

Foodbank Focus

A publication of the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank
Fall 2025



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MAIN CAMPUS
350 Opportunity Pkwy
Akron, OH 44307

STARK COUNTY CAMPUS
1365 Cherry Ave. NE
Canton, OH 44714

SERVING 8 COUNTIES
Carroll, Holmes,
Medina, Portage, Stark,
Summit, Tuscarawas &
Wayne Counties



PARTNER
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AMERICA**



Every meal has a story. Meet Natasha.

It's a very warm day in August when we meet Natasha and her sweet and smiley daughter, Hannah. They had been sitting in their car for at least an hour, waiting in line to receive fresh produce and other food items at a drive-thru distribution.

"I have salad babies," laughs Natasha, quietly. "They love lettuce!" Natasha's also grateful for the other produce items she receives from the distribution. It helps her introduce new fruits and vegetables to her daughters. Sometimes, they're lucky and they even receive pastries, apple juice and other treats, too.

Though it's the only food distribution Natasha visits each month, it's enough to help offset her grocery costs. Receiving fresh produce and other items there allows her to save on her grocery bill and pay for other necessary expenses.

Natasha and her husband met in college while studying in Oregon. They recently moved to Northeast Ohio to be closer to her mother after her father passed away.

Though they both work full time in social services, making ends meet is challenging, especially with daycare costs for their two young girls. Natasha has considered leaving her job to stay home with them, but right now, that's not an option.

And though her mother is nearby, since her father passed away, she too must continue to work full time, attempting to live on a single income.

The two women have become resourceful — freezing large quantities of food they receive to help spread it further throughout the year and prevent food waste.

"This place is a huge blessing and helps us make ends meet, while also giving our kids great, fresh produce," she said.

Thank you for supporting your Foodbank, our hunger-relief partners and families like Natasha's.

Funding update: federal and state budget cuts impact the region

Your Foodbank and its network of hunger-relief partners are working hard to meet the sustained, elevated demand for emergency food in our eight-county service area.

Due to ongoing inflation and economic challenges for our neighbors, the need for help with groceries is higher now than it was during the pandemic.

Despite the needs facing our community, funding cuts on both the federal and state levels are making it challenging to serve our neighbors.

Significant cuts to government programs have reduced our ability to sustain food distribution at the same level provided to our region in 2024.

These cuts equate to the Foodbank receiving approximately 5-6 million fewer pounds of food from government sources. And this gap will likely carry over into 2026.

Furthermore, cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Medicaid will likely increase demand at a time when food supplies to the Foodbank are reduced.

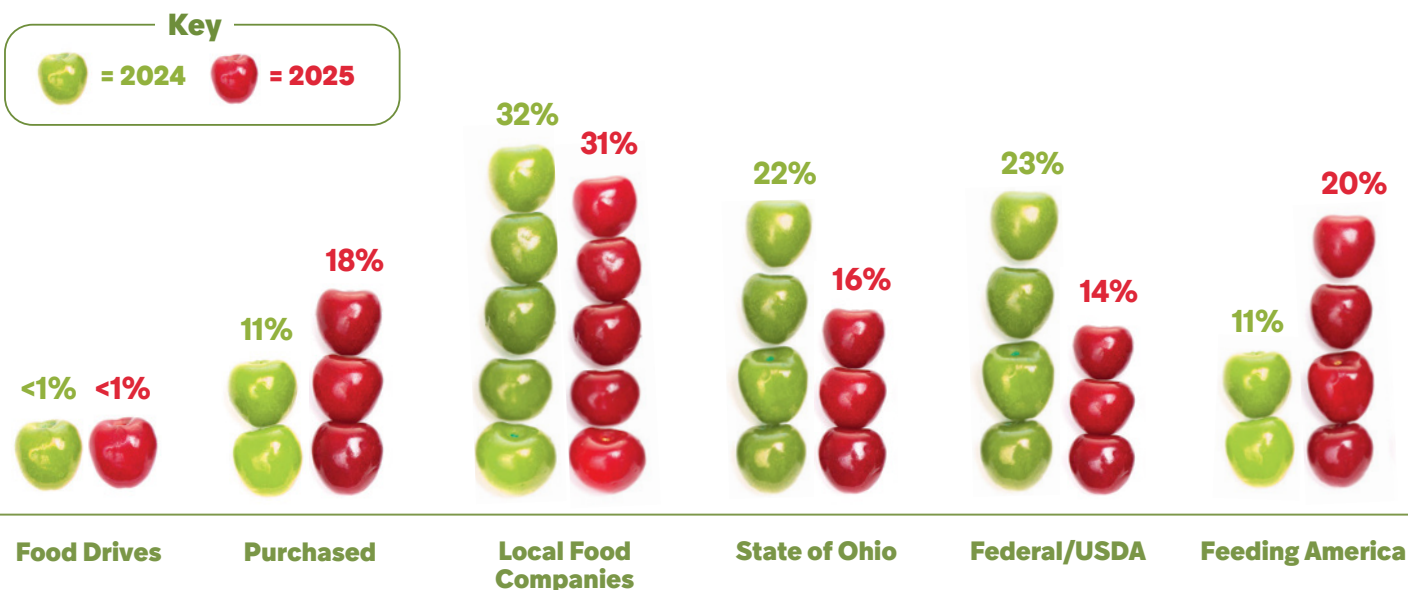


We hope you'll consider supporting your Foodbank and our neighbors this holiday season. To become an advocate and receive action alerts, volunteer or make a donation, please visit akroncantonfoodbank.org.

Where does the Foodbank source its food?

Funding and food availability have been top-of-mind for food banks across the country as budget cuts impact a food bank's ability to source and distribute food. Thankfully, we have a very generous community that continues to support local hunger relief.

Below is a snapshot of where our food typically comes from and how the recent budget cuts have impacted these sources. Both the Foodbank and our network of hunger-relief partners have had to buy more food this year.



Join your Foodbank for some merrymaking at the Merry Meals Mixer

STROLL | SAVOR | SUPPORT

The Foodbank is excited to return to the Ohio Christmas Factory for the second annual Merry Meals Mixer event on **December 3**. Guests will be immersed in a unique interactive holiday experience and all the holiday fun the Ohio Christmas Factory has to offer.

Merrymakers will enjoy samples of the region's finest culinary delights and desserts, and the opportunity to bid on beautifully decorated holiday trees, wreaths and other exciting silent auction items.

Join your Foodbank as we deck the halls with holiday cheer while raising awareness and vital funds in the local fight against hunger. For a purveyor listing and more information, visit MerryMealsMixer.com or contact Ashley Moore at amoore@acrfb.org or 330.535.6900.



Purchase your tickets today!

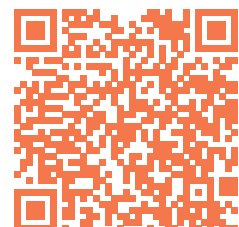


Volunteer drivers needed!

Support our home delivery program in Akron, Canton, Alliance and Medina. Deliver food to homes twice per month using your vehicle. Volunteers need a smartphone with internet access. We'll find a route that works best for you!

Contact Neiva McKim at nmckim@acrfb.org or 330.535.6900 for more information.

Learn more!



“

A lot of folks are living on the bubble. They're able to make ends meet and then all of a sudden, a car breaks down, health issues surface, they lose a job and they can't pay their bills. They don't have enough food to put on the table.”

Pastor Jeff

Matthew 25 Outreach Center



Local outreach center evolves to meet community needs

When Matthew 25 Outreach Center held its first food distribution in August 2016, everything was in place. Their mission was clear. Volunteers were ready. Six thousand pounds of fresh produce was ready to be distributed to local families.

But two hours into that hot summer morning, half the food was still sitting out.

“I knew the need was there,” said Pastor Jeff, the organization’s president. “But I hadn’t earned their trust yet.”

Thinking quickly, Pastor Jeff turned to a well-respected person in the community for help. She reassured her friends and neighbors that it was safe for them to visit the distribution. Within minutes, families began to arrive. Less than an hour later, the truck was empty.

The need for food access was real, but reaching people required more than just showing up; it required trust and flexibility.

Today, Matthew 25 serves Richland, Medina and Ashland counties.

As time progressed, Pastor Jeff knew there were more people in need — people who couldn’t pick up groceries in person. Delivering food directly to people with health issues and transportation barriers wasn’t part of Matthew 25’s original plan, but the organization evolved to better meet the needs of the community.

In addition to its drive-thru distribution, Matthew 25 added a home delivery service for neighbors. With the help of more than 100 volunteers who use their personal vehicles, fresh produce is delivered to thousands of people every month.

Additionally, the organization delivers food boxes to older adults each month — many of whom live alone and can’t leave their homes to pick up groceries.

After years of serving families facing hunger, Pastor Jeff has learned how thin the line is between stability and struggle.

“A lot of folks are living on the bubble,” Jeff explains. “They’re able to make ends meet and then all of a sudden, a car breaks down, health issues

surface, they lose a job and they can’t pay their bills. They don’t have enough food to put on the table.”

A strong partnership with the Foodbank, local organizations and a dedicated group of 1,500 volunteers makes the work possible.



Donna and her grandson, Sullivan, pack produce boxes for the distribution.

“There is absolutely no way any one of us could imagine doing a food distribution without God’s help and guidance — and without the support of organizations and people like the Foodbank,” Jeff said.

Help feed the future. Join the Legacy Circle.

For more than 40 years, the Foodbank has served as a resource for the community, significantly uplifting its neighbors and helping to create economic stability for the region. To safeguard the organization and sustain its programs and services, the Foodbank is excited to offer supporters the opportunity to join the Legacy Circle.

Legacy Circle members are part of a community of visionary leaders who care deeply about creating a hunger-free future. These thoughtful gifts ensure future generations have access to nourishing food.

The Foodbank's Legacy Circle honors individuals who have made a lasting commitment to hunger relief by including the Foodbank in their estate plans through a will, trust, beneficiary designation such as life insurance, or a life-income gift such as a charitable gift annuity.

“

To me, food is fundamental and we all need to eat. How can we be our best selves without that foundation? I want to leave a legacy of giving back to my community, where they need it and when they need it, and I know the Foodbank will manage that legacy for me once I'm gone.”

Jenn

Legacy Circle Member

If you are ready to provide lasting hope and sustainability for neighbors experiencing hunger, we invite you to join the Legacy Circle.

Explore legacy giving opportunities at acrfb.giftlegacy.com or contact Debra Hagarty, CFRE, at 330.535.6900.



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Honor Roll

Thank you to our top supporters of the season!

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Joe & Karen Wilk

Support local families this holiday season!



Gathering together to share a meal with loved ones is extra special during the holidays. But not everyone has the food they need to thrive. As government funding cuts continue to impact the Foodbank and our neighbors, we hope you'll consider supporting our Holiday Campaign. Together, we can help warm the hearts of our neighbors one nourishing meal at a time.



Donate Meals

Make a financial gift.
\$1 = 3 meals!



Coordinate a virtual or traditional food & funds drive

Create an online fundraising page to share with your network and/or collect food and funds.



Double Dollar Day

Your gift can be matched on Dec. 1. Make double the impact!



IRA Rollover

Contact Debra Hagarty at 330.535.6900 to learn about beneficiary designated gifts and other deferred legacy giving options.

Mark Your Calendar

December 3, 2025

Merry Meals Mixer

February 27, 2026

Harvest for Hunger Campaign
Kickoff Luncheon

December 20, 2025

Selfless Elf 5k

February 28, 2026

Polar Bear Jump benefiting
the Foodbank