



Communities Rally in the Wake of Hurricane Season

Many of us in the central and eastern parts of the state have first-hand experience with weather disasters. Almost every year, the impact of heavy rain, wind, and flooding leaves thousands of community members vulnerable – especially those of us who were already food insecure. And our Food Bank network has built a robust infrastructure to respond quickly in the wake of hurricanes and other crises.

With our region spared from the worst of this year's hurricane season, we've activated our disaster response structure in support of hard-hit communities in Western North Carolina. Staff and volunteers readied thousands of emergency kits; generous supporters donated much-needed water and hygiene supplies; and our production kitchen went into high gear preparing ready-to-go-meals for impacted families.

With utilities restored in much of the mountains and our sister food bank back online in Asheville, we're now able to prioritize longer-term recovery assistance as cities and towns work to rebuild. There's a long road ahead, and we're proud of the many ways our supporter community has rallied to help our neighbors out west. It takes all of us to regroup, recover, and rebuild!

Learn more and support ongoing disaster response efforts at FoodBankCENC.org/Helene

Meeting the Hunger Crisis Head-on

Without a doubt, this has been a year of incredible challenges for local families.

More than 560,000 people in our region don't have the resources to consistently keep food on the table. Many pantries, no-cost markets, and meal sites are seeing more people today than we did at the peak of the pandemic. The need for food assistance is up 40 to 60% across our network. And with federal funds for hunger and poverty programs running out, these challenges have only grown.

We've also seen incredible generosity as supporters rallied to respond to this crisis. Volunteers devoted over 170,000 hours to sort and distribute 103 million meals in area communities. Hundreds of advocates contacted state and federal elected leaders to urge action on policies that combat hunger. And these efforts were fueled by thousands of donors who contributed food and funds to the cause. If you're reading this, chances are you're among them.

Still, we know we must do more. Hunger is growing faster than we can address through food assistance alone. Every day, families are making impossible choices — between food and utilities, gas and medicine, rent and childcare. We have to do more to prevent hunger from happening in the first place.

With this community's generosity, I know we'll continue to do everything we can to provide the immediate support our neighbors need. We'll invest even more in efforts that equip families with the tools and resources we need to thrive. And we'll push elected leaders to do their part in addressing the drivers of hunger in North Carolina.

None of this happens without advocates like you and me. If you're able, I hope you'll dig a bit deeper to help meet this hunger crisis head-on – and encourage friends and neighbors to do the same. Because when we work together, there's nothing this community can't accomplish.

Thanks so much for all you do,

Anne H. Lloyd

Anne H. Lloyd, Chair
Food Bank Board of Directors



Our Shared Impact

Your support means our friends and neighbors don't have to make impossible choices between food and other essentials like housing and medicine.

103 million meals

shared with neighbors throughout central and eastern North Carolina

63% of all food distributed

as fresh or frozen produce, protein, and dairy products

1.6 million meals

provided through school-year and summer nutrition programs

170,000+ volunteer hours

fueled our efforts to end hunger and its root causes

700+ community-based partners

including pantries, no-cost food markets, meal sites, and delivery programs

\$5.8 million in grocery support

secured for local families through SNAP food benefits

96% graduation rate

from commercial driver and warehouse workforce development programs

\$15.2 million invested

in local economies through benefits outreach and food purchasing



Joyce Bobbit: Supporting Seniors Back Home

Hundreds of vehicles pull through the lot of a former Halifax County school each month for the Food Bank's senior food box distribution — providing a healthy supply of fresh vegetables, fruit, dairy, whole grains, and pantry staples to people on fixed incomes who are at least 60 years old. It's a vital resource made possible by volunteers like Joyce Bobbit – known to longtime Enfield residents as "Cookie".

Cookie is a fixture at the old Inborden School, where she attended through her teenage years. Food insecurity has risen sharply in the decades since, with one in three local seniors now living at or below the poverty line. She sees plenty of neighbors and classmates at each distribution.

"I know practically everybody that comes through this line, and they know me," Cookie shared after catching up with another longtime resident. "That connection makes people feel comfortable. It gives folks the space to ask for help when they need it."

Though Cookie has long worked to support fellow seniors facing challenges, the drive-through program has made local resources much more accessible. "I'd help people get groceries, bring a plate to neighbors when I cooked. This is so much more," Cookie said. "People have a great experience because we're out here every month – and the food can last even longer. I've spoken to so many people, and they tell me what we're doing is important."

Rain or shine, Cookie's been a presence at almost every distribution in Enfield for more than eight years, with only one date postponed by a hurricane. "It's a blessing for us to be out here in the hot sun and bad weather. We're here for the community, no matter what."

Learn more and get involved at FoodBankCENC.org/Cookie



NC State Fair Draws 18 Truckloads of Food and Supplies for Helene Relief



Fairgoers from across North Carolina come together each year during Hunger Relief Day to donate nonperishable food and supplies in exchange for free admission to the State Fair. This year, the Food Bank and Smithfield Foods joined forces to devote all proceeds to communities impacted by Hurricane Helene. And thanks to incredible supporter generosity, we collected enough food and supplies to fill 18 semi trailers that are now headed out west.

In the weeks since, our volunteer team sorted and prepared these donations for shipment based on the needs and distribution capacity of sister food banks serving Western North Carolina. So far, we've shared enough food to fuel more than 280,000 meals for communities recovering from the storm!

"We're so grateful for the community's generosity during Smithfield Foods' Hunger Relief Day. The existing hunger crisis and the extensive damage from Hurricane Helene means our friends and neighbors need this support more than ever before — and will for some time."

Charlie Hale, Food Bank Chief Operating Officer



Volunteers Power Our Work

Our locations in Durham, Greenville, New Bern, Raleigh, Southern Pines, and Wilmington serve as the central hubs for hundreds of local food assistance sites. Combined, we sourced and distributed more than 103 million meals over the past year across our network of pantries, no-cost markets, meal sites, and delivery programs — and much of that work was led by our amazing volunteer corps.

In the average shift, a single volunteer will sort and pack enough food to fuel more than 160 meals for local families. Multiply that impact over a year's worth of shifts and volunteer efforts totaled up to 84 full-time workers in 2024. Talk about impressive!

With hunger on the rise, there's never been a more important time to get involved. If you haven't yet had the chance, we hope you'll join the 61,000+ supporters each year who devote their time and effort to make a difference in our communities.

Sign up for a shift at your local distribution center at FoodBankCENC.org/Volunteer



Students Help Turn the Tide Against Hunger

No child should have to worry when he or she will eat again — and no parent should have to skip meals or risk not paying a bill just to put food on the table. Unfortunately, that's the reality for far too many families in our area right now.

Students Against Hunger was formed to help ensure no one in our community goes hungry. Each year, students, parents, and educators come together to ask "How big of a difference can our school make?" – raising awareness and encouraging action in support of the 1 in 5 kids and teenagers who face food insecurity.

Since its inception, Students Against Hunger has provided hundreds of thousands of meals for families through the support of local schools – and 2024 marked another banner year. This incredible support will fuel backpack programs, stock school-based pantries, and provide meals and activities during the summer months.

Find ways to get your school on board at FoodBankCENC.org/SAH24

