

# A better life begins with a full plate.

Food is deeply connected to health and well-being. It nourishes our bodies, strengthens our connections with one another, and provides the energy we need to thrive. A full plate can be the first step toward a brighter tomorrow for families in the Blue Ridge area.

Meet Phyllis, a guest who can access the healthy food she needs because of you. As a senior on a fixed income and a former caregiver for her mother, Phyllis has faced challenges with quiet strength and unwavering positivity. Today, as she manages diabetes and post-cancer dietary needs, she visits her local food pantry to help supplement her groceries.

“This really helps me,” she shared. “I don’t come every week, but I come when I need to. It’s nice because it’s a shopping experience where I can choose foods that work for me.” She added, “They are so open and welcoming. You feel the warmth ... it doesn’t matter what my situation is.”

Like many of our guests, Phyllis finds healthy options and compassionate support at her local pantry. And, like



**Phyllis**

at River City Bread Basket in Waynesboro

you, she believes in the power of community in periods of great uncertainty.

“I spread the joy wherever I can,” Phyllis said with a smile. “I believe in paying it forward.”

When you support the Food Bank, you help your neighbors access a steady source of fresh produce, pantry staples, and culturally-meaningful foods. Because of this access, many are better able to manage medical needs, stay employed, care for their families, and meet the rising cost of living in our region. Your partnership makes stability possible.

## Rising costs are pushing more families to seek help

Across the U.S., need is rising. Why? Here’s what people say:

**39%**

4 in 10 say their ability to **afford basics worsened** this year.



**65%**

6 in 10 cite the **cost of everyday necessities** as their biggest strain.



**46%**

About half **rely on more support** from family, government aid, or debt than last year.



“I was blessed to find this place. If it weren’t for them, I would really be in trouble.”

—Raleigh, Partner Food Pantry Guest

\* Source: Resume Now’s 2026 Cost-of-Living Crunch Report

# The changing nature of our food supply

## Declines in donated food mean we must purchase more

We saw a 31% decline in USDA food this year. Compounded with ongoing declines in food from other major donors, we must buy more food to meet rising demand. This financial investment is necessary to ensure guests continue to receive the nourishment they need.

## 120 local pantries were supported with financial credits

As supplies from government sources declined, the Food Bank used some of our financial reserves this year to provide purchasing credits to 120 network partners. This support allows local pantries, many of which do not have the resources to buy more food, to keep their shelves stocked and continue serving guests.



*Thanks to your support, guests and partners never felt the disruption.*

## By the Numbers

July - December 2025 (the last six months)



**16.6 million pounds** of food distributed—approximately 14 million meals



**5.5 million pounds** of produce distributed—up 10% compared to this time last year



**177,000 guests** served, on average, per month—up 3.5% compared to last year



**57,000 kids and 31,000 seniors** served, on average, each month

**Questions?** If you want to have a conversation about our work or schedule a tour of the Food Bank location near you, we welcome your inquiry. Reach out to Karen Ratzlaff, Chief Philanthropy Officer, at (540) 213-8404 or [kratzlaff@brafb.org](mailto:kratzlaff@brafb.org).