

TEN FOOD BANKS,

one mission:

**END HUNGER IN
THE CAROLINAS**



FY25 IMPACT REPORT

WHO WE ARE

Feeding the Carolinas (FTC) is a network that unites the ten Feeding America member Food Banks across North and South Carolina to tackle the root issues of food insecurity. Each Food Bank provides millions of meals each year to neighbors in their communities, working in partnership through FTC to have an even greater impact across both states. FTC’s team works alongside Food Bank staff on collaborative efforts, leveraging resources to help our network deliver healthy, nourishing food to families who need it most.

OUR VISION

Everyone in the Carolinas has equitable access to healthy food.

OUR MISSION

Engage, educate, and unite to achieve food security for all Carolinians.



“These past 10 years, I’ve had the privilege of working at Feeding the Carolinas, connecting the generosity of our farmers with the resilience of our communities by ensuring healthy, fresh produce reaches the people who need it most. By cultivating trusted, long-term partnerships with farmers, we’ve been able to transform surplus harvest that was once destined for landfills into nourishing food that strengthens families – all while delivering hope and dignity. It’s more than a job, it’s a mission I’m proud to live every day.”

— CINDY STAPLETON



“The impact we’ve made together has been real and lasting, and I leave with deep gratitude for the partnerships and friendships formed along the way. This network is strong, and I have every confidence it will continue to grow and evolve to meet the needs ahead.”

— MIKE DARROW

A NOTE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Dear Friend of Feeding the Carolinas,

Thanks to your support, Feeding the Carolinas rose to meet unprecedented challenges last year. Hurricane Helene made landfall on Sept. 26, 2024, devastating communities across the western Carolinas. All ten Food Banks in the Carolinas united quickly and efficiently to bring food, water, and essential resources to people impacted by the storm. It was incredibly moving to see how quickly our Food Banks mobilized staff, volunteers, trucks, food, water, and equipment to support each other in the wake of the worst storm in our association’s collective memory. As impacted communities walk the long road of recovery, our members continue to walk alongside them.

Response, recovery, and rebuilding dominated the year. However, these efforts were quickly followed by massive new challenges: **deep cuts to federal nutrition programs** that are crucial to fighting hunger in our communities. Pulling together and advocating with one voice has become more critical than ever for our Food Banks and the neighbors we serve. Here are a few of the ways we pulled together in FY25:

- ✓ Our **Farm to Food Bank program** continues to flourish, breaking records every year in the volume and variety of produce sourced within the Carolinas for our member Food Banks. Last year, we sourced **over 78 million pounds of produce**—securing our place as the second-largest source of fresh, local produce in the Feeding America network!
- ✓ Feeding the Carolinas leveraged **more than \$16 million in direct financial support to our member Food Banks in FY25**. These funds included \$6.75 million for Food Banks and partner organizations impacted by Hurricane Helene.
- ✓ We coordinated the **largest advocacy campaign in FTC’s history**. Our voices were heard, but in the end, the administration and Congress passed a budget that made huge cuts to SNAP and Medicaid that will create even more hardship among our neighbors.

The Feeding the Carolinas team has brought critical resources to the Food Banks in the Carolinas this year, supporting advocacy efforts and advancing disaster preparation. In 2025, **Cindy Stapleton**, Director of our Farm to Food Bank program, celebrated 10 years with the organization. You can see the incredible impact of Cindy’s passion and hard work in the millions of pounds of food sourced year after year. And, in May, **Mike Darrow** stepped down as Executive Director after seven years of service. Mike’s leadership helped our organization navigate through some of our biggest challenges to date: Hurricanes Florence and Helene, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. We’re grateful for Mike’s leadership during his time with Feeding the Carolinas.

Through milestones and challenges, blue skies and storms, our association of Food Banks remains dedicated to supporting one another. **We know it will take all of us to win the fight against hunger.**

With appreciation,

Eric A. Aft | Board Chair
CEO, Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC

& Nick Osborne | Board Vice Chair
CEO, Lowcountry Food Bank

THE NEED

HUNGER IN THE CAROLINAS

Food banks are witnessing historic levels of need among our neighbors. Year after year, every county in the Carolinas—all 100 counties in North Carolina and 46 counties in South Carolina—experiences food insecurity. And, while food banks continue to empower their neighbors to meet this challenge, the sharply rising cost of living means that rates of food insecurity are on the rise.



1 in 7 Carolinians are food insecure.*

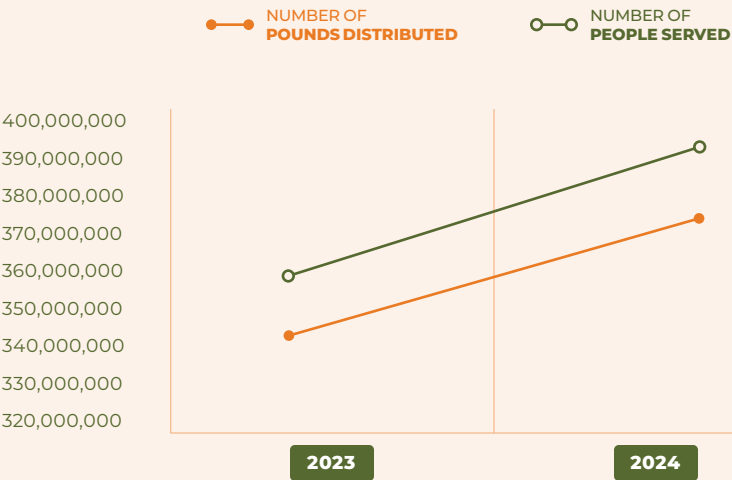


630,000+ children in the Carolinas are food insecure.



45% of those who are food insecure are above the income threshold for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility.

**The USDA defines food insecurity as “a lack of consistent access to enough food for every household member to live an active, healthy life.”*



Increased Need in the Feeding the Carolinas Network

Across our network, we saw a **15% increase in individuals served—a clear reflection of the growing need in our communities.**

This surge pushed our collective reach to more than **15 million people**, underscoring the vital role our Food Banks continue to play in supporting families facing food insecurity in the Carolinas.



FY25 IMPACT AT A GLANCE

1

FARM TO FOOD BANK

- ✓ Sourced more than **78 million pounds** of fresh, local produce to nourish our neighbors—food that otherwise could have ended up in landfills.
→ That's the equivalent of **65 million meals** for families across the Carolinas.
- ✓ FTC is proud to rank **2nd in the Feeding America network** for distributing fresh, local produce!

2

ADVOCACY

- ✓ Executed our **largest advocacy initiative in FTC's history** along with our ten member Food Banks.
- ✓ Mobilized **thousands** of emails, calls, meetings, and coalitions to protect federally funded feeding programs.

3

CRISIS SUPPORT

- ✓ In the wake of Hurricane Helene, we raised **\$6.75 million** in relief funds for impacted Food Banks.
- ✓ Leveraged more than **\$16 million** in direct financial support to strengthen both emergency relief and long-term recovery across our network.

FEEDING THE CAROLINAS' RESPONSE TO HURRICANE HELENE

OUR COMMITMENT IN CRISIS: ELIMINATING HUNGER AMID DISASTER

Since the rollback of pandemic-era hunger relief programs, **more people have turned to their local food pantries for support**. This need spiked significantly in the wake of Hurricane Helene's devastation in September 2024—the defining crisis of FY25. Now, one year after Helene, our Food Banks are still seeing record-breaking numbers of neighbors in need — a sobering reminder that the crisis of hunger persists.

At the same time, severe cuts to critical federal nutrition programs have left food banks with fewer resources to purchase food for those in need. The passage of the Budget Reconciliation Bill (HR 1) on July 4, 2025, deepened the challenge, slashing billions of dollars from SNAP and Medicaid over the next decade.

The reality is clear: between rising demand and shrinking federal support, food banks are facing historic challenges. **But these challenges fuel our fierce dedication to one shared purpose: eliminating hunger in our communities.**



MANNA FoodBank



MANNA FoodBank was completely destroyed by the hurricane, resulting in a loss of more than **\$28 million**. They face a **projected \$112 million, three-year recovery effort**. Yet *within days*, they relocated operations and by March 2025, they were distributing more than 100,000 pounds of food per day! In July 2025, MANNA recorded the highest number of people served in their history—**more than 190,000 individuals**.





SHOWING UP FOR THE CAROLINAS

✓ IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

When Hurricane Helene struck, Feeding the Carolinas jumped into action. Within days, we disbursed emergency relief funding to impacted Food Banks—including MANNA FoodBank, Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC, Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina, Golden Harvest, and Harvest Hope—to provide water, food boxes, and critical supplies.

We also engaged our broader network: non-impacted Food Banks, such as the Food Bank of Central & Eastern NC, and Lowcountry Food Bank, packed emergency food boxes for shipment to affected areas.

✓ TWO-STATE MOBILIZATION

By leveraging support from donors, corporate gifts, and private foundations, as well as support from Feeding America, Feeding the Carolinas disbursed **over \$6.75 million in Helene relief funds in North and South Carolina** in the months after the storm. Additional in-kind support included food, water, warehouse space, and shipping costs from FEMA and the Feeding America network, critical resources that allowed food banks to reach families faster.

✓ RECOVERY & RESILIENCE

As the immediate crisis turned into long-term recovery, Food Banks across the Carolinas have risen to meet three huge challenges:

1. Damage to local distribution infrastructure (pantries, food hubs, community kitchens)
2. Persistently elevated hunger in the community
3. Major cuts to federal food purchasing programs

Through targeted “pass-through” grants, FTC and our member Food Banks invested **\$3.23 million** in local partners—including food pantries, food hubs, and small farms—to repair critical infrastructure like freezers, trucks, loading bays, and farm equipment. These investments kept **109 local partner agencies** in operation, and for several small farmers, they prevented permanent closure after the storm.

STORM STORIES OF IMPACT

FROM OUR NETWORK

Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC

To date, Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC has **invested more than \$5.15 million** in Helene recovery efforts, including the funds provided through Feeding the Carolinas. **Each month, they continue to invest an additional \$150,000 to provide fresh, nourishing food** to partners in the hardest-hit counties—helping communities drive economic recovery and supporting residents as they rebuild their homes, livelihoods, and hope for the future. They have also supported long-term resilience, such as investing nearly **\$300,000** in grant funds in local farms to restore water systems and stabilize creek banks ahead of spring 2025 planting.



Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina



“Replacing damaged refrigerators and freezers allowed our partners to continue to serve the community healthy food without reducing their offerings due to the sudden loss of capacity. Having the **peace of mind** that if they lose power again, the food will be safe is immeasurable. The generators give our partners some assurance that they will continue to serve their neighbors after the next storm.”
— SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK OF METROLINA





STORM STORIES OF IMPACT

FROM OUR LOCAL PARTNERS

We were grateful to be able to distribute grant funds to 109 food pantries, food hubs, small farms, and other food distribution partners within communities impacted by the hurricane. Here are a few of their stories:



“Without the FTC grant, Abundant Acres Farm would be years behind. Our mission is to provide an abundance of fresh, organic produce to our region; this grant **streamlined our farm rebuild and has allowed us to once again provide for our community.**”

— ABUNDANT ACRES



“These funds have been **critical to our farm’s recovery.** We are so grateful to our extended community for seeing the need for small farms like ours!”

— THE TRIPLE B’S



FEEDING *Hope*



“Beacon operates from a mindset of abundance, having borne witness time and again to the beautiful offerings of love and support that always seem to arrive just when we need them most. Grant funding received from Feeding the Carolinas did just that, by **providing funds critical to increasing our pantry program’s capacity,** allowing our organization to continue serving the tremendous increase in families seeking food assistance in the wake of Hurricane Helene.”

— BEACON OF HOPE



“The support we’ve received through Feeding the Carolinas has been truly life-changing for our family farm. This grant has allowed us to rebuild much faster than we ever thought possible after Hurricane Helene’s devastation. **It’s not just about restoring our farm; it’s about being able to give back to our community and provide fresh, nutritious food to those in need.** With this funding, we are not only recovering—we are growing and thriving, ensuring a sustainable future for our family and a stronger, more resilient community.”

— TRAVIS GRAFF, OWNER, GRAFF FAMILY FARMS

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS

The incredible impact of our network last year would not have been possible without the generosity of thousands of individuals, businesses, and organizations who supported Feeding the Carolinas. Special thanks to the following:



THE DUKE ENDOWMENT

“We stand with our neighbors in western North Carolina. Our hearts have been broken with theirs. We want them to know that all of us ‘down the mountain’ are working diligently to help fill gaps where we can.”

— ROBB WEBB, DIRECTOR OF THE ENDOWMENT’S RURAL CHURCH PROGRAM AREA



SECU FOUNDATION

“Enabling immediate relief is key to helping those in need, and we encourage other community leaders to help support critical organizations that we have come to rely upon during unfortunate times of disaster.”

— MONA MOON, BOARD MEMBER



DAVID & NICOLE TEPPER FOUNDATION

“Especially in the wake of Hurricane Helene and the destruction it wreaked across the Carolinas, the fight to alleviate food insecurity is of dire importance, and The David & Nicole Teppner Foundation remains committed to this crucial cause. For years, DNTF has been working closely with these incredible organizations, and we are proud to continue this support and provide even further assistance to the heroic men and women who serve, nourish, and uplift their local communities on a daily basis.”

— NICOLE TEPPER



ENDING HUNGER STARTS HERE

JOIN THE MOVEMENT TO FEED THE CAROLINAS



DONATE
Your gift helps nourish neighbors in need.



ADVOCATE
Raise your voice to shape hunger relief policies.



VOLUNTEER
Support your community at one of our 10 member Food Banks.

OUR TEAM

Interim Executive Director
Fawn Pattison

Farm to Food Bank Director
Cindy Stapleton

*Ag Sourcing & Farm to Food Bank
Coordinator*
Erica King

Compliance Manager
Tina Newsom

*Advocacy & Communications
Specialist*
Jamie Butler Alt

*Long-Term Recovery
Coordinator*
Eric Lewis



Visit our website to learn
more about our mission
and ways to get involved!

OUR MEMBER FOOD BANKS



foodbank
OF CENTRAL & EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA



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