



## **Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina Purchases Wilmington Property to Increase Service to Cape Fear Region**

*Hurricanes and pandemic have dramatically increased food insecurity in the area*

**Wilmington, NC** – August 5, 2020– The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina today announced the acquisition of property that will ensure significant increase in nutrition services, food storage, and distribution throughout southeastern North Carolina. With plans to build a new facility on the five-acre tract located at 1000 Greenfield Street, the property purchase is the first step toward developing the Food Bank at Wilmington's capacities to address urgent food insecurity in Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover, and Pender counties.

The property, sold by Cameron Management, Inc., is zoned for urban mixed use, or UMX. The Food Bank's anticipated plan is to break ground in 2021 for a facility that would open in 2022.

The Food Bank at Wilmington is currently located at 1314 Marsteller Drive, where it has operated since 1990. The new facility will allow for distribution of an additional 4.2 million pounds of food, a 37% increase in overall distribution.

"Last year the Food Bank at Wilmington distributed nearly 11 million pounds of food, but the need is growing more urgent every day. Insufficient space has been the largest single obstacle to feeding more of our hungry neighbors," said Beth Gaglione, Wilmington Branch Director for the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina.

### **Hurricanes, COVID-19 and Food Insecurity in Southeastern North Carolina**

In 2018, the Food Bank at Wilmington provided more than 6.3 million pounds of food to those impacted by Hurricane Florence. Since Hurricane Florence, an additional warehouse in Leland has supplemented offsite storage in order for the Food Bank to meet the community's increased need. Today, estimates of the economic impact of COVID-19 suggest food insecurity has increased by about 38%\* and we estimate that there are now 93,950 people in our region who do not always have access to nourishing food for themselves and their families. The increase in food insecurity due to the COVID-19 pandemic is in line with the Great Recession.

## New Facility Will Diversify Capacities and Service

The new facility will accommodate substantially more dry food and will provide 80% more freezer and cooler space, significantly increasing distribution of fresh, healthy foods such as produce, meat, and dairy items. "Hunger is prominent in our area and we depend on the Food Bank to help our organization provide food, especially fresh, nutritious food," said Roxann Lansdowne, President of the Board, Mother Hubbard's Cupboard. "With their new facility, we can work with the Food Bank on a larger scale to meet the increased need in our community."

Improved accommodations and building access will better serve leaders from the over 100 partner agencies who distribute the food and non-food essentials they receive from the Food Bank at Wilmington.

To build solutions for long-term hunger relief, plans for the new site will also include expanded programming in workforce development and health education, a community garden, and access to fresh, healthy food for nearby residents.

For more information, to receive updates, or provide feedback, visit [foodbankcenc.org/ILMupdate](https://foodbankcenc.org/ILMupdate).

*\*Source: The Impact of Coronavirus on Food Insecurity, Feeding America*

<https://www.feedingamerica.org/research/coronavirus-hunger-research>

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## About the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina

The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina is a nonprofit organization that has provided food for people at risk of hunger in 34 counties in central and eastern North Carolina for 40 years. The Food Bank serves a network of more than 900 partner agencies such as soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters, and programs for children and adults through warehouses in Durham, Greenville, New Bern, Raleigh, the Sandhills (Southern Pines), and Wilmington. In fiscal year 2019-2020, the Food Bank distributed nearly 92 million pounds of food (over half of which was perishable) and non-food essentials through these agencies. Sadly, hunger remains a serious problem in central and eastern North Carolina. In these counties, nearly 760,000 people struggle to access nutritious and adequate amounts of food necessary for an active and healthy life. [foodbankcenc.org](https://foodbankcenc.org).



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