

Food Matters



MISSISSIPPI
FOOD NETWORK

MEMBER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**

Mission

To relieve poverty-related hunger in our service area by distributing donated and purchased food and grocery products through a network of member churches and non-profit organizations. We provide nutrition education to our needy clients.

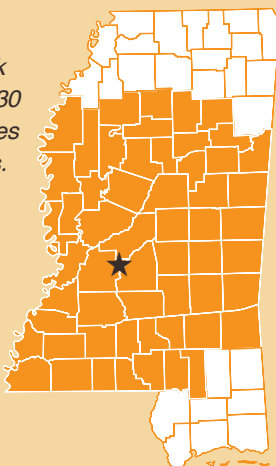
We also emphasize advocacy and related needs.

Vision

To eliminate poverty-related hunger in our service area.

Our Service Area

Mississippi Food Network distributes to 430 partner agencies in 56 counties.



★ = Mississippi Food Network Warehouse

Food Network Fact

Our service area is big! Our 56 counties add up to 32,955 square miles of Mississippi fields, towns and cities.

With an estimated 400,840 food-insecure Mississippians across all that space, that's about 12 people per square mile who are struggling with food insecurity.

Mobile Pantries Provide Food to Underserved Areas

Mississippi Food Network serves 56 counties in the central part of Mississippi – a large rural service area of 32,955 square miles. In some of those areas, we do not have enough member agencies to meet the needs of people facing food insecurity. One way we combat this problem is through our Mobile Pantry program where we take staple food boxes and fresh produce and distribute to people in those communities. Recently, we worked with Mission of Hope, a member agency in Winona on a mobile pantry distribution to help us provide food to more food-insecure families in that area. Through this Mobile Pantry, we provided 160 families with 25 pounds of staple food and a smorgasbord of fresh fruits and vegetables including melons, collards, kale, broccoli, onions, carrots and potatoes. Many of the fresh vegetables were recently donated through our partnership with Up in Farms (www.upinfarms.com). Up in Farms is a food hub working with farmers from all over the state to get farm-fresh produce in your hands in a manner of hours, not days or weeks.

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For those who are reading this note who do not remember or are not familiar with the history of Mississippi Food Network (MFN), in 1983, a group of concerned and compassionate people recognized the need for a food bank in Mississippi --- a warehouse facility that would accumulate, store and distribute food and household items for charities that would make the final distribution to needy people in the community. The reason a warehouse was needed was the charities did not have enough space to store product in large quantities. When MFN opened its doors in April, 1984, it had 37 donors, 8 member agencies, and 2,300 pounds of food.

From a meager beginning in a 4,000-square-foot converted church and abandoned fire station, Mississippi Food Network has grown to over 80,000 square feet in space. Today, we are a proud member of Feeding America (FA), a nationwide network of food banks that feeds more than 37 million people through food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters in communities across America.

Our mission is to relieve poverty-related hunger in our service area by distributing donated and purchased food and grocery products through a network of member churches and nonprofit organizations.

Our Jackson, MS-based facility is the state's only FA-affiliated food bank. Each month MFN serves over 150,000 people and distributes over 1.5 million pounds of food through our 430 member agencies. We distributed 18.5 million pounds of food last year.

The requirements of membership as a Feeding America food bank include maintaining an updated strategic plan. A strategic plan is an instrument used to help take an organization from where it is to where it desires to be at the end of a specified period of time. Recently, I, along with senior staff, met with the MFN



Board of Directors to finalize the most recent update to our strategic plan. The updated plan covers the five-year time period, July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2022.

The consensus at the end of the meeting, based on our presentation to the board and subsequent discussion and deliberation, was that we could grow our capacity to receive and distribute an additional one million, one hundred sixty thousand (1.16 million) pounds of food per person in poverty (PIIP) per year or 966,667 meals per person in need (MPIN) over five years for a total of five million, eight hundred thousand (5.8 million) additional PIIP pounds distributed or 4.8 million MPIN meals provided by the end of the fiscal year 2021-22.

The primary reason MFN has been successful in growing from an organization with 37 donors, 8 member agencies, distributing 2,300 pounds of food, to an organization with hundreds of donors, 430 member agencies, distributing nearly 20 million pounds of food, is because of friends and supporters who were willing to help us provide for our neighbors in need.

Our goal of distributing an additional 1.16 million pounds of food per year, over the next five years is an ambitious one. But, by God's grace and with the help, prayers and contributions from friends like you, it is an achievable goal.



To our many friends and donors, thank you for everything you have done for us...your thoughts, prayers and financial support. In a few years, I look forward to thanking you for helping MFN grow from distributing a couple of thousand pounds of food in 1984 to some 24 million pounds in 2022. As always, your support is welcomed and needed! **THANK YOU!**

Charles H. Beady, Jr.

Charles H. Beady, Jr., PhD.
Chief Executive Officer



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“He is beyond thankful for Mission of Hope because not only do they help him each month, they know his name, make sure he feels he is a part of their family and makes life a little easier for him.”



One of the highlights of the day was our visit with Mr. Luther Yates, a Korean War Veteran. Living on a fixed income, Mr. Yates sometimes needs a little help having enough food to eat so he visits the Mission of Hope Food Pantry in Winona, MS. As a military veteran, Mr. Yates certainly has seen his share of the world, but he talks most about the hospitality of Mississippi. At 88 years of age, he likes to brag that he occasionally has to show his driver's license to people who don't believe him when he tells them his age, a fact that when he shares it brings the biggest grin to his face. The simple fact is that Mr. Yates is healthy, able to get around by himself, but as a retired veteran, needs a little help to make ends meet each month. While Mission of Hope helps him, he also picks up for a neighbor who isn't able to make it to the pantry distribution — he does what he can to help those in need as well. Mr. Yates is beyond grateful for a service like this because the cost of living is much higher than he could have imagined when he thought about retirement as a younger man. He is beyond thankful for the Mission of Hope because not only do they help him each month, they know his name, make sure he feels he is a part of their family and makes life a little easier for him.

Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive Provides Hope



This year, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Stamp Out Hunger food drive celebrated 25 years of the annual nationwide food drive. This food drive is always held on the second Saturday of May and uses the postal network with letter carriers collecting non-perishable food donations as they deliver mail along their routes. The post office locations in the Mississippi Food Network service area participated and helped raise more than 105,231 pounds of food this year. This is one of our largest food drives and helps provide for families during the summer months when we often see an increase in need. We appreciate the efforts of the USPS, the NALC and the generosity of the community each year.

Double your Impact



Many companies have a matching gift program that will match their employees' giving. Double your impact and ask if your company has a matching gift program.

Valley Services Supports the Backpack Program

Generous Donation Helps Feed Kids in Rankin County

Valley Services recently donated \$7,680 to the Mississippi Food Network BackPack Program, giving 60 more children access to meals each week when they are not in school. It is a sad statistic that 1 in 4 children in the Mississippi Food Network service area experiences food insecurity. The BackPack Program addresses the root of hunger on weekends when children may not have access to meals.



In addition to making this generous monetary donation, staff members from Valley Services also volunteered their time packing BackPack meal kits for children. We appreciate Valley being one of our new corporate partners and look forward to working with them on this significant project.



3rd Annual Moonlight Market *Farm to Table* Event Attendees Help Raise Funds for Programs and Services

With the Farmer's Market buzzing with people enjoying shopping with the local farmers, the smells of delicious food being prepared by Chef Nick Wallace was in the air. The Mississippi Food Network's 3rd Annual Moonlight Market fundraising event in March 2017 was a great success. The special event has grown from a simple idea into one of Jackson's most fun events – one people are waiting for each year. Having the farmers at the event selling their fresh produce to promote the Farm to Table event is certainly an added benefit and one that attendees thoroughly enjoy each year. In addition, the event helps raise money to benefit the programs and services of our organization, awareness about the problem of hunger, and the need for more fresh produce for the clients served by our member agencies. Be sure to mark your calendars for March 22, 2018.



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