

Greater Cleveland Food Bank FAQs

The Greater Cleveland Food Bank works to ensure that everyone in our communities has the nutritious food they need every day. To do this, we rely on community support, strong relationships with local food donors, and vital public-private partnerships at the local, state, and federal levels. These partnerships provide a variety of funding and food sources that, last year, helped the Greater Cleveland Food Bank and its network of more than 1,000 partner programs in six counties provide nutritious food to 424,000 individuals.

Recent cuts to certain funding streams for food have been made while, at the same time, other funding streams have been made available for additional food purchases. The complexities related to these funding changes have prompted many in our community to ask questions. Here, we answer some of our most frequently asked questions.

Understanding Food Banks

What is a Food Bank?

A Food Bank is a non-profit food distribution center that collects and stores food to distribute to its partner agencies and programs like food pantries, community meal sites, produce distribution partners, senior programs, and children's programs. These partners work to help ensure that people experiencing hunger have the nutritious food they need every day.

How many Food Banks are there?

There are 199 Food Banks across the country that partner with Feeding America, our nation's largest hunger relief organization. In Ohio, 12 Food Banks, including the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, partner with the Ohio Association of Food Banks. Each Food Bank has its own service area, ensuring there is sufficient coverage to meet the need.

Where does the Greater Cleveland Food Bank operate?

The GCFB's service area includes Ashland, Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, and Richland counties. In those six counties, the GCFB works with over 1,000 partner programs.

Who is eligible to receive food?

In Ohio, anyone below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level is eligible to receive emergency food.

How many people are served each year?

In FY24, the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, in partnership with its program partners, served over 424,000 unduplicated individuals, including senior citizens, children and working families. Nearly 25% of these neighbors received emergency food assistance

for the first time. 565,000 individuals are eligible to receive emergency food in our six-county service area.

How much food does the Greater Cleveland Food Bank distribute?

In our FY24 (October 2023-September 2024), we distributed over 54 million pounds of food, much of which were healthy items like lean proteins, whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, low-sodium and low-sugar canned goods, and dairy.

Food Sources

Where does the Greater Cleveland Food Bank's food come from?

In FY24, the Food Bank received food from the following sources:

- Food donations from local grocers, retailers, distribution centers, and community food drives
- Foods purchased by the Greater Cleveland Food Bank using funds raised through generous community support
- State of Ohio programs (Ohio Food Program and the Ohio Agricultural Clearance Program)
- USDA programs (The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), Commodity Credit Corp purchases (CCC), Local Food Purchase Assistance Program (LFPA) and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).
- Partnerships with Cuyahoga County and the City of Cleveland

How much of your food comes from the government? From community support?

In FY24, food came from the following sources:

- 24% from donations by local grocers, retailers, distribution centers and community food drives.
- 30% from purchases funded by generous support of the community.
- 26% from State of Ohio programs
- 20% from the USDA

Recent Federal Funding Cuts & Their Impact

Food Banks have been in the news recently about cuts to hunger relief programs.

What is this about?

In the past few weeks, Food Banks across the country learned about cuts to two federal programs:

- The Local Food Purchase Agreement (LFPA): This program helps Food Banks source healthy foods (like fresh produce and proteins) from local, small farmers. The LFPA will end June 30, 2025.
- Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC): This program, which stabilizes farm income, has provided food for Food Banks since 2018. Some orders scheduled to ship April through July have been canceled.

In addition, State of Ohio food programs (the Ohio Food Program and Ohio Agricultural Clearance program) have had funding reduced by nearly 25% in the first version of the State Budget.

Without additional State and Federal assistance, the Food Bank could potentially lose 5.1M lbs of food in FY26.

Is there any good news on the way?

Yes! Food banks across the country learned from Feeding America that the USDA has identified additional funds to make food purchases to support food banks! We're pleased to know that, starting in June, there will be additional food coming including fresh and processed fruit, vegetables and nuts. The relationship between food banks and the USDA is a long-standing one that is critical to meeting the needs of people facing hunger. We appreciate the USDA's continued support of both farmers and food banks.

In addition, food banks across the State still have the opportunity to advocate for restoration of funding in the State of Ohio budget, and we are working with members of the legislature in hopes of doing so.

I heard that the food that was cancelled was sitting on trucks and will now rot, or that truckloads were turned around. Is that true?

No, this is false. The truckloads of food that were canceled were scheduled to be delivered between April – July 2025. They were not actively sitting on trucks, and no truckloads of donations were turned around. Food that had already been purchased by CCC is still being delivered. To our knowledge, no food is rotting or going to waste.

Will these cuts affect how much food individuals and families can receive?

We are currently assessing potential impact on our service delivery and whether we need to adjust the variety of food options available or the frequency of certain distributions. We are also looking into purchasing some food with donated dollars. Our priority remains ensuring that our income eligible neighbors have access to nutritious emergency food.

I would like to personally help the fight hunger - what is the best way for me to get involved?

Thank you for your interest in supporting our mission! Here are a few ways to help:

- [Supporting the Harvest for Hunger Campaign!](#) A donation of \$1 can help to provide 3 nutritious meals to someone in need.
- [Joining our Advocacy Network](#) to get updates and learn how you can reach out to your elected officials and elevate the need for critical hunger relief programs
- [Volunteering your time](#) to ensure that healthy food gets to the people that need it most.