grows in Kansas or Missouri, we probably glean it! All gleanings are headed by trained field supervisors. Our staff is small so it's volunteers, like you, who rescue thousands of pounds of produce for those in need.

How do I find out about gleaning events?

Sign up for [e-mail gleaning alerts](#) at the bottom of any page on the ATH website or check out the [Volunteer Calendar](#).

Can kids participate in gleanings?

Yes! We love kids to learn where their food comes from and to help others who are in need. There is no minimum age, but children need to be old enough to follow directions, not step on the crops, or wander off. We require close parental supervision for young children as well as waiver forms signed by parents/guardians for those under 18. In general, one adult for every 10 children is required, but more may be required if participants include many very young children or other special situations.

How do I sign up?

- Go to the [Volunteer Calendar](#). You'll sign up as "Individual," "Family/ Group" or "Organization". When you sign up, provide your cell phone number, so we can contact you the day of gleaning, if needed.
- You will receive an email with instructions and a link to fill out the required electronic waiver form. Each person attending will need to fill out a form prior to gleaning.
- If you're the group's leader, you'll receive a link to forward to other participants so they can also sign up and fill out their waivers.
- If you have questions or just hate to sign up online, contact the ATH volunteer coordinator.

My organization wants to glean. What do I need to do?

- Follow the above sign up directions and sign up as "Organization".

- Fill out your organization's name and description, where you're traveling from to get to the gleaning, and the ages of your volunteers (how many projected 0-6, 7-12, 13-18, 19+ years?).
- If you're projecting more volunteers than the indicated need, sign up anyway for the number we indicate, explain in comment box and we'll be in touch. Note that we may be able to accommodate your group on a date and time not listed.

What is a "Produce gleaning"?

If you see a gleaning event listing on the Volunteer Calendar that says "Produce gleaning," instead of, say, "Apple gleaning", that means we'll be gleaning, but don't yet know what will be ready to harvest on which farm. We'll let you know via e-mail before your gleaning. Signing up for "Produce gleanings" gives volunteers (especially groups) a longer time frame to plan.

I don't see the farm address listed. What's up?

Our Gleaning Manager will e-mail you with the farm address, field supervisor contact info, produce to be gleaned and notice of delay or cancellation due to bad weather. We try to give you as much advance notice as possible, but because of the nature of farming, we will probably not be in contact until the week of your gleaning with specifics.

Why do you cancel gleanings?

We may cancel a gleaning due to wet field conditions, dangerous thunderstorms, or crop failures due to heat, drought, hail, frost or freezing temperatures. We ask every gleaner to check their e-mail on the day of the gleaning to make sure it has not been cancelled. Please know that 95% of the gleanings go off without a hitch.

If it's raining the night before the gleaning, will the gleaning be cancelled?

Please check your e-mail. Often it may be raining at your house, but not at the farm!

What if we have volunteered to glean and then have to cancel?

We ask that, if possible, you give us at least two days notice so we can find replacements for you or your group.

Why do you sometimes post gleanings with only a one or two day notice?

Because of the nature of farming, the farmers often don't give us more than a day or two notice.

Why don't you glean in the afternoon or evening during the summer months?

It's too hot for the volunteers and for the produce, too! In the fall and early spring, we have more leeway and can glean later in the day.

What's the best dress for gleaning?

In the summer, wear a hat, sunglasses, closed-toed old shoes *and* socks (sandals just don't work in fields). Wear long, lightweight pants and a long-sleeved shirt—you'll stay cooler if you're covered. In the fall, it's best to dress warmly in layers and wear gloves.

What should I bring with me to the gleaning?

Bring your waiver form, water bottles, sunscreen, and, if you like, gardening gloves and a hat. Sorry, no pets allowed!

Any other preparations before getting to the gleaning?

If you wish, apply bug spray before you leave home. Most of our farms are organic, so you won't be able to spray there. *Please go to the bathroom and wash your hands before leaving home.* Using the field is never allowed, and only a few of the farms have public restrooms, so you'll have to drive to the closest facility. No smoking is allowed in the fields; plan to smoke ahead of time or by your car.

Can we take home any of the produce that we pick?

If you are currently using a food pantry, you are welcome to take enough for one meal home with you. Otherwise, any produce not going to pantries should be purchased from the farmer.

Can I deliver the produce I gleaned to a local agency?

Yes. Volunteers tell us that delivering from the farm to a food bank, or other agency distributing food, is one of the best experiences of the day. We try to select a location near your route (or an agency of your preference), but if you can, please be open to areas of most need. When you sign up, tell us you can deliver. The primary way that produce gets from the farm to those in need is through volunteers like you (note: you don't need a truck...car trunks hold a lot of produce!).

What's the VEG Squad?

Our quick response team, the Vegetable Emergency Glean Squad, comes together on short notice for weekday morning produce gleanings. They share rides, friendship, fresh morning air and exercise as they rescue nutritious produce for hungry families. Contact the volunteer coordinator to sign up.

How does ATH make gleanings happen?

All of the coordination of a gleaning is done via our gleaning staff. Each gleaning (coordinating farmers, agencies, volunteers, on-site supervision, packaging, van) costs the organization about \$500. So please consider [giving a gift of support](#) if you can.