



Supplying the Future: 2026 Toolkit

Thank you for helping make sure kids in our community head back to school ready to learn. This toolkit is designed to make it easy for you to host a successful Operation Backpack supply drive on behalf of Phoenix Family. Inside you'll find:

- Helpful tips for planning, promoting, and running your drive.
- Email templates you can send to your team or network.
- Printable materials to spread the word.
- A full list of most-needed school supplies.

Every backpack and box of supplies you collect helps a child start school with confidence. Phoenix Family serves families working hard to make ends meet, and more than 96% of the kids we serve come from households living below the poverty level. For these kids, brand-new school supplies can mean walking into the classroom feeling prepared and included, rather than starting the year already feeling behind.

Thank you for being part of Operation Backpack 2026 — your drive makes a real difference!

If you have any questions or need additional support, contact:

Jillian McNamara | 816.612.8844 | jmcnamara@phoenixfamily.org

or

Laurel Groh | 816.616.8917 | lgroh@phoenixfamily.org

Helpful Hints

Getting Started

Thank you for hosting an Operation Backpack supply drive! Whether this is your first time or you've hosted before, this guide will walk you through what to expect and how to make your drive successful.

Step 1: Decide What Type of Drive You Want to Host

You can customize your drive based on what works best for your group:

- **Full supply drive:** Collect a variety of items from the full supply list.
- **Focused drive:** Collect one or two specific items (for example, just backpacks, or just crayons and markers).
- **Monetary drive:** Collect financial donations, which Phoenix Family will use to purchase high-need items.

Step 2: Choose Your Dates and Location

- Plan to run your drive for 2–3 weeks and make sure all donations are delivered to Phoenix Family by **August 4, 2026**.
- Make sure your donation bins are placed in high-traffic, easy-to-access locations.
- Post clear signage so people know what items are needed and how long the drive runs.

Step 3: Promote Your Drive

Let people know what you're doing and how they can help:

- Use the email templates included in this toolkit.
- Post flyers in common areas.
- Share on your company's intranet, newsletter, or social media channels.
- Send out periodic reminders during the drive.
- Consider adding a little fun — friendly competitions between departments or teams can help boost participation!
- Need graphics? Phoenix Family will be sharing Operation Backpack posts throughout the campaign. Feel free to share them on your organization's social media channels to help spread the word.

Step 4: Collect Donations

- Make sure your bins are monitored and emptied as needed.
- Keep participants updated on how the drive is going.
- If collecting checks, make them payable to Phoenix Family and keep them secure until the drive is complete.

Step 5: Deliver Donations

When your drive ends, bring your donations to Phoenix Family's office at:

3908 Washington, Kansas City, MO 64111

Drop-off hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

If you have a large donation or need assistance with delivery, contact:

Jillian McNamara | 816.612.8844 | jmcnamara@phoenixfamily.org

A Few Things to Keep in Mind

New items only: We cannot accept used or opened supplies.

Stick to the supply list: This helps ensure each child receives the items they need most.

Deadlines: Donations need to be received no later than **August 4, 2026** to allow time for sorting, packaging, and distribution before school starts. We recommend that you end your supply drive by August 3, 2026.

Reach out if you have questions! We're here to help at every step.

Contact for Assistance

Jillian McNamara

816.612.8844

jmcnamara@phoenixfamily.org

School Supply List (All Grades)

*Backpack

*Supply box/Pencil bag

Glue Stick/8 oz glue

*Scissors (pointed and blunt-tip)

Pink eraser

"First Writing" Pencils

#2 Pencils

*Pens (blue, black and red)

*Crayons (24 box)

*Colored Pencils

Highlighters

Ruler

Pencil sharpener

*Pocket folders

*Filler paper (wide-rule and college-rule)

Graphing paper

*Spiral notebooks (wide-rule and college-rule)

*Composition notebook

Pencil topper erasers

3-ring binder (1-inch)

Protractor

Index cards

* most needed.

Host FAQ

What items should we collect?

We ask hosts to focus on the most-needed school supplies. A full list is included in your toolkit, but top priorities include backpacks, wide-rule notebooks, pocket folders, 3-ring binders, pencils, erasers, glue sticks, crayons, colored pencils, and supply boxes.

Can we collect used items?

No. All donated items must be new and unopened.

Can we accept monetary donations?

Yes! Checks can be made payable to Phoenix Family and turned in with your donation delivery. Phoenix Family uses monetary donations to purchase additional supplies where shortages exist.

How long should our drive run?

We recommend 2–3 weeks. Please plan to complete your drive and deliver donations by August 4, 2026, so that we have time to sort and distribute supplies before school begins.

Where do we deliver donations?

Phoenix Family
3908 Washington, Kansas City, MO 64111
Monday–Friday, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

If you have a large donation or need assistance, contact Jillian McNamara at jmcnamara@phoenixfamily.org or 816.612.8844

What if we want to do a fun competition or activity during the drive?

Absolutely! Friendly competitions between departments, fun themes, or simple incentives can be a great way to boost participation.

What if I have more questions?

We're happy to help at any point. Just give us a call at 816.612.8844.

Thank you for your support!



to

**Help at-risk kids get
ready to learn.**



**OPERATION
BACKPACK**

It's not a backpack. It's a launching pad.

**Donate new school supplies
to Kansas City kids!**

Drop your items off at our School Supply drive, located at

School supply wish list

Backpacks | Glue sticks | Composition notebooks (wide and college-ruled) | Spiral notebooks (wide and college-ruled) | Filler paper (wide and college-ruled) | Blue, black, and red pens | Rulers Scissors (blunt and pointed tip) | #2 pencils | 24-pack crayons | Washable markers (broad and fine line) | Colored pencils | 3-ring binders | Pink erasers | Pencil boxes | Highlighters | 2-Pocket folders (with and without prongs) | Scientific calculators | Kleenex | Elmer's glue | Index cards | Graph paper

For more information contact:





OPERATION
BACKPACK



SUPPLY
DRIVE



WHEN? WHERE?:



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT



SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE!

NOW THROUGH AUGUST 3

**Notebooks, Filler Paper, Pens &
Pencils, Erasers, Crayons & Markers,
Rulers, Backpacks, 2 Pocket Folders,
Calculators, Glue Sticks, and Scissors**

MOST NEEDED

DROP OFF LOCATION:

**QUESTIONS?
CALL**

**OPERATION
BACKPACK**



SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

NOW - AUGUST 3

DROP-OFF LOCATION

**ITEMS
NEEDED**

NOTEBOOKS, PENS &
PENCILS, ERASERS,
CRAYONS & MARKERS,
RULERS, BACKPACKS,
BINDERS & FOLDERS,
CALCULATORS, GLUE
STICKS, SCISSORS

THANK YOU!

OPERATION
BACKPACK

Check out the great work Phoenix Family is doing in our community on Facebook or Instagram.

Help us and Phoenix Family level the playing field and ensure that all kids have what they need to succeed in the classroom.

For kids, part of the back-to-school excitement comes from buying new crayons, folders, and backpacks. However, when parents can barely afford rent and groceries each month, school supplies just can't be a priority.

School Supply Drive



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Sample emails

These templates are designed to give you a starting point. Feel free to personalize them to match your organization's voice and include details about your drive.

Announcing your supply drive:

Example 1

Subject: Want to help some local kids get ready for school?

Hi friends,

I wanted to see if you'd help me with something.

I'm hosting a school supply drive this summer to support Phoenix Family's Operation Backpack campaign, and I'd love for you to be part of it.

For many local families, back-to-school shopping comes at a time when budgets are already stretched thin. A backpack, notebooks, folders, pencils, and other school supplies add up quickly. Operation Backpack helps make sure local children have what they need before they walk into school on the first day.

If you'd like to help, I'm collecting new backpacks and school supplies like notebooks, folders, pencils, crayons, markers, glue sticks, and other classroom essentials. (I've attached the full supply list.)

If shopping isn't your thing, financial donations are welcome, too. Phoenix Family uses them to purchase the supplies that are still needed most before backpacks are distributed.

You can drop donations off with me at [Location] by [Date].

Thanks for considering it. I'd really appreciate your help, and I know the families who receive these backpacks will, too.

Let me know if you have any questions!

[Your Name]

Example 2

Subject: Help Local Kids Start the School Year Ready to Learn

Hello everyone,

We're hosting a school supply drive to support Phoenix Family's Operation Backpack campaign, and we invite you to participate.

Operation Backpack helps provide local children with new backpacks and school supplies before the start of the school year. For many families, purchasing these supplies creates an added financial burden during an already expensive time of year.

There are several ways to participate:

Donate new school supplies. We're collecting backpacks, notebooks, folders, binders, pencils, crayons, markers, glue sticks, supply boxes, and other classroom essentials. A complete list of needed items is

attached.

Make a financial contribution. Monetary donations allow Phoenix Family to purchase the items that are still needed most before distribution begins.

Help spread the word. Feel free to share our supply drive with friends, family, or coworkers who may also wish to participate.

Drop-Off Information

Collection location: [Insert location]

Donations accepted through: [Insert date]

Thank you for helping support Operation Backpack and local children as they prepare for the new school year.

Your Name]

Example 3

Subject: Help Us Fill Backpacks for Local Kids

Hi everyone,

Back-to-school season is almost here, and we're partnering with Phoenix Family to help local kids start the school year with brand-new backpacks and school supplies.

Remember how exciting it was to get ready for the first day of school? A new backpack, fresh notebooks, crayons that hadn't been used yet. Every child deserves that same excitement. For many local families, though, back-to-school shopping means making tough choices. That's why we're hosting this drive—to help make sure local kids have the supplies they'll use from the very first day of school.

If you'd like to help, it's easy:

- **Donate new school supplies** like backpacks, notebooks, folders, pencils, crayons, markers, glue sticks, or other classroom essentials. (See the attached supply list for everything that's needed.)
- **Prefer not to shop?** Financial donations help Phoenix Family purchase the items that are still in short supply.
- **Share our drive with friends, family, and neighbors.** Every donation helps.

Drive Details

Collection location: [Insert location]

Last day to donate: [Insert date]

Every backpack, every notebook, and every pack of crayons helps a child begin the school year ready to learn.

Thanks for helping us make a difference for local kids!

[Your Name]

A reminder as your drive wraps up:

Example 1

Subject: One last reminder 😊

Hi friends,

Just wanted to send one quick reminder before I wrap up my Operation Backpack school supply drive. If you've been meaning to pick up a few supplies but life got busy (I get it!), there's still time.

I'm collecting donations through **[date]**, and every backpack, notebook, pack of crayons, or box of pencils helps a local child head back to school with the supplies they need.

You can drop donations off with me at: [Location]

Or if it's easier, Phoenix Family can always put a financial donation to good use by purchasing whatever supplies they're still short on.

Thanks so much to everyone who's already contributed. I really appreciate your help, and I know the families who receive these backpacks will, too.

[Your Name]

Example 2

Subject: Last Chance to Support Our Operation Backpack Drive

Hello everyone,

There's still time to participate in our Operation Backpack school supply drive, but the deadline is approaching.

If you've been meaning to contribute, now is a great time. Every backpack and every school supply donated helps Phoenix Family provide local children with the tools they need to start the school year ready to learn.

We're still collecting new backpacks and school supplies, including notebooks, folders, binders, pencils, crayons, markers, glue sticks, and other classroom essentials.

Drop-Off Information

- Collection location: [Insert location]
- Final day to donate: [Insert date]

Prefer to make a financial contribution? Monetary donations help Phoenix Family purchase the supplies that are still needed before distribution begins.

Thank you to everyone who has already donated. Your generosity is helping local children start the school year prepared and confident.

[Your Name]

Example 3

Subject: We're almost there!

Hi everyone,

Just a quick reminder that our Operation Backpack supply drive is wrapping up soon.

A huge thank you to everyone who's already donated! It's been fun watching the collection box fill up.

If you've been meaning to grab a few supplies but haven't made it to the store yet, there's still time. We're collecting new backpacks and school supplies through [date].

You can drop them off at: [Location]

Need a few ideas? Check out the attached supply list.

Not planning to shop? Financial donations are welcome, too, and Phoenix Family will use them to purchase whatever supplies are still needed.

Thanks to everyone who's already helped!

[Your Name]

Thanking everyone:

Example 1

Subject: Thank you ❤️

Hi friends,

I wanted to say thank you for helping with my Operation Backpack school supply drive.

Whether you dropped off a backpack, picked up a few school supplies while you were shopping, made a financial donation, or shared the drive with someone else, I am so thankful!

Because of your generosity, local kids will head back to school with brand-new backpacks and the supplies they need for the first day. I love knowing that something as simple as a few notebooks or a box of crayons can help a child start the school year with confidence.

Thank you for making this such an easy cause to support. I'm grateful for each of you and for the kindness you showed our community. I know Phoenix Family—and the families they'll serve—are grateful, too.

Thanks again!

[Your Name]

Example 2

Subject: Thank You for Supporting Operation Backpack

Hello everyone,

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Operation Backpack school supply drive. Because of your generosity, Phoenix Family will be able to provide local children with backpacks and brand-new school supplies as they head back to school. Every donation—whether it was a backpack, a pack of notebooks, or a financial contribution—helped make this possible.

Thank you for taking the time to support children and families in our community. Your generosity will help students start the school year with the supplies they need to learn, participate, and feel prepared on the very first day.

We appreciate everyone who donated, helped spread the word, or encouraged others to participate. Together, we made a meaningful difference.

Thank you again for helping make our Operation Backpack drive a success.

[Your Name]

Example 3

Subject: We did it – thank you!

Hi everyone,

I just wanted to say thank you for helping make our Operation Backpack supply drive such a success. Because of your generosity, Phoenix Family will be able to send local kids back to school with brand-new backpacks and school supplies. It's easy to think a notebook or a pack of pencils is a small thing, but together those donations add up to something much bigger: helping children start the school year ready to learn.

Thank you to everyone who donated, shared the drive, or encouraged someone else to participate. Every act of generosity mattered.

I'm so grateful to be part of a community that's always willing to step up when neighbors need a hand.

Thanks again for making this happen!

[Your Name]

Thank you for your support!

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact us at jmcnamara@phoenixfamily.org or 816.612.8844