



BLUE RIDGE AREA FOOD BANK STRENGTHENS PARTNER NETWORK WITH MORE THAN \$1.4 MILLION IN GRANTS

The Food Bank has awarded more than \$4.1 million to its partners via the Agency Capacity Fund since the initiative began

VERONA, Va. (July 13, 2022) – The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank today announced it will award more than \$1.4 million in grants to its partners via the 2022 Agency Capacity Fund. Over the next several months, the Food Bank will distribute equipment and financial grants to help to bolster the operations of its vast and localized partner network.

The Agency Capacity Fund is one initiative through which the Food Bank supports a membership network made up of more than 200 food pantry partners and 180 program partners. Awards take the form of equipment and financial grants to sustain and enhance partners' local food distribution efforts. To date, with the support of its donors, the Food Bank has awarded \$4.1 million since 2017.

“While hunger remains ever present throughout our service area, the needs of our partners continue to evolve. Our Agency Capacity Fund helps them meet those demands,” said Michael McKee, CEO of the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank. “The Fund is made possible because of the generosity our donors, and together we’re looking forward to seeing the positive impact this years’ grants make in the coming months.”

The Food Bank serves an average of 118,300 people per month, and distributed 26.7 million pounds of food—the equivalent of over 22 million meals—including over 7.3 million pounds of produce from June 2021 to July 2022.

In total, 109 grants were approved this year – totaling \$1,463,177. They will cover commercial coolers and freezers, technology enhancements and equipment, interior and exterior facility improvements (paint, seating, parking lot repair, entrance/lobby modifications), cookbooks and cookware for guests, supplies to install a community garden, and operating supplies and equipment (shopping carts, bags, and boxes).

McKee continued, “The Agency Capacity Fund is one of our most-impactful initiatives because it enables our partners to enhance and transform their operations and it gives them resources and ability to better serve those experiencing hunger across the Blue Ridge region. We can’t wait see this year’s fund in action.”

To learn more about the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank’s Agency Capacity Fund, visit brafb.org/about-us/how-we-work/our-partners.

About Blue Ridge Area Food Bank

Blue Ridge Area Food Bank Founded in 1981 and headquartered in Verona, Virginia, the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank is the largest organization alleviating hunger in western and central Virginia. The Food Bank serves an average of 118,300 people per month across 25 counties and eight cities through distribution centers in Charlottesville, Lynchburg, Winchester, and Verona. Together with our network of 207 community partners and 187 program sites, we're serving record numbers of Virginians during a prolonged pandemic and its associated economic impacts. We pledge to continue innovating and adapting to secure, store, and distribute more food to more individuals, families, children, and seniors experiencing hunger. The Food Bank is a member of Feeding America, a national food bank association that supports 200 food banks across the United States providing 6 billion meals to 42 million people through 60,000 partner pantries. For more information, visit www.brafb.org.

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