



NEWS RELEASE

North Carolina Food Banks Seeing Stark Increase in Need

Many more individuals across the state seeking hunger relief services in wake of SNAP changes and inflation.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 3, 2023

Food Banks across the state of North Carolina announced today that they are seeing a drastic increase in need for food and resources from neighbors experiencing hunger following the February 2023 end to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ([SNAP](#)) [emergency allotments](#).

In the 34 counties served by the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina (the Food Bank), our partner agencies saw an increase of 24% in the month of March over those served in January, a trend that is anticipated to continue as benefits expire and inflation continues to cause financial strain. The Food Bank's network of partner agencies are serving approximately 80% more individuals with food and resources than pre-COVID-19 pandemic.

"I'd say that our food bank, like those around the state, are facing yet another perfect storm in the work of nourishing our neighbors and building solutions that will end hunger," said Ashley C. McCumber, President & CEO of the Food Bank. "With food prices increasing and federal funds and programs sunseting, while at the same time more folks are in need of food from us, we're working to ensure the resources are there to keep our services consistent."

With food bank funding still in negotiation as part of the General Assembly's budget process as well as proposed cuts to federal nutrition programs in the United States congress, food banks across the state of North Carolina are shoring up resources to continue serving the community.

"The North Carolina food banks are incredibly thankful for support entrusted in us to do the work of hunger relief in our state, and work as good and efficient stewards of the resources we

receive,” said Mike Darrow, Executive Director of Feeding the Carolinas. “The increased need for food and programming that we’re seeing currently and planning for do require additional resources and action on the part of our federal, state, and local leaders to help shape policies that support North Carolinians experiencing hunger.”

Food banks continue the work to implement new programs and find strategic, efficient ways to meet the increased need while building solutions for ending hunger at its root causes. The Food Bank is taking the following steps to support this increase in need:

- **Sharing the information of the partner agency network-** the approximately 700 pantries, soup kitchens, and program partners across our 34-county service area- for people to connect with and receive support from: (<http://foodbankcenc.org/foodfinder>)
- **Holding Pop Up Markets** in the community to provide additional food and resources (<https://www.facebook.com/FoodBankCENC/events>)
- **Expending exponentially more funds** than before the pandemic, including utilizing state and federal grants and funds where possible, **to purchase nutritious food** that we are not receiving through other streams.
- **Focusing on increasing partner agencies’ capacity to distribute foods in efficient ways** by funding facility and equipment upgrades that allow them to serve more food and non-food essentials safely and quickly to their communities.
- **Advocating with elected officials** for strengthening the programs that are effective in building food security. The Farm Bill, which is legislation renewed approximately every five years, contains the funding for programs that are vital to fighting hunger, including SNAP, TEFAP, and a monthly senior food box program (Commodities Supplemental Food Program, CSFP).

Additional information and references can be found here:

- **Pandemic relief is ending, what does it mean to nonprofits and foundations?**
<https://www.ncnonprofits.org/blog/pandemic-relief-ending-and-what-it-means-nonprofits-and-foundations>
- **Triangle Food banks anticipate more people needing help as COVID relief ends**
<https://abc11.com/food-banks-nc-covid-relief-ends-second-harvest/12815663/>
- **Pop-up markets bring food directly to neighborhoods in need** <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nc/charlotte/news/2023/02/02/pop-up-food-markets-serving-communities-in-need-#>
- **Food pantries brace for 'big increase' with SNAP benefits ending**
<https://abc11.com/food-nc-attorney-general-josh-stein-bank-of-central-and-eastern-north-carolina-insecurity/12909115/>
- **Thousands to be impacted with NC pandemic-era program ending**
<https://www.wnct.com/local-news/thousands-to-be-impacted-with-nc-pandemic-era-program-ending/>

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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 more than 40 years. The Food Bank serves a network of more than 700 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 2021-2022, the Food Bank distributed over 97 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, more than 500,000 people struggle to access nutritious and adequate amounts of food necessary for an active and healthy life.

About Feeding the Carolinas

Feeding the Carolinas is North and South Carolina's network of food banks working to solve hunger. Our network unites 10-member food banks to provide a healthy, adequate, and consistent food supply to every community every day. Feeding the Carolinas member food banks support more than 3,700 local charitable agencies, which provide food directly to individuals and families in need to ensure a hunger-free Carolinas. Each year, the Feeding the Carolinas network provides food to the 1.8 million Carolinians facing hunger, including over 547,000 children. Feeding the Carolinas is a unified voice regarding hunger and food insecurity by focusing on each community's needs.