FOOD BANK
OF NORTHEAST GEORGIA

FISCAL YEAR 2025

ANNUAL REPORT

FOODBANKNEGA.ORG

2025 Board of Directors

We are grateful for the extraordinary leadership of our Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers who connect neighbors with nourishing food. Together, we are getting closer to seeing EVERY NEIGHBOR. WITH ENOUGH FOOD. EVERY DAY.

Billy Porter, *Chair*
Tony Ferguson, *Chair Elect 2026*
Erin Barger, *President & CEO*
Emily Escoe, *Secretary*
John B. Graham, Jr., *Treasurer*

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Ryan Dobrin
Natalie French
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Sekhar Rebala
Lee Robinson
Thomas Settles, III
John Tebeau
Dr. Theresa Wright

Small Actions. BIG Impact. Everyday People.

Perfectly baked apple crisp, just out of the oven. Wanting the best for your child. The gratitude you feel after a delicious meal. These things feel universal, but we humans have some things that we don't see eye-to-eye on. (Notice I chose apple crisp and not pumpkin spice. We aren't here for controversy people!) These are the experiences of everyday people.

However, everyday people are finding meals just out of reach, our neighbors, whose portions are dwindling, and even meals disappearing altogether.

Earlier this year, and for the first time in our history, the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia invested in asking neighbors more about their life experience with food insecurity, hearing from more than 1,300 individuals - representing thousands of others in their households.

We had affirmation of what we already know - that our neighbors facing food stress are grappling with multiple stressors but doing so with impressive resilience. We learned inspiring things, like the fact that 97% of our neighbors report being treated with dignity when receiving food.

We also learned some things we didn't know. More than 1/3 of neighbors, OUR NEIGHBORS, reported going an entire day without food. Unacceptably, hunger is a reality for Everyday People.

Our neighbors in need of nourishment are classmates of your children. They are people living just around the corner. They are driving the same streets, and they want the same things as you; still, there are 92,000 humans who experience food scarcity and stress.

But would you believe that food is in abundance? At the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia, we transform scarcity into abundance by sourcing food from across the region, connecting it efficiently to family tables.

Would you believe that the problem facing Everyday People, hunger, will be solved by Everyday People? People like Anne or David who spend countless hours packing and sorting in our Volunteer Center. Folks like Frazier or Chris who spend their days moving food. Or the hundreds of Fork Lifters whose monthly financial gifts to the Food Bank multiplies every $2 into 5 nourishing meals.

Something about *Everyday People* holds exceptional power...the power of exponential impact. It is that power...Everyday People power...that will fuel more than 16 MILLION pounds of food in 2025. These Everyday People are my favorite kind of people for the magical way they transform the ordinary into the extraordinary. I am surrounded by them daily.

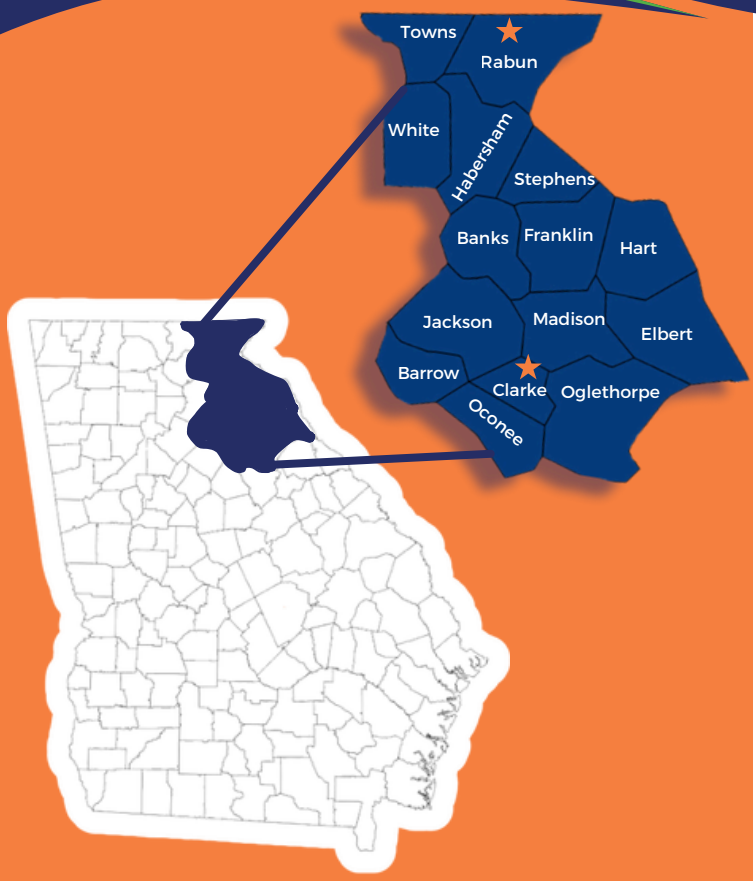
You are one of these people. It is you who inspires me and helps me believe that one day we will see ***Every Neighbor. With Enough Food. Every Day.***

Terri Barger

"I am deeply grateful to Billy Porter for his outstanding leadership and dedication as Chair of the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia board over the past two years. His vision and commitment have made a lasting impact on our mission and the communities we serve.

I'm honored to follow in his footsteps and work alongside our Food Bank team, board, and partners with passion and purpose."

- Tony Ferguson, *Chair Elect*



Inside the Christ for All People food pantry in Towns County

Students in the Teaching Kitchen

OUR VALUES

ACCOUNTABILITY

We commit to continuous improvement and transparency in all that we do.

BELONGING

We create a place of welcome and hospitality for all.

COMPASSION

We acknowledge that hunger is a burden that no one should bear alone.

DIGNITY

We honor the humanity of all people.

EFFICACY

We get things done and understand the urgency of our work.

STEWARDSHIP

We honor the power of giving by applying resources in a mission driven and thoughtful manner.

FY2025 IMPACT

July 1, 2024- June 30, 2025

POUNDS DISTRIBUTED:
16.4 MILLION
(16% INCREASE OVER FY24)

MEALS PROVIDED:
13.7 MILLION

FRESH & FROZEN FOOD:
51%

NEIGHBOR VISITS:
903,278
40% INCREASE OVER FY24

SNAP APPLICATIONS COMPLETED:
308

VOLUNTEER HOURS:
8,000

2025 Neighbor Survey

In early 2025, the **Food Bank of Northeast Georgia**, in partnership with the **Athens Wellbeing Project**, conducted the first-ever regional neighbor survey to hear from those experiencing food insecurity and to strengthen the community's understanding of their needs. Food insecurity in Northeast Georgia remains a profound challenge, undermining not just nutrition but dignity, well-being, and stability for thousands of households. This survey was an opportunity for us to hear directly from our neighbors. We are pleased to share this summary of a few of the findings.

Families Face Real Gaps

69% — **Reported eating less than they should in the past year due to lack of money.**

Said an adult in their home went an entire day without eating. — **34%**

A Daily Struggle, Faced with Courage

45% — **of those who skipped or cut meals did so almost every month.**

49% — **of those who didn't eat for a whole day said it happened nearly monthly.**

The Food Bank is a Lifeline

Are households with children under 18 years of age, while 35% are households with older adults. — **51%**

"I work 6 days a week and have for 6 years now. I take care of my mom who lives with me. No matter how hard I try, it seems like I can barely keep my head above water. Thank you for being so nice and not making people feel embarrassed."

Our Neighbor

Barriers Beyond the Table

39% Cited lack of money for food as a barrier.

Cited not having enough gas money to reach food sources. **39%**

26% of respondents moved in the last 6 months due to high rent

SNAP Gaps Are Real

40% Reported receiving SNAP—despite many more families than this likely qualifying.

SNAP applicants described the process as presenting some level of difficulty. **64%**

Dignity in Action

97% of neighbors felt treated with dignity when receiving food from the Food Bank or our members.

83% Found food pickup locations convenient—highlighting the care and respect shown across the Food Bank's network.

Food Insecurity and Community Education

98% Know how to cook and 96% have the tools (i.e. knives, pots, pans, stove, etc.) to prepare meals.

Said they would like to learn how to cook healthier food. **73%**

One Neighbor shared...

"If it wasn't for y'all, I *wouldn't* eat."

Neighbors First

MEMBER STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Across our region, more than 200 Members, who are nonprofit partners of the Food Bank, connect food directly to neighbors and families. This year, the Food Bank increased our investment in their capacity to serve, and many Members have DOUBLED their distributions, expanded distribution hours, or added special meal offerings. We are grateful for their relentless energy and boundless compassion in connecting neighbors with nourishing food.

"With the cost of food increasing rapidly, we are seeing more families and senior adults attending our grocery distributions. We are trying to do our part in serving those that are 'living in crisis.'"

"Families view the pantries as a no-judgement zone and use them without hesitation. When students are not hungry, they do so much better at school."

"We recently had the opportunity to assist a single woman with a disability who was experiencing a temporary lapse in her food coverage. With [the Food Bank's] support, we were able to provide her and her service animal with emergency food assistance for two weeks. We are deeply grateful for the resources that allow us to respond quickly and compassionately to urgent needs like hers."

"We are a small congregation with a big heart for addressing the needs of our rural community. We specialize in food. During these economically trying times, many of our participating neighbors depend on this food in order to stretch their limited resources. This food makes a major difference."

"UNLESS SOMEONE LIKE YOU CARES A WHOLE AWFUL LOT, NOTHING IS GOING TO GET BETTER. IT'S NOT."

The Lorax, Dr. Seuss

Member stories, continued:

"We know that there is not one specific intervention related to food insecurity that works for everyone. We are proud of our creativity, tenacity and the strong partnerships we have with other organizations (such as the Food Bank) that allow us to say 'yes' when we have neighbors asking for food assistance."

"A pressing need is seeing families that have fallen on hard times. Clients receiving food from the pantry have faced complex health, financial, and social needs. Clients rely on the food pantries for long periods of time and for a substantial portion of their household foods."

"The kitchen is running more effectively and efficiently now with the improved prep area and the dependable ice maker. We are getting food to our clients faster, and I believe the quality of the food has improved. The overall morale of the staff is much improved and that also helps in dealing with the pressures of the job and, thus, the overall operation of the soup kitchen."

"One family shared how [our pantry's capital] improvements [to increase the variety of food offered] allowed them to prepare balanced meals at home, something they had struggled with due to financial hardship. The mother expressed how the consistent access to healthy foods helped her children focus better in school and even improved their Family Connection attendance. This grant didn't just fill a pantry—it filled a need, restored dignity, and uplifted an entire family, serving as a shining example of how targeted support can create lasting, meaningful change."

VOLUNTEERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Our volunteers, from all walks of life, sort food, pack boxes, and even teach cooking classes. Each volunteer makes a direct impact in our work to connect neighbors with nourishing food. In FY25, a total of 1,400 volunteers served with the Food Bank - in Athens and Clayton - donating the equivalent time of *3.8 full-time* employees.

Joanne Baumgartner in the Clayton Teaching Kitchen

Volunteer Spotlight: Joanne Baumgartner

Joanne Baumgartner has been volunteering at the Mountain Branch since 2016 after a friend suggested that she get involved due to her love of cooking and 40 years of experience in education. Joanne supports the Food Bank's "Kitchenettes" who serve in the Teaching Kitchen hosting cooking classes and camps, supporting special events, and developing Food Bank recipes based on the seasonal produce available for distribution. Below she shares about her involvement in the Teaching Kitchen.

"It's not just rewarding to work with kids and adults in the kitchen and teach them about healthy meals and cooking, but it also fosters great community bonds as we all gather around and enjoy a meal together."

"Our family loves serving on Family Days! The Food Bank makes it simple and meaningful for us to volunteer together and give back to our community. Thanks to the Food Bank's clear and impactful mission, my kids truly understand the difference they're making. The staff is wonderful to work with, and every experience is both rewarding and fun." - Kathleen Belknap

Volunteer Spotlight: Pierce Roberts

Pierce Roberts outside the Food Bank in Athens

Pierce Roberts began volunteering at the Athens Branch as a college student. Now a professional working in Athens, he serves on Friday afternoons - which are half-days at the doctor's office in which he works. Pierce reflects on his experience at the Food Bank below.

"Meeting other people willing to put their time toward helping my community brings me hope, and the resulting progress of an afternoon of work lets me leave the Food Bank knowing I've made a positive impact on my city."

ATHENS ACADEMY
SPARTANS
ONION

FOOD BANK
OF NORTHEAST GEORGIA

FOOD BANK
OF NORTHEAST GEORGIA

VALUE PACK
PREMIUM
Russet
BAKING POTATOES

FOOD BANK
OF NORTHEAST GEORGIA

CORPORATE & RETAIL PARTNERS MOVE US FORWARD

Corporate and local business partners are essential to the Food Bank's work. Their investment extends beyond financial support — it fuels innovation, expands access, and strengthens our ability to meet the growing needs of our 15-county service area.

Locally, Cable East, Inc. has been a key partner on many levels - as an event sponsor, as a monthly donor, and as volunteers with a monthly shift. A member of the CEI executive team shared, "*Our employees have seen firsthand how this work changes lives. Volunteering together has strengthened our company culture and deepened our appreciation for the power of community connection.*"

Partnerships like these ensure that every Neighbor has the dignity of nourishing food today and hope for tomorrow.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: SMITH ADCOCK & COMPANY

Smith Adcock & Company in Athens was the Statewide Medium Firm Winner of the 12th Annual Georgia Accounting Food Fight with Most Points Overall & Most Points per Employee.

"It was such a joy to join with other CPAs, clients, and friends from all across Georgia to help provide meals to people. Finding a cause like this one where we can all join forces for a common purpose is a great thing to do. Add in a little friendly competition, and it makes it fun for us all. The food banks of Georgia do great and needed work, and we are thrilled to support you as a firm and from our profession." - Tracy Mathews, CPA at Smith Adcock & Co, GAFF Team Captain

Retail partnerships are a cornerstone of our food sourcing strategy, ensuring Neighbors have access to nourishing meals even when federal resources fluctuate.

As Dave Williams, Associate Director of Operations, reflects: *"Having worked for the Food Bank for over 20 years, I have seen times of scarcity and abundance. So far in 2025 we have seen a large drop in our access to Federal USDA Commodities. However, I am proud to say that we have already received local donations year-to-date that exceed all of last year. Our partnerships with local retailers, distribution centers, and farmers have allowed the Food Bank to continue its mission at an even greater level than previously imagined."*

THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

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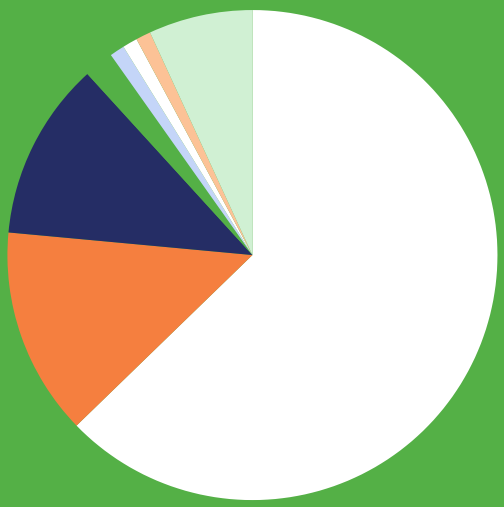
> *If you want to go fast, go alone.*
> *If you want to go far, go together.*
>
> *African Proverb*

FY 2025 FINANCIALS

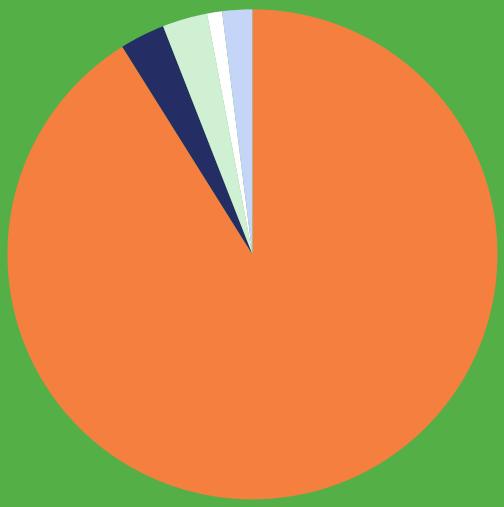
Support & Revenue

	In Kind Contributions	$28,195,588	64%
	Government Grants	$6,137,803	14%
	Philanthropy	$5,486,389	13%
	Member Share Contributions	$668,033	2%
	Rent Income	$74,527	>1%
	Investment Income	$278,112	1%
	Program Revenue	$39,175	>1%
	Other revenue	$2,994,732	7%
	TOTAL	**$43,872,359**	**100%**



Expenses

	Food Distribution	$30,581,129	92%
	Management & Operating	$910,512	3%
	Fundraising	$834,425	3%
	Other Programming	$87,361	>1%
	New Market Tax Credit closing	$776,106	2%
	TOTAL	**$33,189,803**	**100%**



Because of our scale,
every $2 donated connects neighbors to 5 nourishing meals.

Platinum Transparency 2024

Candid.

Food is essential.

At the Food Bank, we live by a very simple reality: Food is essential, and what is essential cannot be negotiable. This core belief was challenged in November 2025 when thousands of our neighbors found their access to food dramatically altered due to the federal shutdown.

Our Food Bank moved to action with urgency, and you jumped in with us. We increased food purchasing by 400% for the month of November, increased all mobile pantry plans - in some cases tripling the amount of food we shared with neighbors.

Our response is not yet complete. Even by the time you read this report, we will still be recovering from this setback, because our neighbors will have not yet recovered. Today is a great day to lock arms with us, investing your resources as Fork Lifters, or time as volunteers.

Together, we stand for and with our neighbors. You being with us makes all the difference.

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