# Your Support MADE MADE MADE HUGE Difference

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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#### **MISSION**

The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan is the Food Source. By partnering with organizations to feed people with limited access to food, we advocate and create a community solution to a community problem. By leveraging an abundance of products from a multitude of sources, we can change the face of hunger.

#### VISION

Through program expansion, advocacy, and innovative solutions in identifying food resources, the Food Bank and the community will develop a collaborative, universal response to end hunger in eastern Michigan.

## 2024: A YEAR OF RESILIENCE, PARTNERSHIP, AND INNOVATION

At the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, 2024 was a year defined by growth, resilience, and innovation. As economic pressures persisted, our network responded with strength, compassion, and renewed focus.

We expanded mobile distributions, increased produce focused pop-ups in high-need communities, and refined our approach to reach more neighbors with dignity and care.

Through collaborative efforts across our 22-county service area, we distributed over **39 million pounds of food**—more than half of which was fresh produce—and delivered **1,787 mobile pantries directly into neighborhoods**. Our summer and school-year nutrition programs provided hundreds of thousands of meals to children, while monthly meal boxes nourished thousands of older adults.

We also made meaningful progress toward long-term solutions by investing in partner pantries and expanding outreach in underserved rural communities. These efforts help create a stronger, more resilient food system.

As we look to the future, we do so with urgency and intention. More than 200,000 people in our region still experience hunger—often due to deep-rooted systemic barriers that food alone cannot overcome. Yet food is a powerful starting point that, when combined with partnerships, can help pave the way toward better health and expanded opportunity.

Thank you for being an essential part of this mission. Your continued support fuels us as we are not only feeding people—we are strengthening communities together.

Sincerely,

Kara Ross, President and CEO

### **STAFF INTRODUCTIONS**

#### **Leadership Team**

Kara Ross, President and CEO
Tiffanie Paielli, Chief Financial Officer
Terry Nix, VP of Food Sourcing and Logistics
Crystal Travis, Chief Development Officer
Tina Martinez, Chief Operations Officer
Patricia Simmons, VP of Human Resources
William Farkas, Chief Programs Officer



Kara Ross



Tiffanie Paielli



**Terry Nix** 



**Crystal Travis** 



**Tina Martinez** 



**Patricia Simmons** 



William Farkas

# FOOD BANK OF EASTERN MICHIGAN >>> 3

#### **OUR NETWORK**

At the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, our mission spans across 22 counties, reaching more than 234,070 individuals facing food insecurity. To effectively serve this vast and diverse region, we rely on a powerful network of agency partners, local farmers, businesses, and generous donors who make our work possible.

Since our founding in 1981, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that every person in our community has access to the food they need. Over the years, we've







learned that **hunger does not discriminate**—it affects
people of all backgrounds,
regardless of income level,
employment status, or age.

Many of of our neighbors are working individuals doing their best to support themselves and their families. For them, our services offer not just food, but a critical source of stability and relief.

We are proud to stand as a pillar of support in eastern Michigan—a trusted resource for anyone in need. With the continued dedication of our partners and community, we remain focused on one goal: to end hunger, one

meal at a time.

# A Network of Difference Makers

As we continue to grow, so does the scale of our mission—and we are proud to grow alongside an incredible network of support. In 2024, we partnered with **346 local organizations**, **8 major grocery store chains**, and countless community leaders who share in our commitment to fighting hunger across eastern Michigan.

In total, we rescue an abundance of local food from **186 retail stores** including: Walmart, Target, Kroger, Meijer, Sam's Club, Costco, Aldi, Dollar General, Family Fare, Save-A-Lot, and Gordon's Food Service.

Each year, Michigan disposes of an estimated **1.5 to 2 million tons of food.** Through our retail food recovery efforts, we're proud to divert "a significant portion by putting good food to good use. Thanks to our partnerships with retailers, **we received 6,942,553 pounds of donated food**, which includes brick and mortar stores and family-owned businesses. Their contribution keeps food out of landfills and places it into the hands of individuals and families who need it most.

Out of these items, 29% of retail donations in 2024 were picked up by local food pantries and kept in the area. All other food is transported to our warehouse, is inspected, sorted, and prepared for distribution. This process not only ensures quality and safety—it also plays a critical role in reducing food waste.

In addition to generous food contributions, our partners support our mission by donating a diverse range of non-food items—including beach chairs, coolers, electronics, personal care products, pet food, and more. These surplus goods are carefully re-purposed to serve our community in meaningful ways. Distributed to agency partners, these items bring tangible value to individuals and families in need.













## **Our Partners**

By thoughtfully redirecting excess inventory, we not only reduce waste but also extend our collective impact, ensuring that every donation makes a difference.

We are especially grateful for the success of several standout campaigns this year, including collaborations with the Big John Steak and Onion Foundation, 103.9 The Fox Radio Station and Genisys Credit Union.





From our Fox Feeding Frenzy Radiothon, Giving Tuesday match, and Holiday Campaign alone, **we provided 4,064,526 meals through generous donations and sponsorships.** The collective support of these initiatives helped us provide our service areas with an impact that is both measurable and meaningful. Although this is only a fraction of the work we do with our community, it is a true testament to their support as well as the work of our dedicated development team.

These partnerships are more than just donations; they are a vital link in our network. As our reach expands, so does the community's awareness of our work. Increased visibility has led to more volunteers, more financial support, and more individuals turning to us for food and resources.

We firmly believe that knowledge and access are the cornerstones of our work. Our community partners amplify both—sharing our mission with their networks, showing up at events, and actively taking part in the fight against hunger.

We are endlessly thankful for their commitment. Their involvement is more than generosity—it's a powerful reminder that we are strongest when we work together toward a shared goal. Together, we are not just feeding people—we are building a stronger, more resilient future for all.











# FOOD BANK OF EASTERN MICHIGAN >>> 6

#### DELIVERING MORE THAN FOOD:

## Celebrating Growth, Partnership, and Community Impact

In 2024, the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan distributed over **39 million pounds of food**—a remarkable 24.2% increase from the previous year. This growth is a direct result of the tireless efforts of our staff, dedicated truck drivers, and the incredible support of our community partners. Together, we continue to expand our reach and deepen our impact across the region.

Our food distribution process is a true team effort. It starts with drivers unloading food onto pallets, which are then carefully sorted by warehouse staff and volunteers. From there, the food is repackaged and reloaded onto trucks, ready for delivery to our network of agency partners. Additionally, specific items are allocated to targeted programs like our Backpack Program, School Pantry, Mobile Distributions, and the Senior Box Program, ensuring we meet the unique needs of every individual we serve.

Our impact extends beyond day-to-day operations. During the 2024 holiday season, we distributed **6,207 holiday meal boxes**, bringing warmth and nourishment to families during a time of year when it's needed most.

With continued community support, we know our impact will only grow. Through partnerships, outreach, and unwavering compassion, we're building a stronger, more connected community—one meal at a time.







#### **COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD WINNERS:**

#### **HAP CareSource and Rolls Mechanical**







HAP CareSource has consistently gone above and beyond volunteering in our warehouse, and generously sponsoring key initiatives like Empty Bowls and Hunger Action Month. Their hands-on involvement truly makes a difference. This year, we were also honored to be selected as the recipient of a \$10,000 donation from the Rheem Difference Maker Award, thanks to a generous recommendation by our long-time partners at Rolls Mechanical. This award—granted annually to Rheem Pro Partners who go above and beyond to support the causes they care about-speaks volumes about the values and commitment of the Rolls Mechanical team. They've also played a vital role in our holiday campaign, raising an impressive \$16,500 through ornament sales.

### **MIOSHA Silver Safety Award**





In recognition of our unwavering commitment to safety, we were honored to receive the MIOSHA Silver Safety Award—a historic first for any food bank in the state of Michigan. This achievement reflects our organization's steadfast dedication to maintaining a safe, efficient, and high-quality operation.

## **MONTHLY SENIOR BOXES (CSFP):**

**Supporting Healthy Aging** 

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) is a vital resource for our aging population, designed to improve the health of incomeeligible adults aged 60 and older. Through monthly distributions of USDA-provided food, CSFP helps bridge the gap between limited income and nutritional needs.

Working alongside community action agencies and nonprofit partners, the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan distributed **27,382 senior boxes** in 2024. Each box contains a balanced assortment of items including fruits and juice, vegetables,

CFSP: SENIORS



milk, cheese, proteins (both animal and plant-based), grains, and cereals.

To ensure recipients can make the most of their food packages, we provide nutrition education with every distribution—empowering seniors with tools and knowledge to maintain healthier diets and lifestyles.





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## MEETING SENIORS WHERE THEY ARE:

## Expanding Access through Project DASH

While our reach is extensive, many seniors in our service area face transportation barriers or mobility challenges that prevent them from



accessing distribution sites. To address this, we partnered with DoorDash's Project DASH, launching a home-delivery solution to bring CSFP food boxes directly to the doorsteps of seniors across both Genesee and Lapeer Counties.

This partnership, supported by a grant operating through 2026, has significantly improved accessibility and convenience for participants. In 2024 alone, we have completed 5,272 home deliveries through Project DASH, providing people in our backyard with additional access to food. In the future, we plan to continue to serve Genesse and Lapeer, as well as add Saginaw County to our distribution list. This would expand our service area to over 190,000 people with 13% of residents experiencing food insecurity.

Beyond improving food access, Project DASH has also created local employment opportunities for residents and helped amplify our mission within the broader community. Like our drive-through distributions, DoorDash drivers simply join the pickup line, collect



the boxes, and begin their delivery routes—making the process smooth and efficient.

CSFP is more than a food program—it's a commitment to dignity, health, and stability for our senior community. As the need continues to grow,

we remain dedicated to evolving and expanding our services to ensure that no senior in eastern Michigan is left behind. With the help of our wonderful volunteers, we are able to move products in and out of our warehouse and an efficient pace. We have been able to grow our warehouse to accommodate volunteers because we believe that they are essential to our mission.





From 2023-2024, we saw a 42% increase in volunteer hours completed, and a 17% increase in number of volunteers. We attribute this growth to our presence of large volunteer groups, the positive environment that our volunteer and warehouse teams create and our overall efforts to bring more people in to help our mission.

We are extremely grateful for our volunteers who consistently look to support us. In 2024, around 65% of our volunteer base was groups and 35% were individuals. These groups include churches, schools, group homes, adult living facilities, banks, sports teams, and social clubs just to name a few!





Collectively, our wonderful 12,761 volunteers spent 37,280 volunteer hours sorting donations with our team. Our volunteers sorted and moved 31.6 million meals. making up 80% of the amount of food that we distributed in 2024. This truly shows that without their support, we would not be able to increase our output each year.

Our amazing volunteers give time, funds and food to help fight hunger throughout eastern Michigan!



## MCFAN AND Harbor Impact Ministries







Both the Midland County Food Assistance Network (MCFAN) and Harbor Impact Ministries exemplify what it means to be dedicated partners. Reliable, proactive, and deeply engaged, these organizations are vital to our network—working tirelessly to serve as many people as possible with compassion and care.

# School Pantry Program

Our School Pantry Program provides students with easy access to food, right on their school campuses. These middle and high school pantries allow students to choose food items for themselves and their families—giving them a sense of autonomy and responsibility.





**Currently, we support 32 school pantries across our region.** Each pantry is designed to preserve students' dignity. Whether permanently housed in a school or brought in through mobile distributions, these pantries create a consistent and welcoming source of support.

We also provide resources at each site to connect students and families to additional food distributions and long-term assistance, helping to create stability and continuity in their lives.



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## **PROVIDING** FOR FUTURE **GENERATIONS**

At the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, one of our guiding values is to put children first.

Hunger has a direct and lasting impact on a child's development physically, mentally, and emotionally. That is why we have made it our goal to ensure children have access to the nutritious food they need to grow, thrive, and focus on just being kids.





Children living in poverty often carry responsibilities far beyond their years. Access to reliable meals not only eases their daily burden but also gives them the chance to experience stability and relief from stress. Through our meals programs, we are committed to redirecting these pressures—so that young people can focus on learning, playing, and dreaming.

Our programs are designed to serve students of all ages, both during school and outside of it. With access to consistent food, students are better equipped to succeed in class and work toward their future goals.

"One family will always stick out in my mind. A woman and her son were in line for food. He saw the cakes and picked one up. He looked at his mom and said, 'See mom, you said we couldn't afford a cake for my birthday.' I'll never forget that moment." - Agency Partner

Stories like this remind us that food does more than nourish the body—it brings comfort, joy, and a sense of normalcy during life's biggest milestones. While we cannot always choose what food we are able to distribute, we are honored to be a source of happiness and relief in these small, meaningful moments. Feeding children is not just a response to hunger—it is a responsibility and a calling that drives every part of our mission.

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## BACKPACK PROGRAM

Launched in 2004 with just two elementary schools and 50 backpacks, our Backpack Program now serves 124 schools across 22 counties.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors and school partners, backpacks remain discreet and varied to help protect the dignity of every child.

This program is essential for students who rely on school-provided meals. Many of these children face food insecurity over the weekend when school is out. Our backpacks provide breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks, each weekend during the school year covering those critical hours to help students stay nourished and focused.

serving 129 schools across 22 counties





Lack of food can lead to poor concentration, developmental delays, and behavioral challenges. The Backpack Program not only meets their nutritional needs, but it also allows kids to just be kids—free from the constant worry of when they will eat next.

We also know that hunger does not discriminate. Many of the families we serve are working hard but still living on or near the poverty line. Our programs fill the gaps where government assistance falls short, and through this support, we aim to help parents break the cycle of hunger for the next generation.



#### **HEAD START AND PNC FOUNDATION**

For many years, the PNC Foundation has been a committed partner to the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan. From providing capital funding for our Flint headquarters to sponsoring emergency food distributions during the pandemic and hosting pop-up pantries at local schools, their continued support has played a vital role in combating food insecurity across the region.

In 2024, PNC strengthened its impact with a \$25,000 grant to support the Genesee Intermediate School District (GISD), benefiting children in the Head Start program. This initiative serves children up to age five by providing free, nutritious meals—including breakfast, lunch, snacks, and baby formula. This marks the second consecutive year PNC has funded this effort.

Thanks to PNC's investment, the program offered two additional lead-mitigating snacks each week — including fresh fruits and vegetables such as starfruit, kiwi, and zucchini.

"There was an opportunity for this amazing grant through PNC to support our kids... and it's just been amazing," shared Jodi Ramos, Director of Early Childhood Programs for GISD.

PNC's generosity continues to ripple through the community. As Leslie Batchelor, Client & Community Relations Director for PNC, put it, "It's inspiring to know that we've had such a lasting impact on such a strong community partner."

## **After School Meal Program**

Operating since 1996, the At-Risk After School Program serves children up to the age of 18, providing nutritious meals and snacks four days a week. In partnership with the Genesee Intermediate School District (GISD), this program supports Head Start students and children attending schools, churches, and community sites/partners across three counties.

Alongside food, students participate in educational lessons and cultural enrichment activities. These after-school hours offer a safe, nurturing space for children to play, learn, and grow—giving them a muchneeded outlet beyond the classroom.



#### PHILANTHROPIC LEADERSHIP AWARD WINNERS:

# PNC Foundation AND Freedom Works of Genesee County







The PNC Foundation continues to support our work through generous funding and impactful grants, helping us expand our reach and strengthen our programs. Freedom Works of Genesee County (FWOGC) leads with heart, consistently volunteering their time while empowering individuals with disabilities through job readiness and workforce training.

## Stories of Impact: Changing Lives, One Connection at a Time

"In 2022, Jan and her daughter were living in their car. She came to us for essentials—clothing, blankets, gas cards, and food. We connected her with a local shelter. Two years later, she returned with homemade cookies to thank us. She and her daughter now have their own apartment, and she's working to support her family. We helped her choose furniture, household goods, and, of course, food for her new kitchen."

- Agency Partner

Each interaction within our network tells a story—of resilience, hope, and the transformative power of community support.

While Jan's story is one of success, it also highlights a deeper truth: even those who overcome homeless-ness and hardship may still rely on food pantries as they rebuild. There are thousands like her across our region—and many more around the world—navigating similar challenges.

That is why we continue to prioritize access, dignity, and support in everything we do. Our role is not only to respond in times of crisis but to remain a consistent presence in people's lives as they work toward stability.



## SUMMER FOOD SERVICE

For many students, summer break means a break from reliable meals. When school ends, so do school breakfast and lunch programs. Our Summer Food Service Program fills this critical gap by distributing free, healthy meals at 72 sites across Genesee, Gladwin, Saginaw, and Lapeer counties.



EAT UP



Bags, filled with fresh produce, milk, juice, and snacks. These bags ensure that children have nutritious options over the weekend. Since the program's inception in 2011, we've distributed over **75,000 nutrition bags**—with **7,584** handed out in 2024 glone.

## In 2024 we served over 601,893 meals during the summer months.

Through support from the USDA and Michigan Department of Education, we've created a system that meets children where they are—bringing food directly to parks, apartment complexes, churches, and other central locations through our Meet Up and Eat Up and Summer on the Run programs.

To further extend our reach, we also provide Take Home Nutrition milk, juice, and snacks. These

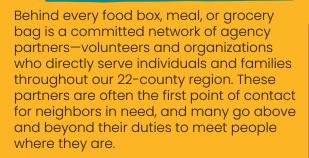






## STRENGTHENING OUR NETWORK:

## The Agency Capacity Grant



To support their efforts, we offer the Agency Capacity Grant, which provides essential equipment like shelving, freezers, refrigerators, and storage tools to help agencies safely and efficiently distribute food. In 2024, we awarded \$280,364 to 41 partner agencies across our network.

#### This grant equips agencies to:

- Expand storage capacity
- Enhance food safety
- Accommodate larger deliveries
- Improve overall distribution logistics



CONTRACTOR OF THE PARTY.

- Agency Partner

Many agencies are also expanding their facilities to better meet growing demand, and our funding helps them prepare for longterm success. Whether an agency is just

term success. Whether an agency is just starting out or has served its community for decades, we tailor support based on need, capacity, and impact.

These stories reflect not only the compassion of our partners but also the critical nature of

our support. Behind every grant is a ripple effect that empowers volunteers, supports families, and builds stronger communities.





## **GROWING FOR 6000: Local Food Purchasing Agreement & Michigan Agricultural Surplus System**

Michigan is home to a rich agricultural heritage, with family farms making up 85% of all farms in the state. However, according to the USDA Census of Agriculture, the number of farms has declined by 4.3% over the past five years—a loss of more than 2,000 agricultural businesses. Despite our state's prominence in the national agriculture space, small and mid-sized farms continue to face economic pressures.

Through the Local Food Purchasing Agreement (LFPA), a USDAfunded grant, the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan has partnered with eight family-owned farms across five counties to strengthen local agriculture and bring fresh, locally grown food to our neighbors. The program, active from 2023 to 2025, allows us to purchase fresh protein and produce—often items at risk of spoiling due to short shelf lives or slower sales in local markets.

In 2024, we purchased 937,212 pounds of fresh food from local farmers. These items were quickly processed through our warehouse and distributed across our network of agencies. With thoughtful planning, much of this fresh produce is directed to programs serving children, helping support physical and cognitive development through nutritious meals.

The Michigan Agricultural Surplus System (MASS), administered by the Food Bank Council of Michigan, connects local farmers with food banks to redirect surplus Michigan-grown products to families in need. Through this vital program, the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan was able to procure a total of 7,874,566 pounds of food in 2024—including 2,440,457 pounds of dairy, 87,655 pounds of meat and protein, and 5,346,454 pounds of fresh produce. MASS not only reduces food waste and supports Michigan's agricultural economy, but also ensures that nutritious, locally grown food reaches communities facing hunger.

This partnership creates a meaningful cycle of impact: supporting local farmers, reducing food waste, and nourishing our communities. As food costs rise and farming becomes more difficult, we remain committed to investing in these relationships that are rooted in shared purpose—and in Michigan soil.

### **Valley Farms**







ANNUAL

MEETING

**AWARDEE** 

Craig and Chris Brandt, owners of Valley Farms in Imlay City, have gone above and beyond, donating an astounding 5.3 million pounds of fresh produce over the years. Their commitment has helped bring a greater variety of fresh, nutritious food to tables across our region and made a lasting impact on the health and wellbeing of our communities.

EDWARD A. MITCHELL
MILLION POUND CLUB AWARD WINNER:

#### **Costco of Midland**







We're deeply grateful for every partner who stands with us to end hunger and strengthen our communities.

Here's to another impactful year ahead!

#### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

September 30, 2024

#### REVENUE

Donated Food Cash Donations

Grants

**Purchased Food Reimbursements** 

**Agency Shared Maintenance** 

Other Revenue

\$60,968,947

\$ 3,612,464

\$ 7,238,935

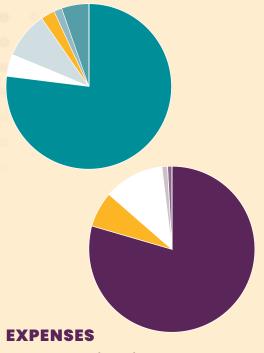
\$ 2,150,566

\$ 1,106,021

\$ 4,207,520

TOTAL REVENUE

\$79,284,453



#### **MEALS**

Meals Distributed **32,549,312** 

Meals Per Day

89,177

Meals Per Week

625,949

Meals per Month

2,712,443

Donated Food Purchased Food

Programs & Outreach

Fundraising

**TOTAL EXPENSES** 

Administration

\$ 61,999,382

\$ 5,300,884

\$ 9,062,823

\$ 912,671

\$ 688,624

\$77,964,384

## 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### **OFFICERS**

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**Peggy Haw Jury,** Chair Elect CFO, Michigan Association of CPAs

**Antoine Burks,** Vice Chair *Executive Leader* 

**Greg Viener,** Treasurer Flint Market, President, Huntington Bank

**Leanne Panduren,** Secretary President & CEO, Rowe Professional Services Company

**Julianne Princinsky,** Past Chair Retired, President, Baker College of Flint

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Advanced Urgent Care

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**Steve Dawes**Director, UAW Region 1-D

**Melany Gavulic** CEO, Hurley Medical Center

**Elizabeth Latchana, Esq.** SVP, Director of Compliance, Lockton

**Dick Skaff** President & Owner, Skaff Furniture Carpet One

**Emilee Thornton**Director - External Reporting,
The Dow Chemical Company

**Jane Worthing** President & CEO, Genesee Packaging, Inc.

Edward A. Mitchell Board Member Emeritus

## THE ROAD AHEAD:

## COLLECTIVE STRENGTH FOR COLLECTIVE CHANGE

For 44 years, the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan has proudly served our home city of Flint and the broader region with compassion and determination. The strength of our work lies not only in our programs, but in the collective power of our staff, volunteers, donors, partners, and neighbors.

We are grateful for the unwavering support we receive from across Michigan—and from contributors across the country and globe. It is because of this solidarity that we have overcome countless challenges and continue to show up, grow stronger, and serve more.

We know that hunger does not recognize income, status, or circumstance. But we also know that when communities come together, there is no limit to what we can achieve. Whether it is a mother regaining her independence, a child receiving a nutritious meal, or a local farmer keeping their business afloat—every story of success begins with someone choosing to care.

We are proud to be that choice for so many. And we're even prouder to do it with you.

All names have been changed or redacted to protect the privacy of our beneficiaries and volunteers.







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