Ways to Give Back This Holiday Season



Greater Austin Area | 2026

Austin Empty Bowl Project
Austin | November 22

Celebrate the 30th annual Austin Empty Bowl Project, benefiting Meals on Wheels Central Texas and the Central Texas Food Bank's Kids Cafe program. Enjoy soup, bread, and live music while choosing a handmade bowl to take home. Admission is $30 per person, and all proceeds support local hunger-relief programs.

austinemptybowl.org

Coats for Kids
Austin & Central Texas | November–December

Help keep Central Texas children warm this winter through The Junior League of Austin's annual Coats for Kids program. The community-wide coat drive collects and distributes thousands of warm coats to children and teenagers in need. Individuals, schools, businesses, and community groups can participate by organizing coat drives or making monetary donations. Check the website for 2026 collection dates and drop-off details.

jlaustin.org/coats/coat-drive/

Central Texas Food Bank
Austin & Central Texas | Year-Round

Help ensure families throughout Central Texas have access to nutritious food this holiday season. Volunteers can sort and pack food, assist with mobile food distributions, and support warehouse operations. Individuals, families, and corporate groups can sign up for volunteer shifts or organize food drives and virtual fundraisers.

centraltexasfoodbank.org

Operation Turkey
Austin | November 25–26

Spend Thanksgiving giving back with Operation Turkey. Volunteers help prepare, package, and deliver Thanksgiving meals and care packages to individuals and families experiencing homelessness or food insecurity. The Turkey Tailgate takes place November 25, followed by Thanksgiving morning meal preparation and deliveries at multiple Austin locations on November 26. Volunteers of all ages are welcome.

operationturkey.com/locations/austin/

SAFE Alliance Holiday Giving
Austin | November–December

Support survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and exploitation through SAFE Alliance's annual holiday giving program. Community members can sponsor families, purchase items from holiday wish lists, organize donation drives, or make monetary contributions. December volunteer opportunities include organizing gifts, assisting with donor drop-offs, and preparing donations for distribution.

safeaustin.org/safeholidays/

Operation Blue Santa
Austin | November–December

Help make the holidays brighter for Austin families through the Austin Police Department's Operation Blue Santa. Donate new, unwrapped toys for children from infancy through age 14, host a workplace toy drive, or volunteer to sort gifts and assist with distribution. Donations can be dropped off at participating Austin fire stations through December 20.

bluesanta.org

ThunderCloud Subs Turkey Trot
Austin | November 26

Start Thanksgiving morning with Austin's 36th annual ThunderCloud Subs Turkey Trot at the Long Center. Participate in the 5-mile run, 1-mile walk, or Stepping Stone School Kids K. Both in-person and virtual options are available. Proceeds benefit Caritas of Austin and its work to end homelessness. Volunteers are also needed to assist with race-day activities.

thundercloud.com/turkeytrot/

Foster Angels of Central Texas – Toys for Teens
Austin & Central Texas | October 1–December 15

Make the holidays special for teens in foster care through Foster Angels of Central Texas' annual Toys for Teens drive. Sponsor a teen's wish list, organize a workplace or community gift drive, donate gift cards, or contribute financially. The 2026 campaign hopes to provide meaningful gifts to more than 200 teens throughout Central Texas. Gift-wrapping volunteers can also sign up for available shifts.

fosterangelsctx.org/events-calendar/toys-for-teens

The Salvation Army Angel Tree
Austin | November–December

Help make Christmas special for children and families in need through The Salvation Army's Angel Tree program. Volunteers are needed to sort, organize, and inventory donated Christmas gifts at the South Austin warehouse from November 9 through December 11. Additional volunteers are needed to help distribute presents December 14–21. Monetary donations and online wish-list purchases are also welcome.

salvationarmyaustin.org/texas-austin/angel-tree

Travis County Sheriff's Brown Santa
Travis County | November–December

Help provide holiday gifts and food to families in need through the Travis County Sheriff's Brown Santa program. Community members can donate new toys, puzzles, books, and wrapping supplies, organize workplace toy drives, or make monetary contributions. Volunteer opportunities include helping organize donations and prepare gifts for distribution. Check the website for current volunteer registration and warehouse details.

brownsanta.org

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