



**GREAT PLAINS
FOOD BANK**

Annual Report



A LETTER FROM OUR CEO & BOARD CHAIR

Dear hunger-relief partners,

A grandmother in rural North Dakota recently shared her story with us. Her and her husband lived on a fixed income, which didn't cover the necessities, so they both picked up part-time jobs. Even with the increased earnings, they still made difficult choices between buying groceries or paying for medication. They turned to their local food pantry, supplied by the Great Plains Food Bank, to help make ends meet. I wish I could tell you her story was unique, but it's not. It's one of many we hear every day—stories of resilience, sacrifice, and hope. Stories that remind us of the vital role we play in ensuring that no one goes hungry in our communities.

Over this last year, 151,191 children, older adults, and families turned to the Great Plains Food Bank and our network of partner food pantries, shelters and soup kitchens for food assistance. That is one in five individuals and one in four children who sought assistance because they didn't know where their next meal would come from. This struggle goes beyond a lack of food; it's about those difficult choices surrounded by stress and uncertainty that no one should have to face.

The Great Plains Food Bank continues to support our neighbors by distributing nearly 16 million pounds of food—equating to over 13.5 million meals. In 2024, programs like the kitchen coalition expanded to five communities and served nearly 40,000 pre-made meals, the mobile food pantry delivered over 739,000 pounds of food into rural areas, and nearly 5,300 children were served through our youth summer meals program. These are all testaments to our commitment to meet the rising need in our region.

Looking ahead, our team is dedicated to addressing both immediate needs and the root causes of hunger. We are taking the next steps with our Harvesting Hope campaign focused on building essential infrastructure to meet our neighbors' needs with dignity and compassion, expanding the reach of and implementing new innovative direct service programs, and sustaining our work long-term by investing in our endowment fund. We are committed to transforming hunger relief to make certain that neighbors are nourished, communities are strong, and systems ensure no one is left behind. We can't wait to share more details and invite you to join us.

We are proud of what we have accomplished together, and we know none of this would be possible without you. You are part of a movement that seeks to end hunger and bring hope to those who need it most. Thank you for your unwavering support, your compassion, and your belief in a future where everyone has access to the food they need to thrive.

For we will only end hunger, together.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melissa Sobolik'.

MELISSA SOBOLIK
Great Plains Food Bank
CEO



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jasper Schneider'.

JASPER SCHNEIDER
Great Plains Food Bank
Chair, Board of Directors

WHAT WE STAND FOR

OUR MISSION

End Hunger Together.

OUR VISION

Neighbors are nourished, communities are strong, and systems ensure no one is left behind.

OUR VALUES

We do all things in the spirit of passion, service and innovation.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jasper Schneider (Chair)

Stacey Ackerman (Vice Chair)

Kathy Schneider (Past Chair)

Margaret Asheim (Treasurer)

Jim Herrington (Secretary)

Levi Bachmeier

Ruth Buffalo

Jennifer Hauge

Stacie Loegering

Emma McIntyre

Sidney Rustvang

April Walker

Jennifer Weisgram

This roster reflects our current board of directors.

ABOUT US

The Great Plains Food Bank is North Dakota's only food bank, dedicated to ending hunger across the state and Clay County, Minnesota. Through innovative programs, partnerships, and food distribution efforts, we distribute food for millions of meals each year to children, seniors, and families in need. Every dollar donated and every volunteer hour shared helps nourish communities.

Ending Hunger Today: We are doers, filling immediate needs of our neighbors.

Ending Hunger Tomorrow: We are collaborators, tackling the root causes of hunger.

Ending Hunger For Good: We are builders, constructing a future where hunger doesn't exist.



2024 BY THE NUMBERS



230,000

miles driven by our team delivering food

151,191

individuals served



15.9M

pounds of food supplied

13.5M

meals provided



196

partner agencies in 100 communities

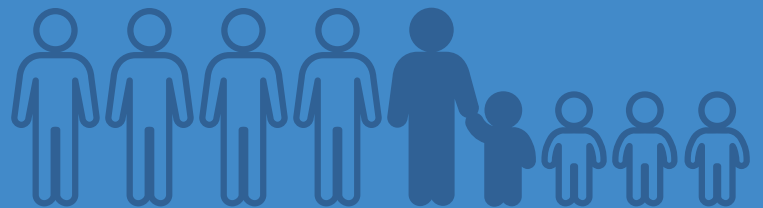


4,284

volunteers provided

13,694

hours of service statewide



1 in 5 individuals and **1 in 4** children across North Dakota were served last year

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Statement of Activities for Year Ended June 30, 2024

PUBLIC SUPPORT & REVENUE	FY24	FY23
Private Contributions	\$5,238,796	\$5,965,912
Government Contracts & Grants	\$2,240,811	\$1,457,355
United Way & Private Grants	\$1,001,849	\$1,398,737
Program Revenue	\$958,277	\$1,283,094
Investments & Other Income	\$516,363	\$323,947
USDA Commodity Food Value	\$7,444,402	\$3,960,956
Donated Food Value	\$18,685,364	\$15,201,747
Total Public Support & Revenue	\$36,085,862	\$29,591,748

EXPENSES	FY24	FY23
Programs & Services	\$34,291,742	\$25,729,781
Fund Development	\$1,206,087	\$1,133,949
Management & General	\$521,297	\$468,612
Total Expenses	\$36,019,126	\$27,332,342

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	FY24	FY23
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$15,689,190	\$13,429,784
Net Assets at End of Year	\$15,755,926	\$15,689,190



Thank you

Every investment you make in our shared mission is an investment in your neighbors. Your generosity fuels our commitment to providing hunger relief and building food-secure communities across North Dakota and Clay County, Minnesota. We remain dedicated to thoughtfully stewarding your donations to make the greatest impact.



1 Meal | 1 Meal

The Great Plains Food Bank can distribute food for **2 meals** for each charitable **\$1** it receives.

EXPENSES*

- 95%** Programs & Services
- 3.5%** Fund Development
- 1.5%** Administrative & General

*Includes the value of donated food distributed of \$28,617,042.



SOURCES OF FUNDING

- 53%** Private Contributions
- 22%** Government Contracts & Grants
- 10%** United Way & Private Grants
- 10%** Program Revenue
- 5%** Investments & Other Income



Great Plains Food Bank's auditors have expressed an unmodified opinion on our financial statements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. Those financial statements, which are available on the Great Plains Food Bank's website, include associated notes that are essential to understanding the information presented here.

STORIES OF HOPE



With the economy being hard right now, we are super grateful for those working to help others.”

-Sabrina



Sabrina —

In Williston, Sabrina held her young daughter’s hand as they visited the Great Plains Food Bank’s mobile food pantry. Sabrina and her husband work hard to provide for their three daughters. Her husband, employed full-time in the oil industry, puts in long hours to keep things afloat, but the rising cost of groceries and household expenses has made it increasingly difficult to make ends meet.

“We don’t have a lot left for groceries,” Sabrina shared. “For me to be right here, right now, knowing that I’m able to make dinner tonight is a blessing.”

Without help from the mobile food pantry, she feared she would have to turn to family for financial support—a thought that weighed on her heart.

“I would probably have to ask my mom to help financially, but it hurts to not be able to provide for my husband and my kids,” she said.

Despite the challenges, Sabrina remains grateful for the kindness of those working to support families like hers.

“With the economy being hard right now, we are super grateful for those working to help others,” she said, her voice filled with appreciation.

For Sabrina, the food she received that day was more than just groceries—it was hope. Hope that, despite the hardships, her family would have a warm meal together at the end of the day.



Nancy & Yodell —

At 72 and 68, Nancy and Yodell each maintain part-time jobs trying to make ends meet. Still unable to cover their basic needs, the couple visits the Park River Area Food Pantry, supplied by the Great Plains Food Bank, for food assistance.

“We come about once a month,” says Nancy. “It really helps us make ends meet.” Nancy works at the local grocery store, and Yodell washes dishes at a local restaurant. “I just can’t stand sitting at home doing nothing,” Yodell says. Unfortunately, their combined incomes just are not enough to cover all their expenses.

“We’re kind of struggling getting our bills paid,” Yodell shares. The food they receive from the pantry allows them to save money on groceries, freeing up funds for other necessities, like Nancy’s diabetes medication, which can cost as much as \$800 a month.

They both aim to eat the right foods, which is critical for Nancy to keep her blood sugar under control, but those items are often expensive. If Nancy had to pay out of pocket for all the food best suited for her condition, the cost would simply be too high. Instead, she and Yodell rely on the pantry for nutritious options, helping to bridge the gap between what they can afford and what Nancy needs to stay healthy.



Read more
Stories of Hope
from our neighbors
living with hunger.



Amber —

When Amber heard that the Great Plains Food Bank Mobile Food Pantry was stopping in Fort Yates, she jumped at the opportunity to receive some fresh produce and other staples.

She picked up some items for her own household, which includes three girls ages 4, 7, and 11. While she has a full-time job and easy access to food, keeping her growing and active children fed can be a challenge. “They’ll snack me to death,” Amber joked. But mostly, she was determined to pick up essentials for her partner’s 86-year-old grandmother.

“She called me a couple days ago and asked if we could buy her some bread because she was hungry,” Amber said.

Amber immediately brought the older woman chicken, noodles, hamburger, eggs, milk, and bread. Still, she knew the groceries would only help for a while. Amber was thrilled to know she could also deliver potatoes, onions, oranges, and bison meat that she picked up at the mobile food pantry. Her partner’s grandmother uses a wheelchair and walker, which makes it difficult for her to get groceries even when she has money.

“They used to serve hot meals for seniors in the community,” Amber said. “But they don’t do that anymore. She misses that.”

The mother of three is employed as a full-time accounting technician. She drives to Mandan three times a week so that her two oldest can play on a fast-pitch softball team. This means she also has access to cheaper groceries.

Items in her local grocery store are pricier than those she buys at a larger market. But Amber wants to make sure there’s always good, fresh produce available in town. She sees it as part of her calling to support the businesses that try to serve the community.

OUR HIGHLIGHTS

Food Sourced and Distributed

The Great Plains Food Bank reached a milestone of sourcing and distributing at least 1 million pounds of food each month in 2024, a milestone that started in April of 2023, ensuring consistent support for our neighbors experiencing hunger. Achieving this milestone for a full calendar year is a testament to the dedication and collaboration of our operations, food sourcing, and programs teams. Their hard work and commitment have made it possible to overcome challenges and keep food moving to those who need it most.

Packathon 2024

Packathon is an annual, hands-on food-packing event that takes place in Bismarck and Fargo, where companies volunteer their time to help repackage bulk food items into household sizes that can be distributed to our neighbors. In the spring, a total of 26 organizations dedicated over 300 volunteer hours to pack 66,836 pounds of food, including black beans, pinto beans, yellow split peas, and white rice. On top of giving their time, they also made financial contributions to help offset transport and distribution costs to ensure families in need have access to these household staples.

Cultural Food Distribution

Our cultural food distributions, started in Moorhead, MN, were established to offer culturally meaningful foods to community members. This distribution was created with and for our New American, Immigrant, and Refugee communities to provide culturally familiar foods that meet diverse needs. Thanks to the support of Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota Caring Foundation, we were able to bring these cultural food distributions to Bismarck, ND as well this year. A total of 11,294 households were served in both Bismarck and Moorhead in 2024.





Hunger-Relief Champions

Each year, the Great Plains Food Bank lifts up individuals, business, churches or organizations for their extraordinary contributions and commitment to helping us end hunger together as our hunger-relief champion award winners.

2024 Hunger-Relief Champions:

Bell Bank/Bell Insurance

Brenda Janssen

Hornbacher's

Katie Johnke

GROW, GIVE & GAIN

The Grow, Give & Gain program launched in 2024, enabling farmers and ranchers to donate agricultural commodities to support hunger relief efforts. This initiative offers potential tax benefits to donors while supplying food to 196 pantries, shelters, and soup kitchens across North Dakota and Clay County, Minnesota. The program simplifies the donation process for farmers and ranchers aiming to give back, ensuring that their gift makes the maximum impact for neighbors living with food insecurity.

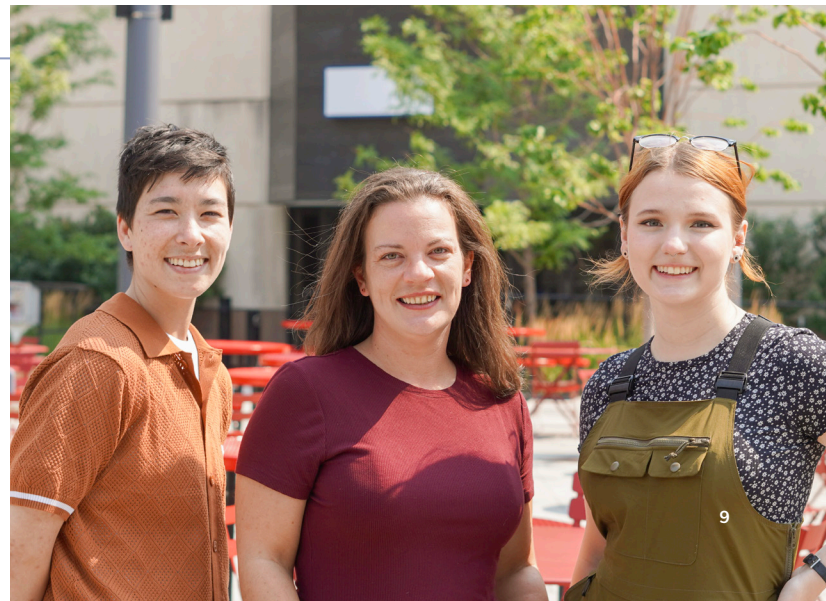
Fill the Dome

During the fall, Fill The Dome, a student-led food and funds drive, collected 119,552 pounds of food and raised around \$30,000 to support the Great Plains Food Bank, providing over 99,600 meals for those in need. Organized by the Metro Area Student Ambassadors, the event marked its 18th year of rallying the community to fight hunger. Since its inception, Fill The Dome has raised over 2.6 million pounds of food and more than \$870,000, making a lasting impact on hunger relief efforts across the Fargo-Moorhead area and surrounding communities.



SNAP Outreach Program

This year, our SNAP outreach program expanded to new locations to connect with neighbors who may need assistance. We brought our efforts to the Red River Market in Fargo and to partner agencies in Grand Forks, sharing resources with community members while promoting access to nutritious food. We also participated in community resource fairs at state penitentiaries, ensuring that individuals preparing for reentry have information on food assistance and support services. By broadening our reach, our team is able to help more individuals and families access the resources they need to thrive.



ENDING HUNGER TODAY

Beyond sourcing and distributing nearly 16 million pounds of shelf-stable and fresh food to our network of 196 partner food pantries, shelters, and soup kitchens in 100 communities, we aim to bridge the gap in food assistance and bring equitable services by offering a wide range of direct-service programs.



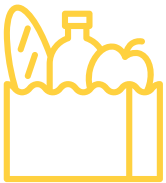
Mobile Food Pantry

Providing food assistance to rural communities with limited access to a food pantry or a grocery store, our mobile food pantry made stops in 47 communities providing food for **615,974 meals** to those in need in 2024.



Healthcare Programs

Healthcare providers offer patients the opportunity to be screened for food insecurity, granting them access to clinic food boxes or wellness pantries as a resource. In 2024, we partnered with 8 healthcare organizations across 31 sites, delivering food for **67,047 meals** to patients in need.



SNAP Outreach

Great Plains Food Bank team members assisted 674 individuals with SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) applications, which generated an estimated **\$980,715** in total benefits in 2024.



Senior Hunger

In addition to serving seniors through our network of food pantries, shelters, soup kitchens and at our mobile food pantry distributions, we provided **225,054 meals** in 39 communities to seniors living on fixed incomes through the Great Plains Food Bank Senior Food Pack Program.



Childhood Hunger

One in four children throughout North Dakota and Clay County, MN sought food assistance from the Great Plains Food Bank in 2024. Kids were able to get food assistance through the Great Plains Food Bank Backpack Program (**151,431 bags** provided in 124 communities), School Pantry Program (**159,444 meals** provided serving 96 schools) and Youth Summer Meals Program (**36,926 meals** at 18 meal sites), ensuring children have access to food over the weekends, holidays and summer break when other food resources may not be available.



ENDING HUNGER TOMORROW

A Fresh Approach to Fighting Hunger

Great Plains Food Bank Kitchen Coalition provided nearly 40,000 meals in it's second year

For many neighbors facing hunger, access to food is just one part of the equation. Without a home kitchen, access to refrigeration, or the utensils to prepare food, traditional food pantry offerings may not always be the right solution. That's where the kitchen coalition program steps in—bringing nutritious, freshly prepared meals directly to those who need them most.

Launched in 2023, kitchen coalition has grown from serving three sites in a single community to now supporting ten sites across four cities: Bismarck, Williston, Jamestown, and Fargo. The program began by delivering 335 meals per week, has expanded to nearly 1,400 meals weekly ensuring that more people can access high-quality, ready-to-eat food. At the heart of kitchen coalition is a network of local restaurant and catering partners like Brew Catering and Sol Avenue Kitchen. These catering partners are able to gather meals that didn't go out at an event and use surplus ingredients, turning potential food waste into nourishing dishes for neighbors residing at shelters and seeking assistance at feeding sites.

"We want to help the community somehow, and this is a great outlet," shared Jake Hughes, Director of Operations at Brew Catering. "The need is there. We don't want to see people go hungry, and we know that some people don't have the means to prepare food. On top of that, we want restaurant-quality; we aren't sending stuff out we wouldn't put in our own restaurants."

For individuals like Warda Jama, kitchen coalition has been life-changing. "Every Thursday, food is brought in as prepared meals. Those foods have helped us. I'm able to get it fresh," she shares. "I don't have to worry about what my daughter is going to eat tomorrow."

The impact goes beyond nutrition. "What people don't realize is the shame that comes with food insecurity. I was like that in the beginning," Warda says. "But after getting to know the program and the staff, I understand they're here to help when I need it. The food has improved my life and my daughter's. We get nutritious meals, worry less, and go on with our lives."

In 2024, this program provided a total of 39,958 meals. With every meal served, the program brings fresh solutions to hunger, proving that innovation and collaboration can transform lives.

Kitchen coalition partners:

- F5 Project – Fargo
- F5 Project – Jamestown
- F5 Project - Williston
- Dakota High
- Fargo Veterans Affairs

- Downtown Engagement Center
- Jeremiah Program
- HeadStart CAP-LP
- SENDCAA HeadStart
- Blessed Builders





Community Partnership are Improving Access to Fresh Produce

At the heart of North Dakota's agricultural landscape, collaboration made the vision of "feeding our own backyard" possible. In 2024, this commitment took root in a powerful partnership with Farm in the Dell of the Red River Valley, Case IH, and the Great Plains Food Bank to cultivate fresh produce for local families facing food insecurity.

Together, the three organizations worked to grow one acre of sweet corn and one acre of potatoes. This initiative not only provided fresh, high-quality food to those in need but also supported meaningful employment for individuals with disabilities through Farm in the Dell's programs.

Throughout the growing season, part of the harvest was donated to the Great Plains Food Bank, ensuring that families across the region could access nutritious foods through pop-up markets, mobile pantries, and soup kitchens.

"Our pantry partners greatly appreciate having access to high-quality produce, as it helps our neighbors get the essential nutrition they need to thrive. However, fresh produce can be challenging to source," shares Stephanie Erickson, food resource department manager at the Great Plains Food Bank.

"Thanks to this collaboration, we were able to bring fresh corn and potatoes directly to those who need it. Witnessing our community come together to plant, grow, and harvest has been inspiring, and I look forward to the continuation of this relationship."

As the season came to a close, the final harvest was completed and a total of 3,779 pounds of potatoes and 4,147 pounds of corn were donated to the Great Plains Food Bank, amounting to 7,926 pounds of fresh produce that made its way to families in need.



ENDING HUNGER FOR GOOD —

104° West Collaborative

The statewide food banks of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming came together to explore new ways of supporting food access, food security, and food sovereignty in partnership with Native Nations and tribal communities.

Our four states share geography with more than 20 Native Nations. Tribal communities have unique values, traditions, lifeways, and other assets. They also experience food insecurity, poverty, health disparities, and other challenges at higher rates than many other communities in the region. Supporting equitable food access in tribal communities requires working differently, and that's exactly what we're doing

4 Food Banks, 1 Commitment: Taking new steps to walk alongside tribal communities

Right now, we are working to:

- Deepen our understanding of the history, culture, and contemporary experience of the Native Nations and tribal communities in our region.
- Develop sustained partnerships through trust and respect to ensure continuity of food access projects.
- Invest in community-led solutions to food access that respond to the unique assets and needs of Native Nations and tribal communities.
- Fully embed this work into our food banks, ensuring our boards and teams are trained and engaged to do this work effectively.
- Collectively learn how to best support greater food access in Native Nations and tribal communities, document learning, and share it with our national network of peers.

Instead of traditional programs and one-size fits-all services, we are working together with tribal communities to co-create sustainable hunger solutions so we can best support all of our neighbors within our service region.



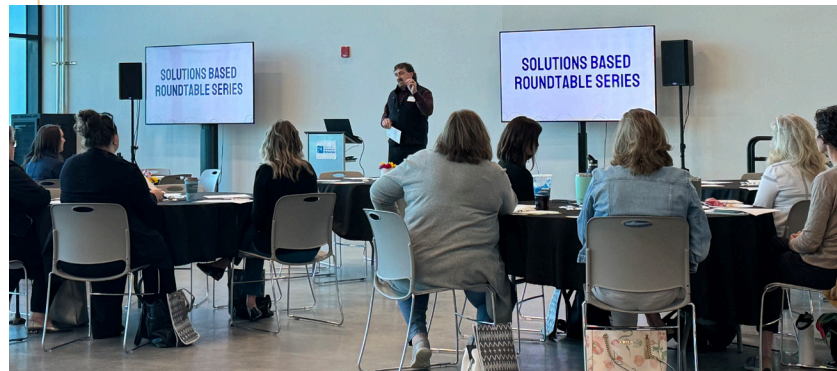


Creating A Hunger Free North Dakota

A local coalition supported by the Great Plains Food Bank, Creating a Hunger Free North Dakota, held its inaugural summit in May. Nonprofits, organizations, and state entities met to brainstorm ways to prevent people from getting to the point of food insecurity – working to address the root causes of hunger. The summit was held in Bismarck, ND and saw more than 40 service providers, health promoters, community leaders and hunger advocates gather to network, share best practices, and develop collaborative initiatives.

Participants left the summit committed to three action steps in an effort to create a future without hunger:

- **Inform and Educate.** Share the mission of the coalition and raise awareness about food insecurity.
- **Nutrition Advocacy.** Promote resources that provide access to nutritious foods.
- **Simplified Enrollment Processes.** Work together as hunger-relief organizations to create simplified and inclusive processes that can be understand and used by all.





Doing all things in the spirit of passion, service & innovation.




**GREAT PLAINS
FOOD BANK**

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