



Blue Ridge
AREA
**FOOD
BANK**

Partnering With Purpose

SUMMER 2025

PRINT EDITION

A NEWSLETTER FOR FOOD BANK PARTNERS

Food Bank Supports Healthy Pantry Initiative With Workshops

You spoke, and we listened! This summer, the Food Bank is rolling out a series of workshops to help our partners become even more health-focused and neighbor-centered. These workshops are a direct response to what you told us your organization needed in the 2025 Healthy Pantry Initiative (HPI) assessment, sent out to all Food Bank partners in early 2025.

Your responses to the HPI assessment show a strong interest in health education and neighbor-centered practices, with some regional differences in preferred approaches. Based on your feedback, our rotating workshops, hosted by Kara Snapp, manager of health initiatives at the Food Bank, will cover a variety of

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Remind me: What is HPI?

The HPI is a statewide movement led by the Federation of Virginia Food Banks to promote health-focused and neighbor-centered practices in food pantries. The HPI offers 20 recognized Healthy Pantry practices across four key areas: food availability, community connection, health education, and neighbor-centered practices.



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health and neighbor-centered practices—such as providing referrals and resources for public benefits, offering cooking and nutrition programs and materials, and meeting guests' unique cultural, health, and household needs during food distributions.

All partners are encouraged to participate in person or via Zoom to foster networking and shared learning. You will receive communications from your

“We are directly responding to partner-identified needs to better support the health of their guests.”

—Kara Snapp,
Manager of Health Initiatives

regional partner engagement manager or the manager of health initiatives reminding you of the workshop schedule.

Complementing the workshops, the web-based Virginia Learning Center provides online courses for all 20 Healthy Pantry practices, allowing partners to learn at their own pace and implement tailored strategies. Partners needing extra support for certain practices should contact their partner engagement manager or the manager of health initiatives.

Workshop Calendar

THURSDAY, AUGUST 14

10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Online via Zoom and also in person at the Food Bank:
1207 Harris St, Charlottesville

Community Connection

We'll discuss the following practices:

- How to provide information on benefits, health, and other social needs.
- How to provide and/or receive neighbor referrals to community health or social benefit services.
- How to offer health services or social supports on site.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

1:00-2:30 p.m.

Online only via Zoom

Neighbor Centered

We will discuss the importance of:

- Having materials, resources, or processes for serving non-English speakers.
- How to deal with transportation barriers.
- How to enable neighbors to choose which types of food they would like from the pantry.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16

10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Online only via Zoom

Health Education

We'll discuss the following practices:

- Offering food demonstrations and tastings, cooking classes, or nutrition education on site.
- Offering healthy, product-specific recipe cards.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6

10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Online only via Zoom

Neighbor Centered

We'll discuss the following practices:

- Collecting neighbor feedback on pantry services and using that feedback to make organizational decisions.
- Having materials, resources or processes for serving non-English speakers.
- Addressing transportation barriers in at least one way.



Additional online learning resources are available. Register at the Virginia Learning Center's website and start learning today!

vafoodbanks.acornlms.com/register



***“Please, help us help
our community,
because when our
community flourishes,
we all grow together.”***

— Valencia Bailey, Executive Director
of Good Samaritan, Inc, Orange

The Time Is Now: Become an Advocate for a Strong Farm Bill

The farm bill is at the heart of food security in America. It determines access to nutritious food for the millions of people in the United States facing hunger.

As Congress continues the crucial process of reauthorizing the farm bill, the future of charitable food assistance and federal nutrition programs hangs in the balance. The Food Bank is joining other food banks and food pantries across the U.S. to advocate for a robust farm bill that strengthens the safety net for vulnerable populations. The goal of this advocacy is to ensure we continue to have a steady stream of food for our guests.

As of the date of publication, this network has already lost hundreds of thousands of pounds of food committed to us from the USDA. Additional cuts to several federal programs could be on the horizon.

If these cuts occur, it could reduce access to food assistance for many of your guests and neighbors, and could create a surge in demand, straining our ability to help individuals and families struggling to access the food they need.

Together, we can raise our voices and advocate for a strong farm bill that protects programs like TEFAP, CSFP, and SNAP.



Tell Congress to pass a strong, bipartisan farm bill that supports farmers and food banks, and strengthens our communities. Our website offers easy-to-follow guidance.

www.brafb.org/advocacy

Streamline Your Guest Registration Process

Link2Feed offers a self-registration feature that lets pantry guests create and update their own profiles—right from their phones, tablets, or personal computers.

While waiting in line or before visiting your food pantry, your guests can privately enter their household information directly into Link2Feed.

Key benefits:

- Reduces volunteer time spent on guest registration
- Available in guests' preferred languages
- Offers privacy and dignity
- Guests can update their own information anytime

Reminder: Pantries offering **TEFAP** or **CSFP** must still screen for household eligibility and enroll guests in-person for these programs.



To help you launch this feature, this edition of *Partnering With Purpose*

includes a flyer you can display to guide guests to the online registration site.

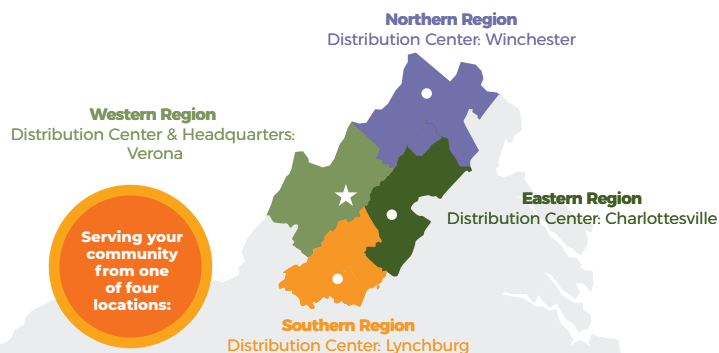


Blue Ridge Area FOOD BANK

Everyone should have enough to eat.

PARTNER
FOOD BANK OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**

HEADQUARTERS | P.O. BOX 937 | VERONA, VA 24482



Our VISION: Nourishing food and better health—for everyone, every day.

Our CORE BELIEFS: Hunger is unacceptable, everyone deserves access to enough food, food sustains life and nourishes health, and we are called to serve without judgment.

Our MISSION:
To improve food security through equitable access to good nutrition and the resources that support health and well-being.

Snackables

FoodFinder Tool Gets an Upgrade

We're excited to announce significant improvements to our web-based FoodFinder tool, designed to better connect guests across our service area with local food pantries. This update reflects our ongoing commitment to serving both our guests and partners more effectively.

- Key changes have been implemented to enhance user experience and accessibility. The map displaying search results has been refined, offering a clearer and more visible presentation of pantry locations.

- To reach a broader and more diverse audience, dozens of additional languages have been integrated into the platform.
- For mobile users, the default display for search results has been switched from the map to a list of pantries, addressing previous challenges in deciphering information on smaller screens.

Visit the
FoodFinder
tool here:
foodfinder.brafb.org

