

Hunger Action Month Starts with Us.



"Community support is more important than ever."

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There's No Single Story of Hunger

Over the past year, I've made it a priority to visit communities across our 34-county service area. So far, I've met with more than 40 local pantries, meal sites, and delivery programs. And each visit has reinforced an important truth: there is no single story of hunger in central and eastern North Carolina.

The challenges families face look different from one community to the next. In some places, transportation is the biggest barrier. In others, it's rising housing costs, stagnant wages, or rural isolation. Often, it's hardworking families and seniors doing everything they can and still struggling to make ends meet. That gap has grown wider as cuts to federal hunger relief programs and funding hit home.

Through it all, our dedicated partner agencies have maintained critical support for neighbors throughout the region. Even with limited resources, they continue to do far more than distribute food – they listen, problem-solve, and respond to the unique needs of their communities. They are often the first to recognize emerging challenges and the first to act.

That's where you and I come in. Hunger has risen to near-record highs and our network is seeing more people seek support than any time in recent memory. As government resources decline, community support is more important than ever – and Hunger Action Month is the perfect time to take the next step in your support for hunger relief.

If you're able, I hope you'll sign up for that extra volunteer shift and bring a friend. Sustain this work with a monthly donation or add a few dollars to your usual gift. Visit one of our restaurant partners and 'Plate it Forward'. Take a few minutes to make your voice heard, whether at the ballot box or with a quick note to your legislators. **Every action you take throughout September and beyond brings us closer to a future where no one goes hungry.**

Thank you for everything you do to ensure local families have access to the food and support they need to thrive.

Amy B.



AMY BEROS
President & CEO



I only come once a month because they supply me with enough food where I don't have to come back two or three times... It's just wonderful — I love the love.

– Barbara, longtime Community of Hope shopper

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



Building A 'Community of Hope' for Seniors

Across our 34-county service area, the Food Bank works alongside hundreds of partner agencies that help neighbors access food close to home. With your support, our six branches serve as distribution hubs for this network – helping stock pantry shelves with nutritious food, including fresh produce grown by local farmers.

One of those partners is Community of Hope in Garner, where neighbors can shop for food in a grocery-style pantry or attend a monthly drive-thru distribution. The pantry serves as a cornerstone for critical services in the community: in the past year alone, they provided more than 600,000 meals to 29,000 neighbors.

Led by Executive Director Amy White and a dedicated team of volunteers, Community of Hope centers dignity and choice in every part of the experience. Neighbors are welcomed with care, offered fresh and high-quality food, and encouraged to select the items that work best for their families.

For longtime pantry shopper Miss Barbara, that support makes a meaningful difference. As a senior living on a fixed income, Barbara shared in a recent interview that the food she receives from Community of Hope often lasts an entire month.

This is what our partner network makes possible every day: food, choice, connection, and community.

Watch the interviews and get involved at FoodBankCENC.org/CommunityOfHope

HUNGER ON THE BALLOT

foodbank
OF CENTRAL & EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

Hunger is a problem we can solve together — and we're proud of the broad, bipartisan support the Food Bank's mission has earned across North Carolina. In urban and rural communities alike, people agree that families should have access to the healthy, locally-grown food. **And we know the leaders we elect this fall will make decisions that directly affect neighbors facing hunger.**

Just a few examples: Congress will shape the future of SNAP grocery support, one of the most effective tools for helping families keep food on the table. State legislators will

set funding that helps food banks purchase fresh food from local farms — supporting agricultural communities while increasing access to nourishing food. At the local level, school boards will help determine how many children can access free breakfast and lunch. **Every voice matters in these decisions.** So whether it's a message to a legislator or support at the ballot box, every action brings us closer to a future where no one has to choose between food and other essentials.



Photo via FoodBankNews.org

That's why we're making it easy to connect the dots between each elected office and the decisions that impact hunger in our community. Our work is nonpartisan, open to all, and focused on elevating the voices of neighbors and farmers in decisions that affect food insecurity. And we hope you'll join us to help ensure all public officials understand what's at stake and the urgent need for action on hunger. **Visit FoodBankCENC.org/Ballot to find resources and take action.**



RIISING PRICES PUTTING STRAIN ON
FOOD BANKS



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I think it's a fear for everybody in this world right now, as food prices grow and gas gets higher and higher. And those of us who still have to drive and commute, it's a nice feeling to know that the community still has this here. It's a very comforting feeling to know that if we ever need to fall back on it, it's still here for us and available.

—Jen, Community of Hope
volunteer and former shopper

September is Hunger Action Month

Right now, more than 607,000 people across Central and Eastern North Carolina don't have the resources to consistently keep food on the table. And as the cost of living continues to rise, more of our neighbors are being pushed to the edge.

Families are making impossible choices between food and utilities, gas and medicine, rent and childcare. For many, even steady work is no longer enough to keep up with the growing cost of groceries, transportation, housing, and other basic needs. That pressure is felt in real and personal ways across our communities, especially by neighbors who are commuting to work, caring for children or older loved ones, and doing everything they can to make ends meet.

At the same time, demand for food assistance in our region has reached a near-record high — with many Food Bank network pantries and meal sites serving more people now than they did at the peak of the pandemic. And with recent federal and state budget cuts threatening critical food and nutrition programs, the need will only grow.

This is why Hunger Action Month matters more than ever. When you give, volunteer, and advocate, you help ensure neighbors can access food today while also supporting the long-term policy changes and community investments needed to end hunger for good. Every action makes a difference. And this September, our neighbors need all of us to act.

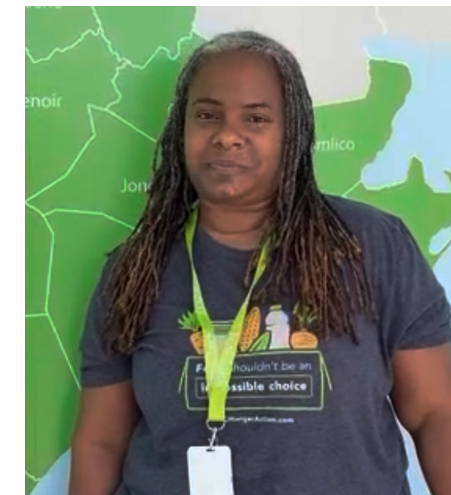
Scan the QR code or visit HungerActionNC.org for details on the many ways to make a difference this month!



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Join Keia to Help Fill the Meal Gap



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It's amazing. I come around three times a week...It's been a wonderful experience. I worked on various projects here and I try to spread the word to get family and friends to come out.

...there are families out here who don't know where their next meal is coming from so it is very important that we fill those gaps whenever we can.

— Keia, dedicated Food Bank volunteer in Raleigh

Find upcoming opportunities at FoodBankCENC.org/Volunteer

5 | #NoOneGoesHungry

Plate It Forward: Dine Out for A Cause

Throughout Hunger Action Month, you can dine out at local restaurants and breweries to help take hunger off the table for neighbors across central and eastern North Carolina.

It's never been easier to make a difference. Just visit your favorite participating restaurant and order the signature 'Plate It Forward' dish, beverage, or dessert. A portion of proceeds from each qualifying item directly benefit the Food Bank and our network of 700+ local partner pantries and meal sites.



Thank you to all the incredible restaurateurs, brewmasters, and diners for supporting our vision for a future where no one goes hungry!



Scan the QR code or visit PlateItForwardNC.org to view locations and dishes.

A New 'Goal to End Hunger' Challenge: 50 Sustainers in 30 Days

Through deep cuts to federal funding and widening disruptions to SNAP and WIC, the Food Bank network remains as a dependable resource for our community. That's thanks in large part to dedicated Sustainers who provide the reliable funding needed to respond quickly to urgent challenges and invest in long-term solutions.

As government support becomes less and less stable, consistent support from Sustainers is more important than ever. And we're grateful for new donors like Aggie, who was inspired to join when Carolina Hurricanes stars launched the 'Goal to End Hunger' challenge during the championship series.



Jacob is my favorite player — and in honor of him, I signed up as a monthly supporter!

– Aggie, new Food Bank Sustainer

Supporters like Aggie stepped up in a big way during the Canes historic run, raising more than \$26,000 in a few short weeks. Their generosity is the catalyst for a new Hunger Action Month goal: to welcome 50 new Sustainers in 30 days. **Join us at FoodBankCENC.org/Sustainers to make a difference with a monthly contribution** — or amplify your impact by increasing your regular donation. Help create lasting solutions our community!