

Feeding Hope

2024 WINTER NEWSLETTER | WOFB.ORG



Imagine Food As Medicine



For the 1 in 8 neighbors facing food insecurity in Ohio, good food is the cornerstone of good health. Yet many Ohioans lack access to affordable, nutritious food. Food insecurity can mean everything from a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life, to anxiety over food shortages, reduced diet quality and disrupted eating patterns. It is also increasingly associated with some of the most costly and serious health problems in the U.S.¹

Food as medicine is the prioritization of diet and nutrition (what we eat) as an important part of treating and preventing some chronic diseases. The fact that a person's diet, healthy or otherwise, can impact an individual's health is well-documented and

acknowledged. Improvements in diet quality, like adding nutrient dense, fiber-rich foods, may reduce disease symptoms and improve quality of life.²

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Food is medicine.

- Lower food security is associated with higher probability of chronic disease diagnosis — including hypertension, coronary heart disease, hepatitis, stroke, cancer, asthma, diabetes, arthritis, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), and kidney disease.
- About half of all American adults — or 117 million individuals — have 1 or more preventable chronic disease, many of which are related to poor-quality eating patterns and physical inactivity. These include cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, and poor bone health.⁴

Ohio Association of Foodbanks' 2023 Statewide Study of Hunger in Ohio, an anonymous survey, included 2,087 validated responses from residents of 32.6% of all Ohio zip codes. The findings are

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THE FOOD BANK MISSION

Everyone should have access to healthy, nutritious food. Together with our partners, we provide food to those in need.

OUR VISION

Ending Hunger Together

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CONTACT US

West Ohio Food Bank
1380 E. Kibby St.
Lima, OH 45802

Phone: 419-222-7946
Fax: 419-222-1150

CONNECT WITH US

Find us online!
www.wofb.org



Words of Gratitude from the CEO



As another year closes, we have found it more imperative than ever to develop partnerships that assist us with getting to root causes of hunger and how food can be used as medicine. During 2020, West Ohio Food Bank (WOFB) began a partnership with Mercy Health to provide a Green RX Program through its Residency Clinic. Those facing food insecurity could receive a shelf-stable box of healthy food to take home with them along with a voucher to visit WOFB and receive perishable items. However, this program did not gain momentum until the pandemic ended.

Today, this partnership has grown exponentially from one program, to 11 different medical offices through Mercy Health System, Lima Memorial Hospital's Dialysis Center, and a Family Practice in Hardin County. The need for healthy, nutritious food is vital to an individual's overall wellbeing.

None of these programs would be possible without the support from YOU, our partners and donors. Your support helps us to distribute healthier foods and be a safety net for these individuals and families facing food insecurity. So, thank you for supporting the West Ohio Food Bank. Whether your support is in the form of a financial contribution, a food donation, or volunteering, YOU help to guide our work throughout the 11-county service area and develop programs that go beyond just food to help a person's overall well-being and productivity as well. We couldn't do this work without YOU!

Tommie Harner

Chief Executive Officer

OUR IMPACT

Together with our community members, supporters, partner agencies, and volunteers, in 2023 West Ohio Food Bank:



HELPED

59,666
Un-Duplicated
Neighbors in West
Central Ohio



REACHED

525
Mobile &
Community-Wide
Food Distributions



PROVIDED

6,675,203
Meals



RESCUED

3,012,900
Pounds of
Groceries From
Going to Waste



ASSISTED

29,292
New Neighbors
Using our Meal
Programs

Agency Spotlight: Agape Distributions

Mission: To Bring Hope for Changed Lives
by Providing Food to At-Risk Families

Pantry Manager: Mike McRill-POC for Agape; 1 year.

I have been with Agape as a volunteer and Board member since 2020, but stepped off the Board to take a leadership role in the pantry when we knew Pastor John would not be returning.

Our main goal is best summed up by our Vision Statement, "We make it hard to go hungry!"

Agape Distribution currently aids Shelby County residences through services of a food pantry. Families may come twice each month. Agape is currently in a good state with an active Board of Directors who provide guidance to our CEO, staff, and volunteers. Through this collaboration, our agency is stable. Agape receives support from the Shelby County United Way, Community Foundation Match Day, and donations from corporations, churches, and individuals. Agape is also supported by the invaluable work of many volunteers. Our main program is the food pantry at 209 Brooklyn Ave. in Sidney, OH.



In addition, we sponsor "The People's Garden" with assistance of the Master Gardeners.

Programs: Food Pantry, Mobile Pantry, Non-Profit Agency Store

Provided: In 2021, served 8,165 individuals, 4,346 of which were children. In total, served 2,618,575 lbs. of groceries

Agape Distributions:

Address: 209 Brooklyn Ave., Sidney, OH 45365

Mailing Address: PO Box 808, Sidney, OH

Hours: Mon.-Thurs. 10am-2:45pm
& Sat. 9am-11:45am

Phone: 937-498-4368

Email: www.agapedistribution.org

Employee Spotlight: Wayne Steed, COO



**Be yourself;
everyone else
is taken."**

- Oscar Wilde

Wayne's food bank journey started in 2016 as the Food Bank's Warehouse Manager, before he was promoted Operations Director, Director of Business Affairs, and ultimately to the current title, Chief Operating Officer, which he has acted as for the last three years. Wayne brought to the Food Bank over eighteen years of high-level experience with warehouse/inventory management, customer relations and accurate record-keeping skills.

Wayne enjoys league bowling, coaching, golfing and spending time with family on the water.

As the COO, Wayne's goal is to provide excellent management and leadership skills to the operations team and to serve as a key member of the organization's executive team, ensuring food safety practices and procedures are followed. He provides budget oversight, inventory management, and improvement of the Food Bank systems that acquire and deliver food to those who are food insecure throughout the Food Bank's service area.

SNAP Outreach

What is SNAP?

Formerly known as food stamps, SNAP stands for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, a federal government food-aid program based on household income. The benefit amount also considers the number of individuals relying on that income amount. Neighbors enrolled in SNAP receive a monthly stipend loaded onto a payment card — much like a credit card. This stipend can be used to buy grocery items from most food retailers.

What is SNAP Outreach?

The SNAP Outreach Program sends our Outreach team into our communities to help all neighbors sign up for SNAP benefits. Our Outreach team's goal is to ease the complexity of the application process, helping individuals gather necessary documents and also helping with the recertification process.



Please visit wofb.org or call 419-222-7946 if you need assistance getting food, or would like to help support the Food Bank's meal programs reach our vision of Ending Hunger Together.

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representative of the experiences and challenges foodbank neighbors face statewide.

- 44.3% have at least one household member under 18
- 34.7% have at least one household member over 60
- 38.1% of households include at least one disabled member
- Nearly 4 in 10 households have at least one member with high blood pressure/hypertension
- More than 1 in 4 have at least one member in the household with diabetes
- More than 1 in 7 have at least one member in the household with heart disease/stroke
- 40.7% participate in SNAP (Food Assistance Program)

- More than 3 in 4 said that, since the end of pandemic-era SNAP benefits, their household's SNAP benefit is completely used up within the first two weeks each month

“It can be hard to ask for help. I am a mother of 5 and I have 2 grandchildren, but my one income is not enough to make it work. To anyone in a similar situation, please do not be afraid to ask for help. I appreciate everything that West Ohio Food Bank and their partner agencies do. I wouldn't be able to make it without the assistance I receive.”
- C.D.



¹<https://ohiofoodbanks.org/hungerandhealth/>

²<https://lifestylemedicine.org/nutrition-as-medicine/>

³<https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2016/03/16/healthy-eating-index-how-america-doing#:~:text=About%20half%20of%20all%20American,cancers%2C%20and%20poor%20bone%20health>

⁴<https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/84467/err-235.pdf?v=9081.9>