



**Blue Ridge Area**  
**FOOD BANK**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Guest Visits Nearly Double to One Blue Ridge Area Food Bank Summer Program**

**VERONA, Va. (August 08, 2023)** – The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank recently concluded the summer Neighborhood Produce Market (NPM) season in Harrisonburg, nearly doubling the number of people served.

The total number of people who visited the summer Neighborhood Produce Market increased by 85.4% over last year--4,952 visitors were served, representing 1,101 households in Harrisonburg, compared to summer 2022, when those numbers were 2,671 and 605, respectively. These numbers represent nearly double the total number of guest visits year-over-year.

“Unfortunately, these days, increased numbers like this are not uncommon. There’s a quiet crisis happening in our communities where more and more people simply can’t afford the higher costs of gas, groceries, and housing. They are turning to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank and our partners to supplement their food budget. We greatly appreciate our supporters who help us meet this need in our community,” said Michael McKee, CEO of the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank.

The Neighborhood Produce Markets are a collaboration between the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank and – at many of the stops -- James Madison University’s Gus Bus. The NPM travels to Harrisonburg-area neighborhoods to provide fresh, free produce to community members who may face food insecurity. Neighborhood Produce Markets help families, children, and seniors facing food insecurity by offering wholesome foods all year.

This summer, the Food Bank visited 20 different neighborhoods in Harrisonburg. Four (4) stops were made each night, along with The Gus Bus, and each site was visited twice from June 21 through August 1, 2023.

Food distributed included seasonal Farm to Family and Mid-Atlantic Regional Cooperative mixed produce boxes along with three or four bulk items, like cabbage, corn, and cucumbers.

The Federation of Virginia Food Banks created the Farm to Family program to increase access to fresh produce for our neighbors facing hunger while supporting the hard-working and generous spirit of the Commonwealth's growers.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Cooperative is a member-led regional produce cooperative of Feeding America Food Banks serving the Mid-Atlantic Region from Maine to Virginia.

If you or someone you know needs help finding free groceries, please visit [www.brafb.org/find-help](http://www.brafb.org/find-help).

### **About the 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 109,500 people per month across 25 counties and eight cities through distribution centers in Charlottesville, Lynchburg, Winchester, and Verona. We're serving record numbers of Virginians through our network of more than 400 community partners, which includes food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, schools, libraries, healthcare clinics, community centers, and more. 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 partner food bank of Feeding America®, a national organization supporting more than 200 food banks across the United States, helping provide 5.2 billion meals to tens of millions of people through 60,000 agency partners. For more information, visit [www.brafb.org](http://www.brafb.org).