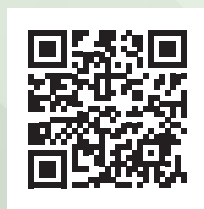


**You can make a
DIFFERENCE.
Scan the QR code
to donate today!
\$1 = 6 Meals**



THE SOURCE is published by the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, a non-profit 501(c)3 charitable organization (Tax ID# 382379678).

The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan Expands Into Gaylord

The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan is moving forward with its Northern Expansion Project to strengthen food access across rural and underserved communities in northern Michigan, where food insecurity rates exceed 17 percent—well above state and national averages. Many families in these areas face significant challenges, including limited transportation, long distances to food resources, and insufficient storage for perishable items, making consistent access to nutritious food especially difficult.

To better serve these communities, the Food Bank is developing a new satellite warehouse in Gaylord, Michigan, with groundbreaking scheduled for this summer. In partnership with Feeding America West Michigan, the facility will expand distribution capacity, extend service into the Upper Peninsula, improve delivery efficiency, reduce food waste, and strengthen collaboration with local farmers and partner agencies.

This important work is made possible through the generous support of community, corporate, and philanthropic partners, including Enbridge, Carls Foundation, Feeding America, the office of Elissa Slotkin, USDA Rural Development Community Project Funding, Community

Foundation of Northeast Michigan, the Mackey Family, Consumers Energy Foundation, Towsley Foundation, Allen Foundation, Besser Foundation, Priority Health, Lions Club members, Leon Lowenstein Foundation, and Lions Clubs International Foundation. Together, these partnerships are helping build a stronger, more resilient, and more equitable food distribution network for families across Michigan.



Proposed Render of Northern Facility

The Hidden Cost of Rising Fuel Prices: Hunger in Our Communities

Spring is often a season of renewal, but for many families across eastern Michigan, this year brings new financial strain. Rising fuel costs are impacting nearly every aspect of daily life—from commuting to work, to heating homes, to the cost of groceries on store shelves. For households already living paycheck to paycheck, these increases are stretching budgets beyond their limits.

At the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, we are seeing firsthand how higher fuel prices are driving greater need in our communities. When families are forced to spend more at the pump, they are often left with difficult choices, sometimes sacrificing nutritious meals to cover essential expenses like transportation and utilities. The impact doesn't stop there. Increased fuel costs also affect food distribution. It becomes more expensive to transport groceries from suppliers to our warehouse and then out to partner agencies across the region. Despite these challenges, we remain committed to ensuring that no neighbor goes without the food they need.

The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan's transportation team travels nearly 500,000 miles each year using a semi-

truck within our fleet to collect and distribute food across our 22-county region. At the beginning of March, diesel fuel prices in Michigan averaged approximately \$3.70 per gallon. Since then, costs have risen sharply, surpassing \$6.00 per gallon in early May. This significant increase continues to place added pressure on our distribution operations at a time when demand for food assistance is already growing.

This spring, our mission is more critical than ever. Together, we can ensure that the burdens of rising costs are not carried alone and that every family in Eastern Michigan has access to the food they deserve.



Meeting the Need During Uncertain Times



When the federal government shutdown threatened to pause SNAP benefits last fall, thousands of Michigan families faced uncertainty about how they would put food on the table. In response, the State of Michigan announced \$4.5 million in emergency funding to the Food Bank Council of Michigan to help food banks continue serving communities across all 83 counties. The funding was designed to provide immediate food assistance and help ensure vulnerable residents, including seniors and families without reliable transportation, could still access meals during the crisis.

The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan was proud to play a critical role in that response. Thanks to this emergency support, our network was able to quickly increase food distribution efforts across our 22-county service area. From November 1st through November 17th, the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan distributed 2,503,429 pounds of food, equivalent to 2,086,191 meals through our partner agencies.

FBEM also partnered with the City of Flint to launch a targeted Food Box Voucher Program for Flint residents receiving SNAP benefits and federal employees impacted by the shutdown. Through this effort, 900 food boxes filled with shelf-stable foods and fresh produce were distributed ahead of Thanksgiving, providing timely support to local families during a difficult season.

Moments like these demonstrate why community support for the Food Bank is so important. Hunger does not pause during times of crisis, and neither do we. With the help of state funding, donors, volunteers, and community partners, FBEM continues to work every day to ensure our neighbors have access to nutritious food when they need it most.

The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan Celebrates It's 45th Anniversary

Fighting hunger is a lot like climbing a mountain—daunting at first, but made possible by determination and community support. Since its founding in 1981 as the Genesee Food Bank, the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan has taken that climb step by step. Early growth led to partnerships that helped establish the Food Bank Council of Michigan, expanding impact statewide. Over the years, innovative programs like mobile food pantries, backpack programs for children, and senior food boxes have ensured that neighbors receive the support they need, wherever they are.

As the need grew, so did the organization's reach. Milestones such as distributing 10 million pounds of food in 2002 and being named National Food Bank of the Year highlighted significant progress. Continued expansion—including the opening of the Thomas Landaal Food Recovery Center in 2010 and the Hunger Solution Center in 2015—allowed the Food Bank to dramatically increase capacity and efficiency. Even during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the community came together—donors, volunteers, and partners alike—to meet rising needs and ensure no neighbor was left behind.

Now, as the Food Bank celebrates 45 years of service, the climb continues. A planned northern expansion in Gaylord will strengthen connections with local producers, improve distribution across rural communities, and enhance emergency response capabilities. With every step forward, the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan remains committed to its mission—working alongside partners and supporters to nourish neighbors, harvest hope, and rise together.

SCAN TO WATCH
ON YOUTUBE!



Lions Clubs Across Michigan Raise \$50,000



The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan is proud to collaborate with Lions Club of Michigan members who share our commitment to fighting hunger and serving those in need. Through their generosity, dedication, and hands-on involvement, the Lions Club continues to make a meaningful difference for families across our region.

This spring, Lions Club volunteers have been especially active—partnering with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan to help raise funds for the FBEM northern expansion. Their efforts help ensure that more individuals and families have access to nutritious food during a season when many are still facing rising grocery costs and economic challenges.

The Lions Club, including 18 local clubs, individuals, and the Otsego Community Foundation, was able to raise \$50,000. This unlocked an additional \$150,000 in matching funds from the Lions Clubs International Foundation. This partnership represents something even greater: a shared belief in service, compassion, and community strength. Together, we are able to reach more neighbors, expand our programs, and respond more effectively to the growing need. A special thank you to District Governor Marie Leathers and Secretary/Treasurer Barb Durlinger (District 11 E-2), as well as everyone who supported this campaign.



2025 Annual Meeting Highlights: Celebrating Partners Making a Difference

At our recent Annual Meeting, the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan reflected on a remarkable year of partnership and progress in the fight against hunger. We were delighted to honor several outstanding partners for their extraordinary contributions.

Community Leadership Award Winner: CAPTRUST

CAPTRUST has been a loyal partner of the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan over the last few years. Not only do they support our child feeding programs, but they have also leaned in and sponsored FBEM events as well. We appreciate their exceptional leadership and their partnership.



Partner Leadership Award Winner: AMVETS

American Veterans of World War (AMVETS) became an agency partner in June 2024 but had collaborated with other agencies prior to joining as a partner themselves. In the same year, they were honored with the Community Spirit Award from the Thumb Food Policy Council for their outstanding work addressing food insecurity.

With the support of funds from the FBEM capacity grant (as well as other grant opportunities facilitated through us), they continue to grow at a rapid pace.



Philanthropic Leadership Award Winner: Genisys Credit Union

For the past thirteen years, Genisys Credit Union has been a dedicated supporter of the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, contributing a remarkable \$156,558 to a wide range of impactful initiatives. Their generosity has helped fund and support gift-matching campaigns, while their employees also regularly volunteer in our warehouse and actively engage their own networks to solicit food and financial support.



Fresh Leadership Award Winner: Prairie Farms

Prairie Farms is a farmer-owned cooperative, which means they are owned and operated by over 500 farm families who are vital to producing nutritious, high-quality milk. This commitment requires being on the job 24/7, 365 days a year.

Since partnering with the Food Bank, Prairie Farms has provided an incredible 3.9 million pounds of both donated and purchased product. This partnership has had a tremendous impact—helping us provide quality dairy products to the families we serve.



Edward A. Mitchell Million Pound Club Award Winner: ALDI

As a valued retail partner, ALDI supports the Food Bank by donating fresh foods and pantry staples that are rotated from inventory but remain safe, high-quality, and suitable for consumption. Since 2021, ALDI stores have combined over 2.3 million pounds of donated food across our service area, including 1.1 million pounds of food in just the last two years.

We are deeply grateful for this continued investment in our work, and the tangible difference it's making in the lives of those we serve.

