



# OPERATION BACKPACK®

Operation Backpack® is an annual drive hosted by VOA Illinois to collect backpacks and school supplies for the youth we serve including children in families experiencing homelessness and children of the Veterans we serve. We know that a child will not be able to succeed in the classroom without the necessary supplies, and that's where you come in!

In addition to providing backpacks to the youth we serve, we also host Back-to-School events open to all community members and we partner with local schools, organizations, and churches to distribute to students in need.

## WAYS TO GET INVOLVED



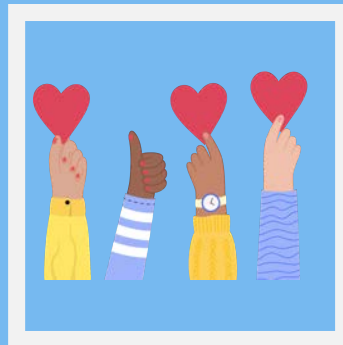
### Virtual

VOA Illinois has created a virtual store for our drive. This store is equipped with backpacks and school supply kits corresponding with different grade levels. Due to Chicago Public Schools having the early start date of August 24, 2026, the online drive will close on July 8th.



### In Person

Do you have anyone that prefers to shop in person? No problem! We have included a checklist by grade level of all of the supplies we are asking you to purchase. We are not picky on the brand names that are purchased, however, we ask that all items are purchased new.



### Volunteer

Are you looking to volunteer with us during this incredible event? We will have multiple opportunities for you to join us at the office and help us fill, tag, and organize backpacks! For more information, visit our [website](#) or send Sarah an email: [skowal@voail.org](mailto:skowal@voail.org)



### Other

If you want to support VOA Illinois, but don't love shopping for school supplies, that's okay! We have several sponsorship opportunities available for our Back-to-School events this year. We are always thankful for the monetary donations that help our essential programs run!



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## Virtual: Individuals



1. Visit our [Roonga store](#).
2. Purchase the backpacks and school supply kits you would like to donate.
3. You're all set! All school supplies bought from Roonga will be shipped directly to our office!

## Virtual: Teams



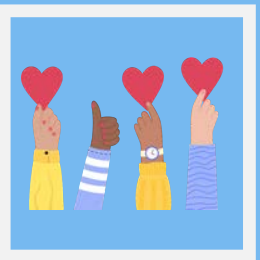
1. Visit our [Roonga store](#).
2. On the right under "Team Drives" select "Launch New Drive". This team drive will have a unique link that you can share with your coworkers, friends, family, or anyone else.
3. Set a specific goal for your team and start purchasing backpacks and school supplies! All supplies ordered on Roonga will be shipped directly to our VOA Illinois office!

## In Person



1. Purchase backpacks and school supplies on the checklist.
2. Place the supplies into the backpacks with the checklist inside.
3. Drop off to designated company location (for teams) or directly to VOA Illinois (for individuals), located at 47 W. Polk St. Chicago, NO LATER than **July 31**.

## Volunteer



We are always looking for volunteers to help us sort, stuff, tag, and organize backpacks! This year, our volunteer week will be from **August 3 - August 7**. If you are interested in volunteering during this time, contact Sarah at [skowal@voail.org](mailto:skowal@voail.org), or visit our [website](#) for more details.

## Other



If shopping for school supplies is not your thing, or you are looking to get involved in other ways, no problem! You can visit our [website](#) to make a monetary donation OR reach out to [development@voail.org](mailto:development@voail.org) for more information about sponsorship opportunities for our Back-to-School events!



# OPERATION BACKPACK®

## Sample Social Media Posts

### Facebook/LinkedIn

- As the weather begins to warm, we're reminded that summer is quickly approaching and that means it's Operation Backpack® season! A new backpack and school supplies are essential to a child being prepared for the school year and we want to make sure that every child @VOAIllinois serves has what they need to succeed. You can help make this a reality by purchasing school supplies and backpacks at our online store. Click the link below to purchase much needed supplies today! \*Insert team store link\* [#TheVOAWay](#)
- With a new school year approaching, we're even more excited to provide the students @VOAIllinois serves with brand new backpacks and school supplies! You can help make this a reality by purchasing directly from the Operation Backpack® store! \*Insert team store link\* [#TheVOAWay](#) 🇺🇸❤️

### X (formerly Twitter)

- As the weather begins to warm we're reminded that summer is quickly approaching and that means its Operation Backpack® season! You can help @VOAIllinois provide much needed school supplies to the children they serve. [#TheVOAWay](#) \*Insert team store link\*
- Looking for a way to change the life of a child served by @VOAIllinois? Head over to our Operation Backpack® store to purchase backpacks and school supplies. Their goal is to provide all the children they serve with a brand new backpack & supplies. [#TheVOAWay](#) \*Insert team store link\*
- We're excited to partner with @VOAIllinois to provide school supplies & backpacks to the children they serve. You can help make this a reality today! Visit \*Insert team link\* [#TheVOAWay](#)

## Newsletter Template

Happy Summer!

Operation Backpack® is an annual drive hosted by VOA Illinois to collect backpacks and school supplies for the youth they serve including children in families experiencing homelessness and children of the Veterans served by VOA Illinois. In addition to providing backpacks to the youth they serve, they also host Back-to-School events open to all community members and they partner with local schools, community organizations, and churches to distribute to students in need. As you know, for any student to be successful in the classroom, they need the right tools to succeed, and we believe that starts with backpacks and school supplies. With your help, we hope we can reach our goal of providing 2,000 children with brand new backpacks filled with everything they need!

There are a few ways you can help make this year a success:

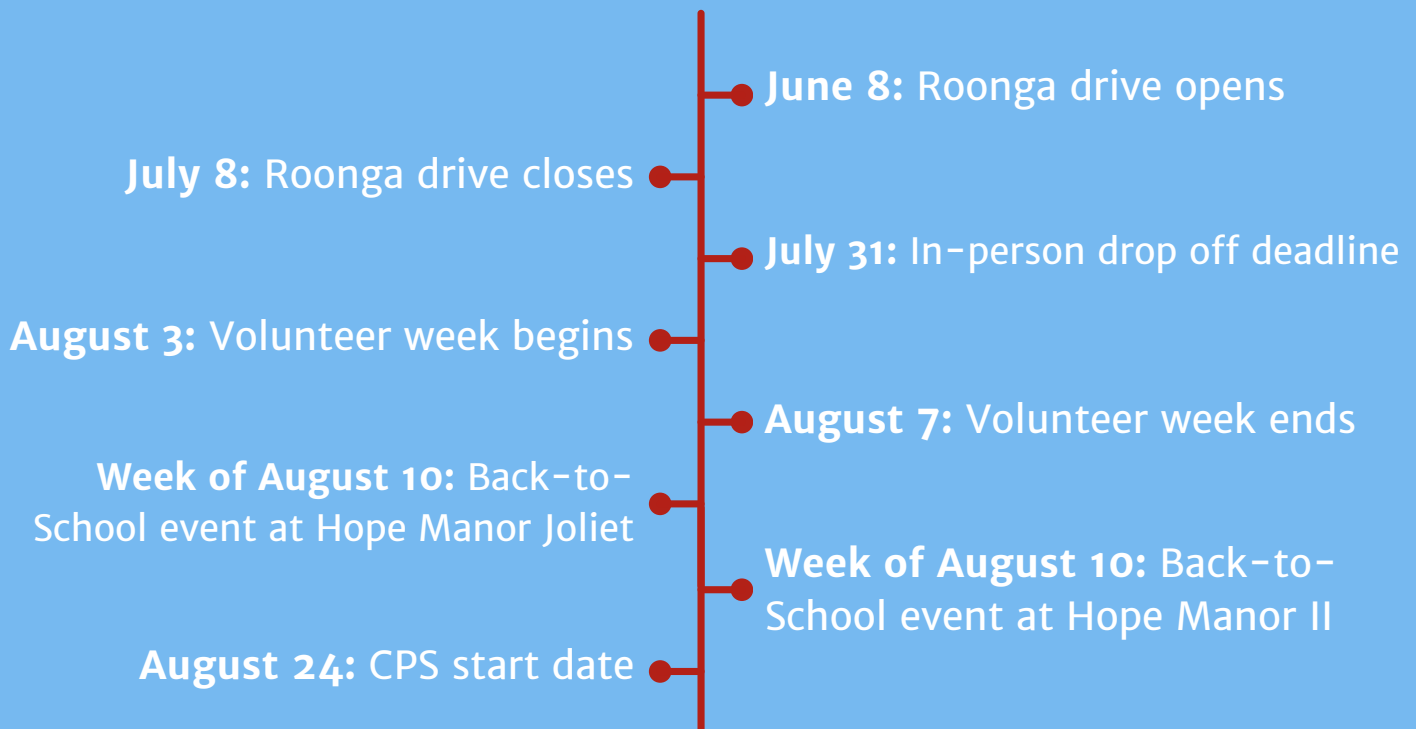
1. You can visit our team store to purchase backpacks and school supplies
2. You can purchase backpacks and school supplies in person
3. Share this email with anyone you think would be interested in helping to provide backpacks to children in need

Thank you for your support of Operation Backpack® and the children VOA Illinois serves. If you have any questions on this year's program email Team Rep at \*insert contact\*



# OPERATION BACKPACK®

## 2026 Timeline



## FAQs

### Why is Operation Backpack® so important?

- One of the most devastating consequences of family homelessness is its impact on a child's education. Helping students succeed in school is critical to breaking the cycle of generational poverty and homelessness.
- Having a full backpack of school supplies plays a role in higher rates of homework completion, class participation and, ultimately, graduation, but backpacks and school supplies are costly - an average of at least \$400 per child. This is an expense that most families living in poverty cannot afford.

### Can I donate physical backpacks and school supplies?

- Yes! We are accepting new backpacks and school supplies. If you are interested in purchasing supplies in person, please reach out to Sarah at [skowal@voail.org](mailto:skowal@voail.org) to receive a supplies checklist. Backpacks should be dropped off to our main office at 47 W. Polk Street, Suite 250 Chicago, IL 60605 by **July 31**.

### What makes Operation Backpack® unique?

- We put respect for the child at the center. School supplies are top quality and our supply lists for each grade grouping are based on the lists of the public schools in the communities we serve. We make sure children receive their backpacks and supplies before the first day of school, so they can walk in on day one looking and feeling like their classmates.



# OPERATION BACKPACK®

## Sponsorship Opportunities

### Hope Manor II Back to School Sponsorship

Sponsor our Hope Manor II Back to School event! Our Hope Manor II Back to School event is hosted at our Hope Manor II property, at 6002 S. Halsted. This event is open to the Englewood community, and with a sponsors help we can make this event very special with a bounce house, ice cream, snacks, backpack give-away, and more! Check out photos below of our sponsored HMII Back to School Event.



Presenting Sponsor \$10,000  
Gold Sponsor \$5,000



### Hope Manor Joliet Back to School Sponsorship

Sponsor our Hope Manor Joliet Back to School event! Our Hope Manor Joliet Back to School event is hosted at our Hope Manor Joliet property, at 1331 Eagle Street. This event is hosted for the residents of our property, who are Veteran families. With a sponsors help we can make this event very special with a bounce house, ice cream, snacks, backpack give-away, and more!



Presenting Sponsor \$10,000  
Gold Sponsor \$5,000



### Operation Backpack® Site Sponsor

As our Operation Backpack® program grows and we serve more children, we have a huge need for more space to store, sort, and distribute our backpacks. This year we would love to be able to rent a space to host all of our Operation Backpack® activities. This sponsor rate is too be determined, please contact our development team for more information!



Contact [development@voail.org](mailto:development@voail.org) for more information on sponsoring!



# OPERATION BACKPACK®

## Sponsorship Levels

### Presenting Sponsor

- One opportunity available per event
- Recognition as presenting sponsor at event and all publicity regarding event, including on website
- Volunteer opportunity at event for employees
- Premium signage of company logo designating sponsorship level displayed at event
- A naming plaque at eye-level on the door of an individual apartment at Hope Manor II/Hope Manor Joliet

### Gold Sponsor

- Multiple opportunities available per event
- Recognition as a gold sponsor at event and all publicity regarding event, including on website
- Volunteer opportunity at event for employees
- Premium signage of company logo designating sponsorship level displayed at event
- A brushed-plated plaque in the Hope Manor II/Hope Manor Joliet entry

### Site Sponsor

- Recognition as first ever site sponsor in all publicity regarding event, including on website
- Volunteer opportunity during our volunteer week at site for employees
- Premium signage of company logo designating sponsorship level displayed at site space



Contact [development@voail.org](mailto:development@voail.org) for more information on sponsoring!