

# YOUR

## SUMMER 2023



### INSIDE:

Partner Agency: ..... P2  
Volunteer ..... P2  
Advocacy: ..... P3  
Summer Meals: ..... P4

Morgan Stanley was the initial funding source for our pilot produce box program in western Alaska in 2019. Their generous support funded 2,000 produce boxes that were provided to the Bethel Food Bank and Alaskans in 38 additional communities in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta.



## From Our CEO

Hunger involves a lot of hard choices. Alaskans facing food insecurity are forced to choose between buying food for themselves and their families and paying bills. Bills we know are significant in Alaska with the continued rise in rent, gas, heating fuel, and groceries. When we hear from our rural partners, the families they are serving face the additional challenges of astronomical food costs and impacts from weather events and low salmon runs. In Bethel, they experienced their highest distribution month in history- serving 308 households, including 41 new families. In one store, a small bottle of mayonnaise was priced at \$18.29.

This continued rise in food insecurity is being seen across our state, from Nome to Ketchikan, and in our urban communities. In Anchorage, where 9 Mobile Food Pantries serve thousands of households each week, the numbers have increased by over 30% since the height of the pandemic. During the first six months of 2023, over 23,000 households were served compared to 17,600 in 2020. In Juneau, the Southeast Alaska Food Bank set a 27-year record for food distributed in FY23, amounting to 581,500 pounds. These statistics highlight just how critical times have been this year for our neighbors in need.

As we continue to implement our 3-year strategic plan, our goal of setting up a distribution center in the Mat-Su Valley has come to fruition. This facility will allow us to increase efficiency and better serve our 17 partner agencies in the area. We have also continued to support our produce box program in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, where thousands of low-cost to no-cost produce boxes from Meyer's Farm have been shipped directly to Alaskans in 40+ communities. We estimate that 1 in 6 Alaskans do not know where their next meal will come from, many of them children, seniors, and veterans. As our neighbors struggle to make ends meet and keep food on the table, we hope you will continue your support of our mission and programs to allow all Alaskans the opportunity to have the nourishment they need to thrive in our communities.



1 in 6 Alaskans are turning to Food Bank of Alaska and our 66 agencies and 109 partners.

With gratitude,

Jim Baldwin  
CEO, Food Bank of Alaska

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Morgan Stanley employees, Anne and Stephanie, husk corn at FBA.

## CONNECTED, COMMITTED, AND CRITICAL TO OUR CAUSE

Food Bank of Alaska is supported by amazing volunteers who share our same belief that **NO ONE** should go hungry. This year, over 617 volunteers have donated nearly 6,300 hours of their time to help feed our neighbors in need. Stephanie Crago is one of these volunteers. She works at Morgan Stanley Wealth Management, a generous supporter of Food Bank of Alaska.

Growing up knowing what it was like to be hungry, Stephanie was naturally drawn to volunteer at the food bank. She believes that everyone should have access to food, water, and shelter, and she continues to go above and beyond, both personally and professionally, to help feed Alaskans.

“

**It only takes a short amount of time for you to understand the importance of ensuring others do not have to feel the same hunger pains.**

Stephanie has been volunteering with us for 7 years, saying, “I’ve been volunteering since we were all working in a hallway at the old location on Spar Ave.” She has been a true example of what it means to be an Alaskan, and her dedication, along with that of hundreds of others, has enabled us to continue feeding Alaskans for the past 44 years.

## FROM CLIENT, TO VOLUNTEER, TO PARTNER

With 150 partners and 3 affiliate food banks, we’ve seen a diverse group of individuals come together to support our vision of a hunger-free Alaska. Miranda Norton is one of those partners. Miranda was first introduced to the food bank as a young girl when her family struggled with food insecurity. She and her family were often on the receiving end of assistance from their local food pantry. “Having been on SNAP for several years, I’ve seen firsthand the huge impact a box of food can have on families facing hunger,” Miranda explained. Despite their own struggles, Miranda’s parents instilled in her a strong sense of compassion and generosity. “When I was 11, my Girl Scouts troop volunteered at Food Bank of Alaska. The best part for me was getting to help other families in similar situations to mine.”

Fast forward to the present day and Miranda has become a champion for fighting food insecurity. She works for Women in Safe Homes (W.I.S.H.) in Ketchikan and has committed her career to ensuring that people have access to food and shelter, partnering with the same food bank where she volunteered as a young girl. “Being able to give back to the community after receiving so much from them has been a gift to me. Food is a basic need, and when we give someone a food box, we are truly lifting a burden off their shoulders.” She is now the Shelter Coordinator at W.I.S.H. and has expanded the organization’s capacity to serve even more families in need. “We typically serve 80 families per month, but some months we serve as many as 110. The need has really fluctuated.”

Like many of our partners, Miranda is passionate about the work she does and has first-hand experience of the impact that access to food can have on an individual’s quality of life. She is committed to fighting hunger in Alaska and is always working to improve her community. Miranda’s remarkable story is just one example of how one individual can have a profound effect on many lives. Thanks to the Food Bank of Alaska’s network of partners and the generosity of donors, volunteers, and advocates, every day we are **Feeding Alaskans, TOGETHER!**

**“Food is a basic need, and when we give someone a food box, we are truly lifting a burden off their shoulders.”**





# ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT

## State Allocation for Emergency Distribution (SAFE-D)

Food Bank of Alaska and our three partner affiliates are thankful to have received \$1.68 million to provide immediate relief to Alaskans in need. The Food Bank of Alaska received \$1,011,500 that we distributed to our partners throughout the statewide network. The Fairbanks Community Food Bank received \$420,500, the Kenai Peninsula Food Bank received \$100,000 and additional food, and the Southeast Alaska Food Bank received \$150,000 for their respective regions. The Food Bank of Alaska was ultimately able to purchase over 583,000 pounds of food to distribute to 75 partners statewide, from Ketchikan to Bethel to Gambell.



The program came at a crucial and necessary time and made a meaningful impact. Across the state, our partners in the anti-hunger network have seen increasingly elevated levels of need which has been further exacerbated by the SNAP backlog. The significant decline in donations and in our federal commodity programs has also constrained our ability to meet the need. SAFE-D provided our partners with food they would not have had otherwise for hungry individuals in their community.

All Food Bank of Alaska partners could access SAFE-D food in bulk food purchase orders through us. Local partners in Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley had the ability to pick up or get food dropped off depending on their capacity. Partners receiving bulk food purchases reported estimates on the number of people and pounds served. Communities without a current partner could receive food through the program by applying for a limited partnership with us. The success of this program demonstrates the impact further investments could make to improve our ability to meet the need.

## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Legislation

Alaska has experienced an unprecedented delay in the processing of SNAP applications this year, resulting in a nearly 69% decline in program participation. The backlog has underscored the urgency to make changes and we have maintained significant advocacy efforts around state policy options to improve SNAP in Alaska. Two important bills were introduced toward the end of the last legislative session as a result.

Representative Genevieve Mina introduced House Bill 196 and Senate Majority Leader Cathy Giessel introduced Senate Bill 149 to implement broad-based categorical eligibility (BBCE). BBCE would raise the gross income eligibility for SNAP from 130% to 200% of the federal poverty level and eliminate the asset test. This bipartisan and bicameral legislation will allow more working, low-income Alaskans to access SNAP benefits while reducing the administrative burden on the Division of Public Assistance (DPA). BBCE is right for Alaska because it:

- Helps working families by eliminating the “benefit cliff” as their earnings rise.
- Allows low-income households to save for the future.
- Encourages SNAP participants to get and keep jobs.
- Simplifies administration of SNAP and increases the State’s flexibility.

Another proposed meaningful improvement to the SNAP program is HB 198, introduced by Representative Andrew Gray to extend household recertification periods from 6 months to 12 months and to 24 months for seniors and those with disabilities. This bill compliments work being currently done by the state to extend recertification periods for SNAP.

HOUSE  
BILL 196

SENATE  
BILL 149



Representative Mina  
with FBA staff members  
Anthony and Ron.

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**OUR MISSION:** Dedicated to eliminating hunger in Alaska by obtaining and providing food to partner agencies feeding hungry people and through anti-hunger leadership.

## September is Hunger Action Month

Join this month-long movement to inspire people to take action and raise awareness about food insecurity.

Summer  
Lunch  
Spotlight  
**VALDEZ**



Scarlett, 7 years old, eats her lunch in the park.

**September 15**  
Hunger Action  
Day

**September  
20-21**  
Anti-Hunger  
Network  
Conference

**September 21**  
Open House/  
Business After  
Hours

**September  
19-23**  
Restaurant Week

The Valdez Food Bank, one of our partners, distributed 75 boxes of food every two weeks during the summer months. You can imagine how important this food is to families with children when there are no school meals during summer vacation.

Larissa, a board member for the Valdez Food Bank, recognizes the significance of feeding children after noticing that many of the neighborhood kids were skipping meals this summer. She wanted to get involved, so she started a summer lunch program for school-age kids in Valdez.

“We were able to purchase enough food to feed almost 30 children five days a week for three weeks this summer. It’s not much, but for some of these kids, it may have been their only meal.”

Your generosity helped to close the summer meal gap.

*For event details, follow us on:*

