



PATHWAYS TO A THRIVING COMMUNITY

THE FOOD BANK'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION

2023-2028

OUR VISION:
Nourishing food
and good health—
for everyone,
every day.

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



Thriving communities begin with nourishing food.

Imagine what your neighborhood would be like if every child, every mother, every father, every senior, every community member had the nutritious food they need to thrive.

That future is possible with your help. Together, we can make life better for the 1 in 9 neighbors in central and western Virginia who do not have the food they need to live active, healthy lives.

After more than 45 years of food banking in our corner of Virginia, we have charted a bold, new strategic direction, with and for our neighbors.

At the center of our work are the people we serve (our guests) and the people we seek to serve (missing guests), bolstered by passionate support from our dedicated partners and generous donors.
Thank you for joining us.



Blue Ridge Area
FOOD BANK

PARTNER
FOOD BANK OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**

What our neighbors WANT and NEED

In 2023, we set our 5-year strategic direction based on what our guests, neighbors, and partners told us was most important or difficult related to charitable food assistance.

Nearly half of surveyed guests reported hurdles that include transportation or finding an open food pantry at convenient times. About half of our guests reported special dietary needs in their household, often caused by a chronic health condition. Language can often limit peoples' understanding of where and how to access help (more than 50 languages

are represented in the region). Most guests—2 out of every 3—don't get SNAP benefits, the government's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

These and other insights gained from Food Bank-hosted listening sessions, other research, plus our decades of food banking experience guided the development of a bold roadmap to deepen our impact. At the plan's mid-point in 2025, we reassessed and reaffirmed our original goals, adjusting some strategies to respond to the changing environment in which we work.

"We pick up for seven different families. Some of them are older and disabled and they can't get out. So, this is an important place."

— Carmen, grandmother raising grandkids, guest at Mobile Food Pantry

With our neighbors at the center, our STRATEGIC GOALS are to:



ELIMINATE DISPARITIES IN ACCESS to NUTRITIOUS FOOD

To make sure we're reaching neighbors with food, when and where they need it, we will:

- Expand the Food Bank network by partnering with previously untapped organizations who also serve our focus populations
- Invest in partner operational capacity
- Build partner knowledge, capability, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities
- Develop and deploy innovative distribution models
- Connect our neighbors with food by providing the information they need to make informed decisions
- Seek and learn from guest feedback



IMPROVE the HEALTH OF GUESTS

We recognize that food is health, and that the Food Bank is a regular source of food for many households. So we will:

- Source and distribute foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of guests, including those with chronic conditions
- Engage partners in the Healthy Pantry Initiative, which supports food availability, resource connection, nutrition education, and removal of barriers
- Source and distribute foods that meet the cultural and religious needs of guests
- Engage strategically with statewide efforts designed to improve food security and health equity
- Partner with healthcare providers to support patient nutrition security and health



SUPPORT HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL STABILITY

For long-lasting impact, we will provide our guests with a bridge out of poverty. Our focus will include:

- Provide training and resources to community partners on SNAP and other food resources and financial supports
- Leverage our vast network of community partnerships to connect neighbors and guests to wraparound resources
- Advocate for policies at the state and federal levels that address the root causes of hunger and food insecurity



MAINTAIN A STRONG & SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION

We will ensure the Food Bank has the data, human resources, technology, infrastructure, equipment, and revenue to achieve the mission. Key activities will include:

- Develop data governance and strategy systems
- Invest in staff wellness and retention
- Engage in strategic operational planning and review of current and emerging needs and risks
- Recruit staff and Board members who represent the diversity of our communities and geography
- Explore new revenue models

OUR VISION

**NOURISHING FOOD
& GOOD HEALTH**
for **EVERYONE, EVERY DAY**



Because of generous community support we've been able to better understand the challenges our neighbors face and think deeply about how we can better respond. We know it's not enough to focus on today. This is a moment that calls on us to adapt to tomorrow's needs. This is a time to invest, innovate, and transform. Your generosity enables us to do so.

Thank you for standing with us!



What success looks like

We set measurable goals each year and track our progress toward these long-term outcomes:



Guests have greater access to food when and where they need it.



The food and resources we provide support the health, cultural, and religious needs of guests.



Guests have greater access to wraparound resources that meet their basic needs.



Our structure, resources, staff, and capacity enable us to achieve our mission.



Learn more about our strategic direction.

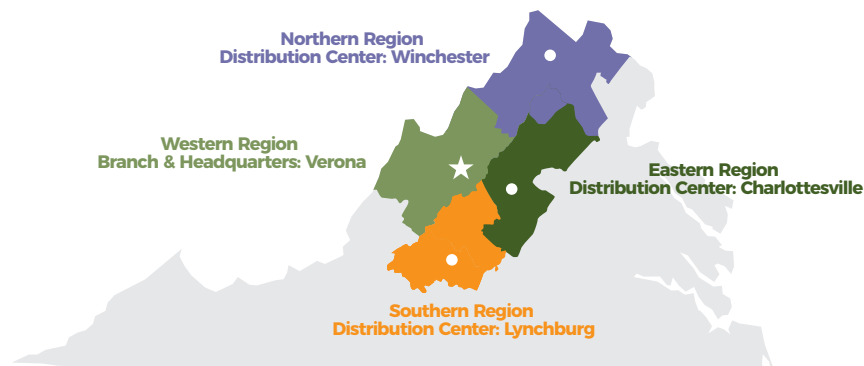
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We serve your community through four distribution centers and a network of partners.