

City starts Food for Fines program

Sean Rossman, Democrat staff writer Published 1:46 p.m. ET Nov. 30, 2015 | Updated 4:57 p.m. ET Nov. 30, 2015



(Photo: Democrat files)

First-time Tallahassee parking violators can now pay their tickets by donating non-perishable food items to Second Harvest of the Big Bend.

The Food for Fines program started today and allows residents to give one food item for every \$1 of their fine.

City Commissioners unanimously approved the initiative, based on a similar program in Lexington, Kentucky, at its meeting last week. Commissioner Scott Maddox put forward the idea as a way to spark the spirit of giving this holiday season.

The program runs until Jan. 4, but only for tickets issued during the time period beginning Nov. 30. Starting fines typically start at \$10. Under the program, residents could pay penalties up to \$50 in non-perishable food. The city won't accept any damaged, opened or out-of-date items.

Residents must make the donations in person at the Utility Customer Service counter at the Frenchtown Renaissance Center, 435 N. Macomb St., which is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The initiative won't hurt the city financially, Maddox said, but could encourage residents to start donating during the holidays. During October, the city collected 860 parking ticket fines, 280 of which were paid in person.

"I'd rather forego those dollars during the holiday season and allow people to spread a little goodwill and good cheer," Maddox said last week. "If you pay your parking ticket with crucial food items for families that are in need, perhaps you'll be more giving in other ways as well."

Contact Sean Rossman at srossman@tallahassee.com (<mailto:srossman@tallahassee.com>) or follow [@SeanRossman](https://twitter.com/SeanRossman) (<https://twitter.com/SeanRossman>) on Twitter.

Read or Share this story: <http://on.tdo.com/1juBAMB>