

# Food Share Cabinet Toolkit



A Guide for Sharing Food in  
University of Wyoming Buildings



# Table of Contents

What is a Food Share Cabinet? .....	1
Guiding Principles	1
How to Start Your Cabinet .....	2
Managing Your Cabinet .....	4
Management	4
Communication Strategies	5
Financial Contributions	5
Appendices .....	7
Cabinet Spotlights .....	Throughout
Haub School of ENR	2
Cowboy Cabinet	3
SALivation Station	3
Honors College	5

# What is a Food Share Cabinet?

Food share cabinets are spaces that student groups and others at the University of Wyoming can establish and maintain in campus buildings to share food with each other, regardless of need. Academic and administrative units can support cabinets and encourage students, faculty, and staff to share food. This guide provides information to groups and units that would like to host cabinets in their own campus buildings.

The Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources launched the first UW food share cabinet in late 2017 at the Bim Kendall House. Alanna Elder, class of 2018, implemented the cabinet with a team of staff and faculty as part of a project for her Sustainability minor capstone and honors thesis. She discovered that a recent survey of UW students found **nearly 37% experience low or very low food security**, meaning more than one third of students do not consistently have enough food to eat. By increasing the number of food sharing cabinets across campus in combination with other strategies, we can help to alleviate food insecurity for students at UW.

Listen to Alanna Elder's Wyoming Public Radio story on food insecurity: *Despite Low College Price-tag, Some UW Students Still Struggle To Eat.*

<https://www.wyomingpublicmedia.org/post/despite-low-college-price-tag-some-uw-students-still-struggle-eat#stream/0>

## Guiding Principles

### Ethic of dignity, respect, and abundance.

Use words like “sharing” and “contributions.”

Avoid wording that implies charity, including a “we” that “gives/donates” to “them” and restrictions on use by any definition of “need” or other qualifications.

### Open access for everyone.

The entire UW community is welcome to both contribute to and use cabinets. Encourage students to use the cabinets when they need to and contribute to cabinets when they can.

### A policy of sharing high quality food.

Share the best of what we have in the cabinets.

# How to Start Your Cabinet

**Identify a point person to be in charge of the cabinet.** A student, staff, or faculty member who is passionate about food sharing should serve as a main point of contact for the cabinet. Student points should ideally have an institutionalized role in the building, such as a student employee or recognized student organization (RSO) leadership position. Make sure plans are in place for transitioning cabinet maintenance after the student graduates. Additionally, students should identify a faculty or staff mentor to partner with for cabinet maintenance.

**Build your team.** Identify a team of people to collaborate with the point person and support the longevity of your food sharing efforts. Find others in your building who are interested in food sharing, including faculty, staff, and students. The team can make joint decisions about the cabinet and its management.

**Research and visit other cabinets.** The University of Wyoming campus is now home to several food share cabinets. Each is unique to the needs of individual buildings and student communities. Use the best practices of other cabinets in combination with the specific needs of your community and building.

**Reach out to important stakeholders.** Make sure other people in your building are on board with the cabinet, including department heads, building managers, and custodians. They can be a big help in setting up and sustaining your cabinet.

## Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources Food Share Cabinet



Bim Kendall House

Launched in Winter 2017/18

Maintained by Haub School student employees and staff

Contact: [haub.school@uwyo.edu](mailto:haub.school@uwyo.edu)

Fun Fact: First food share cabinet at the University of Wyoming

**Select a location.** The cabinet should be in an easily accessible yet private area of the building. Involve key building stakeholders in cabinet location selection.

**Select a cabinet.** Identify a used cabinet, if possible. Your cabinet could have doors or be open. Does your building have a mouse problem? Would you like students to be able to more easily see available food? Consider these kinds of questions and the long-term sustainability of your cabinet.

**Start with a fully stocked cabinet and announce your launch.** See Appendix A for a cabinet launch email template and page 4 for cabinet management strategies. You may choose to hold a launch event to encourage initial cabinet contributions.

## Looking for a cabinet?

Ask around your building to determine if a faculty or staff member has a spare cabinet.

The University Surplus Warehouse frequently has used cabinets from around campus.

(307) 766-2340, Surplus Warehouse, 15th & Gibbon Street

Try thrift stores in Laramie, such as Goodwill. (307) 460-9566, 1575 N 4th Street

## Cowboy Cabinet



Corbett Building

Maintained by Phi Epsilon Kappa (PEK) RSO

Launched in September 2018

Contact: <https://uwyo.collegiatelink.net/organization/CHESNut>

Fun Fact: Supported in year two by auctioned cowboy art made by RSO member's father

## SALivation Station



Visual Arts Building

Maintained by Student Art League (SAL)

Launched in March 2019

Contact: [sshadwel@uwyo.edu](mailto:sshadwel@uwyo.edu)

Fun Fact: Steps up the cabinet concept by using an entire shared kitchen space

# Managing Your Cabinet

**Post a guide for acceptable and desirable cabinet contributions. (See Appendix B for an example sign with a link to an editable sign template.) Cabinets can only accept factory-sealed, shelf-stable items that do not require refrigeration.**

- Individually wrapped items from a larger container are OK.
- **NO** prescription medications, illegal drugs, or items containing alcohol, tobacco, or nicotine.
- Sealed toiletries are also acceptable.

**Implement a plan for weekly or more frequent cabinet maintenance.**

- Remove inappropriate items and any past prime, shelf-stable produce.
- Organize food and wipe down shelves. (Plan on a once per semester deep clean.) Baskets and boxes can help organize contributions by type.
- Catalog food and identify contribution requests for your communication plan (see p. 5).
- Track your weekly cabinet maintenance, including who completed the maintenance and when.

**With the sole exception of infant formula, sell and use by dates are not federally mandated or regulated<sup>1</sup>. There is no health or safety reason to exclude non-perishable items once their date has passed. Food quality, based on appearance, can drive your removal of food items.**

**Feel free to post pertinent information about other cabinets on campus and local food security opportunities, such as the Laramie Soup Kitchen: <https://www.laramiesoupkitchen.org/>.**

**Decide if your cabinet will operate through summer and winter breaks or not. Post a sign to suspend contributions and use, or simply reduce stocking and weekly maintenance during these time periods.**

<sup>1</sup>See [www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/food-labeling/food-product-dating/food-product-dating](https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/food-labeling/food-product-dating/food-product-dating)



## Communication Strategies

Announcing your initial cabinet launch and periodic communication with building occupants and student communities will support cabinet maintenance and use.

Please see Appendix A for template emails communicating the following:

- Cabinet Grand Opening
- Cabinet Restock
- Cabinet is Fully Stocked

You can also create a google form through which students can sign up to anonymously receive email communications. Post the sign-up link on your website and cabinet signs.

## Financial Contributions

In addition to direct food contributions, you may opt to accept financial contributions for your cabinet.

- Approach department and unit heads for financial contributions to support your initial cabinet stocking.
- Plan on accepting cash contributions only.
- Identify a responsible party who will accept and track contributions (e.g., student RSO point person or treasurer; staff administrative assistant or business manager).
- Determine a periodic shopping schedule and adhere to acceptable food contribution guidelines.
- Larger cabinet gifts to academic and administrative units should go through your unit and then the University of Wyoming Foundation.
- Gifts can support monthly online food orders. The Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources uses Brandless (brandless.com).

### Honors College Food Share Cabinet



Guthrie House

Maintained by Honors College staff

Launched in May 2019

Contact: jlamb9@uwyo.edu

Fun Fact: Part of an Honors building-level sustainability plan



This toolkit and the Kendall House Food Share Cabinet are supported in part by a gift from the family of Paul Rechard, in his memory. His family said they support food sharing at the University of Wyoming, because, "when we attended UW, he made sure we had full pantries and stomachs. He shared that gift with our friends and anyone who needed it."

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Template Emails

### Cabinet Grand Opening Email:

Thanks to support from [xx, yy; credit people and organizations], we are proud to announce that our building now has a Food Share Cabinet for sharing healthy, nutritious food with our students. [Describe location].

Please contribute high quality, healthy food to our Cabinet using the following guidelines:

- Factory-sealed, non-perishable foods (e.g., canned goods, pasta, granola bars, flours, dried fruit, nuts, grains, cereal, shelf-stable milk, tea)
- Shelf-stable produce (e.g., apples, bananas, winter squash, onions, citrus, fruit)
- Sealed toiletries and personal items

Please Note: the Cabinet CANNOT accept any perishable goods that require refrigeration, prepared foods, or foods with opened packaging.

The [xx org] is sponsoring and maintaining our Cabinet. Please get in touch with any questions or suggestions.

[include contact information]

### Cabinet Restock Template Email:

The Food Share Cabinet is running low and needs contributions! Please feel welcome to enter [BUILDING NAME] at any time during our business hours, [DAYS AND HOURS BUILDING IS OPEN], to share non-perishable, factory-sealed and shelf-stable food/personal items to the cabinet. The cabinet is located [EXACT LOCATION OF CABINET]. You can also provide a financial contribution at [WHERE YOU'RE ACCEPTING FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS].

[SPECIFIC ITEMS CURRENTLY NEEDED]

Thank you!

## **Fully Stocked Template Email:**

The Food Share Cabinet is fully stocked! Please feel welcome to enter the [BUILDING NAME] at any time during our business hours, [DAYS AND HOURS BUILDING IS OPEN], to help yourself to the food/personal items in this cabinet. The cabinet is located [EXACT LOCATION OF CABINET].

Items currently available include:

- [Insert bulleted list of types of items available.]

[PICTURE(S) OF CABINET CONTENTS].

## **Appendix B: Example Sign**

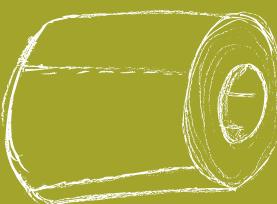
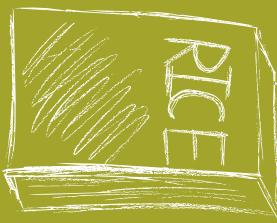
Enter your cabinet's name and the appropriate contact information into the linked [sign template](#).

# Kendall House Food Share

The food share cabinet is open to all students during normal business hours, with no sign-up or check-in necessary. Please help yourself!

Faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to share the best of what they have, with an emphasis on healthy, high quality food to help students feel nourished and energized. Please share only non-perishable, factory-sealed items or shelf-stable produce.

## Example foods to share:



### Dry Goods:

- Rice
- Couscous
- Quinoa
- Oatmeal
- Lentils
- Pasta

### Canned Goods:

- Beans
- Veggies
- Fruit
- Soup

### Shelf-Stable Produce:

- Winter Squash
- Potatoes
- Yams
- Onions/Garlic
- Apples
- Bananas

### Packaged Snacks:

- Nuts
- Dried Fruit
- Trail Mix
- Popcorn
- Granola Bars

### Personal Items:

- Shampoo
- Feminine Hygiene
- Deodorant
- Toothbrushes
- Toilet Paper

**Food Share Alerts:** Students can receive email and text alerts when the cabinet is stocked. Please inquire at the front desk.

# Acknowledgments

The existing Food Share cabinets at the University of Wyoming are the work of a great community of passionate individuals. Without them, making this toolkit would not have been possible. Thanks go to:

- The Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources food share team, Mandy Gifford, Zayne Hebbler, Amanda Korpitz, Addison Marr, and Melanie Matthews;
- Draft toolkit authors, Hillary Yoder and Hannah Daley;
- Toolkit designer, Sam Richins;
- All the other units who have started their own food share cabinets at the University of Wyoming to help end student food insecurity.

Special thank you to Ryan Davis and his family for their generous support of this toolkit which will extend food sharing opportunities across the University of Wyoming campus.

**Have additional questions about food share cabinets or this toolkit? Want to get involved with student food security efforts at the University of Wyoming?**

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