

# Food Matters

FALL 2022

Thank you for providing food, fighting hunger, and offering hope.



MISSISSIPPI  
FOOD NETWORK



## Mississippi Food Network Frequently Asked Questions

### What is Mississippi Food Network?

The Mississippi Food Network (MFN) is the only food bank located in Mississippi. We are a member of Feeding America, the nation's largest charitable hunger relief organization made up of more than 200 food banks across the country. Our service area consists of 56 counties in the central part of the state.

### How is food distributed?

Mississippi Food Network does not provide food directly to the public; we are 100% agency-enabled. Mississippi Food Network's 400+ partner agencies distribute food and other grocery products directly to approximately 150,000 people each month. Our partner agencies are 501(c)3 non-profits that

consist of food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and senior citizen programs. Many of these agencies are organized through churches in their respective communities. Agencies either pick up the food orders themselves at our distribution warehouse in Jackson, or we deliver to them in one of our MFN trucks.

### How do I find an agency in my area?

You can find an agency in your community by checking on our website: [msfoodnet.org](http://msfoodnet.org) and clicking on the "Get Help" tab at the top of the page or call our office at 601-353-7286. Our office hours are Monday-Thursday 7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. and Friday 7:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

*Continued on page 2*

### Mission

Mississippi Food Network changes lives by fighting hunger today and feeding hope for a healthier tomorrow.

### Vision

A Hunger-Free Mississippi

### Our Service Area

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



### 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 386,650 food-insecure Mississippians across all that space, that's about 12 people per square mile who are struggling with food insecurity.

# Mississippi Food Network Frequently Asked Questions



Continued from page 1

### Where does MFN get the food?

The food we distribute to our agencies comes from a variety of sources. We get food from the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) through our partnership with the Mississippi Department of Human Services. We also get food and grocery products direct from manufacturers and wholesale food distributors. MFN has a retail grocery program with major retailers such as Sam's Club, Wal-Mart, Kroger, Costco, Fresh Market, Aldi, Target, and Dollar General. We also purchase needed but seldom donated food and household items through our affiliations with Feeding America and other wholesale vendors.

Food drives from groups such as the 16-WAPT Food for Families Football Challenge, 16-WAPT Turkey Drive, the UPS / WJTV / iHeart Media You Can Make A Difference Food Drive, the National Letter Carriers Food Drive, Digio Strategies Summer Stock-Up, and other local groups help us provide a variety of items to our partner agencies. Our food drives decreased exponentially during the COVID pandemic; however, we are slowly but surely seeing an increase in organizations wanting to host food drives. MFN also hosts Virtual Food Drives for various organizations on our website. **If your business, club, or church group is interested in sponsoring a Virtual Food Drive, check out the link on our website or contact Stacey Cain at [scain@msfoodnet.org](mailto:scain@msfoodnet.org) or call 601-973-7089.** Food drives are an important source of food for MFN, especially during the fall months when our demand increases for the holidays.

### How is Mississippi Food Network funded?

Some of our operating funds come from grants and gifts from individuals, businesses, churches, and foundations. MFN receives some administrative funding from USDA for warehousing and distributing USDA products through the Mississippi Department of Human Services. Donations from individuals, corporations, and private foundations are very important to the operation of Mississippi Food Network. 98% of donations we receive go to our programs and services. For every \$1 donated, we are able to provide six meals. With the help of the community, we are able to offer a variety of programs and services for our partner agencies.



# What are Your Agency Programs?

## CHILD FEEDING PROGRAMS:



**Kids Café** – We provide afterschool snacks and meals to children each day during the school year through our program partners. These afterschool programs provide tutoring, homework help, and enrichment activities.



**BackPack** – This program is designed to discreetly provide nutritious, easy to prepare food to chronically hungry children in backpacks to take home for the weekends and holidays.



**School Pantry** – Once a month families in Jackson can visit their child's school to receive shelf-stable foods and fresh produce.



**Summer Feeding** – This program provides meals to children during the months they are not receiving meals at school. These sites also provide enrichment activities, including nutrition education, to offer children an alternative during the summer months.

## SENIOR ADULT FEEDING PROGRAMS:



**CSFP** (Commodity Supplemental Food Program) – Volunteers pack 13,030 food boxes each month for senior citizens with limited incomes.



**Senior Grocery Program** – Because of the increased need for food for our senior population during the pandemic, we started this program in April 2021 to provide additional pre-packed food boxes to our agencies that are serving a high percentage of seniors. This program is 100% funded by donations.



## FEEDING FAMILIES:



**Mobile Food Pantries** – Mississippi Food Network not only has the opportunity to provide food to families through regular pick-ups and deliveries to our partner agencies, but we also utilize sponsored mobile food pantries to reach those in need who may not be familiar with their local food pantry or soup kitchen. Mobile food pantries help fill the gap for people who may have missed a food pantry distribution due to working hours or other extenuating circumstances.



**Nutritional Education** – MFN offers nutrition education to clients of our partner agencies. Our registered dietitians join our interns from the University of Southern Mississippi Dietetic Inter Program to teach people about healthy food and snack choices and exercise. Topics include recipes and ideas on preparing fresh produce, cooking demonstrations, and canning classes.



# FROM THE CEO

## Dear Friends and Donors,

For much of the last fiscal year (FY22), Mississippi Food Network (MFN) was involved in updating our 5-year Strategic Plan. A Strategic Plan, which is a requirement for membership in the Feeding America network of food banks, is a “roadmap” for taking an organization like MFN from where it is to where it wants to be over a set number of years. The plan addresses organizational issues and concerns such as board governance, staffing, facility needs, programming, capacity building, fundraising, and so forth.




The strategic planning process we went through included many meetings that involved discussions and deliberations with staff, our agencies, members of our board of directors, and community stakeholders. The process was facilitated by a strategic planning consulting group (funded by Feeding America).

### Three major recommendations grew out of the months-long process:

- 1) The need to gauge success by increasing our ability to reach the most vulnerable
- 2) The need to focus on expansion of services while strengthening current operations
- 3) The need to prioritize opportunities that will allow MFN to retain and support staff

As always, none of what we have accomplished at MFN would have been possible without your support. Likewise, none of what we hope to accomplish as we implement this strategic plan over the next five years will be accomplished without your help. **Your continued support is critical to our success. It always has been. It always will be. It is needed and it is most appreciated.**

Sincerely,



Charles H. Beady, Jr., Ph.D.  
Chief Executive Officer

## Board of Directors

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## AGENCY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

# The Basket Food Pantry / CareCenter Ministries Mississippi



In February 2019, CareCenter Ministries Dallas launched Pastor Daniel Awabdy to Jackson to start a residential discipleship program for men coming out of a lifestyle of addiction. Pastor Awabdy, along with The Men's Home director Pastor Kevin Ellingson, were soon looking for a way to feed the men. They called

Mississippi Food Network to inquire as to how they could get some assistance. At that time, they didn't have a food pantry, so they were not able to get USDA products, but every once in a while, something would come along that they could order for The Men's Home.

During the summer of 2019, the pastors received a call from Austin Turner, Food Sourcing Specialist with Mississippi Food Network, asking if they were able to handle a donation from Sam's Club. They jumped at the opportunity even though they didn't know what to expect.



"We figured this was the answer to our prayers about how to get consistent food for our men," said Pastor Ellingson.

The first time they picked up from Sam's Club, they had their entire 16-foot car hauler loaded down with almost 8,000 pounds of fresh produce, baked goods, and meat. They had no idea what to do with all of it, and because they wanted to be good stewards of everything God provides, they didn't want anything to go to waste. So, they took it to an impoverished area in the city and began to hand it out.

"Little did we know this was the beginnings of The Basket Food Pantry in Jackson, Mississippi," said Pastor Awabdy, "It was always in our vision to establish The Basket here, but we didn't necessarily have a solid plan to bring it to fruition."



Over the last three years, The Basket has evolved into a weekly food pantry that serves the downtown area of Jackson. Thanks in part to the generous donations from Sam's Clubs, Costco, and other organizations including the Mississippi Food Network, CareCenter

Ministries is able to feed not only the men in their one-year residential discipleship program, but also between 150-300 families every week. Not only does this help to fulfill a physical need that sustains life, but it also gives them the opportunity to establish relationships with their community members and opens the door for them to be able to serve in a great many more areas.

The Basket Food Pantry offers food assistance to those in need on Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m. at Hilltop Church in Jackson.



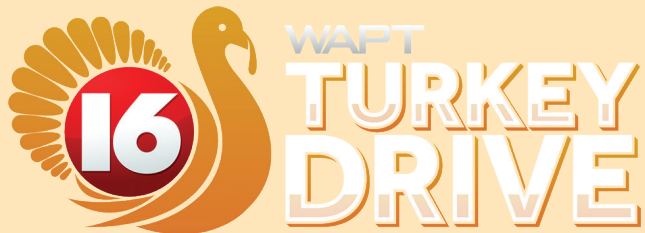




# Need Help? Get Help at MSFOODNET.ORG

Do you or someone you know need food assistance? Check out the geo-locator tool on our website to quickly and easily find a food pantry near you. Simply log onto [msfoodnet.org](http://msfoodnet.org) and click on the "Get Help" tab at the top of the page. From there, simply enter your location and click on the drop-down menu, then click "Search" to find one of our 400 partner agencies that can help.

**Many thanks to the Mississippi State University Extension Service for funding this project.**



## SAVE THE DATE It's Almost Turkey Time!

It's almost time for the Annual 16-WAPT-TV Turkey Drive! Join us on Thursday, November 17 at Jackson metro area Kroger stores to donate turkeys for our friends and neighbors who may be struggling during the upcoming holiday season.



Your kindness and generosity make a BIG impact. Thank you!

[WWW.MSFOODNET.ORG](http://WWW.MSFOODNET.ORG)