



LOWCOUNTRY  
FOOD BANK

Case For Support



# FACING HUNGER IN THE LOWCOUNTRY



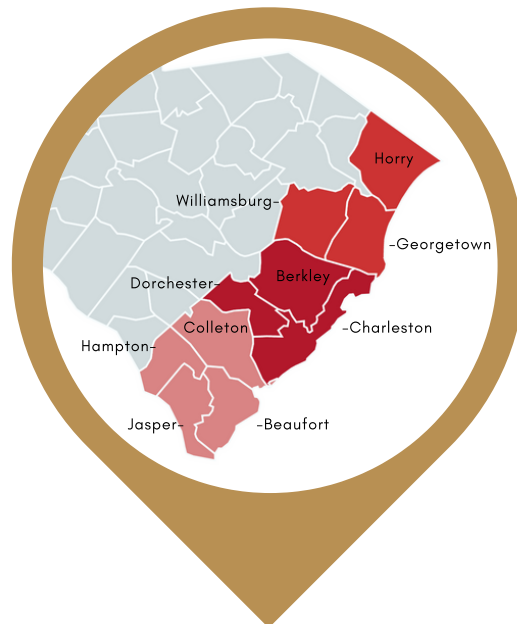
Every day, children, seniors and working families in our community struggle with hunger. Michelle and Ronald, from Myrtle Beach, skip their own breakfast or lunch to help stretch groceries for their family of four. Paula, a Charleston senior, suddenly finds herself choosing between eating for a day or paying her medical bills for a recent cancer diagnosis. Five-year-old Denyah, from Beaufort, clears her plate at school and walks around the lunch room, quietly gathering unopened meal trays to take home for dinner. In the Lowcountry, there are families like Michelle and Ronald's, seniors like Paula and children like Denyah who face daily challenges due to lack of nutritious food.

The need for providing healthy and nutritious food for those in our community who struggle with hunger has never been greater. As a network member of Feeding America, the **Lowcountry Food Bank (LCFB) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to leading the fight against hunger throughout the 10 coastal counties of South Carolina.**

## OUR STORY

The LCFB, founded in 1983 by the Trident United Way and Coastal Community Foundation, was created to address the community health issue of hunger, which we now understand more broadly as food insecurity. Every year, the LCFB is committed to feeding more than 200,000 individuals who struggle to access nutritious food and providing educational resources to encourage an active and healthy life.

## LCFB STATISTICS & SERVICE AREA



**OUR DATA AND EXPERIENCE INDICATE THAT HUNGER REMAINS A SERIOUS PROBLEM IN THE LOWCOUNTRY, WITH MORE THAN 14.8% OF OUR NEIGHBORS STRUGGLING WITH FOOD INSECURITY. THIS IS HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF 12.9%.**

# STRATEGIC PLANNING HELPS MEET UNIQUE NEEDS

LCFB’s Strategic Plan aligns our goals and strategies with those of the national Feeding America network. We focus on meeting the ever-changing needs of our own coastal South Carolina community. We focus on both the amount of hunger relief we provide and the quality of nutritious food we provide. Our goal is to ensure access to enough nutritious food for people struggling with hunger to lead healthy and active lives. We also strive to provide equitable access to food sources throughout the 10 coastal South Carolina counties we serve.

As we continue to increase our understanding of hunger and its impact on health, the Lowcountry Food Bank recognizes its critical role in the health promotion cycle. With an emphasis on nutrition, education and outreach, the Lowcountry Food Bank partners with more than 300 faith-based organizations, schools, community organizations and nonprofit agencies and executes a myriad of nutrition programs to combat hunger in our community. Our efforts provide equitable access to food, nutrition education experiences and create an engaged support system for people who struggle with hunger.

The LCFB will continue to build pathways to long-term food security and cultivate resources to help our neighbors reach self-sufficiency.



## UNDERSTANDING OUR ORGANIZATION

### FEED.



The LCFB feeds those experiencing hunger through a network of more than 300 partner agencies, as well as numerous programs targeting vulnerable populations, specifically children and seniors.

### ADVOCATE.



The LCFB advocates on behalf of those experiencing hunger by taking the lead in increasing awareness about hunger and educating the community about the social and policy issues that surround food insecurity.

### EMPOWER.



Recognizing the connections between poverty, food insecurity and poor health, the LCFB empowers clients and partners in our community to holistically address wellness through nutrition education and service with dignity.

The LCFB utilizes a fleet of 15 trucks and vans to pick up donated food and distribute it to agencies and LCFB program sites. The LCFB also facilitates direct-to-client distributions throughout the 10 coastal counties of South Carolina through Fresh For All farmers' markets offering a variety of fresh produce.



# FEED.

## HUNGER DEPRIVES OUR CHILDREN OF MORE THAN JUST FOOD

Research shows that children with regular access to nutritious food have higher grades and test scores, as well as better attendance and improved behavior in school. At the LCFB, we work to end childhood hunger in coastal South Carolina through a range of innovative programs:

- Kids Café
- Summer Meals
- Backpack Buddies
- School Pantry
- School Market
- Fresh for Kids

## FIGHTING CHILDHOOD HUNGER IN THE LOWCOUNTRY

Chronic food insecurity presents many adverse consequences for children, including impaired cognitive function, compromised ability to resist illness and higher levels of aggression, hyperactivity and anxiety. In the Lowcountry, one in five children does not know where his or her next meal will come from. No child should have to worry about when he or she will eat again, and no parent should have to skip a meal, water down drinks or risk not paying a bill so they can put food on the table for their family.

To fight childhood hunger, our dedicated partners deliver food and programs to vulnerable communities to meet children where they are - pantries at their schools, meals to take home on weekends and school breaks, hot foods at after-school care, and breakfast and lunch at summer camps. By providing targeted programs to alleviate child hunger, the Lowcountry Food Bank continues to improve outcomes for children in our communities who are most at-risk.



“Eating habits are established during childhood. Exposing children to fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods is instrumental to their future health outcomes.”





# FEED.

## SENIOR HUNGER CONTINUES TO GROW

Nationally, the food insecurity rate among seniors is 7.7%, which means that 5.5 million individuals age 60 and older struggle with hunger. The need for senior hunger-relief is particularly acute in the Lowcountry Food Bank's service area where almost 25% of our neighbors seeking food assistance are age 60 or older.

Seniors are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity because many live on fixed incomes and may be faced with extraordinary healthcare costs. Seniors often face tough decisions when purchasing food and must decide between having quality or quantity. Programs with partners like East Cooper Meals on Wheels, Charleston Area Senior Citizens and Summerville Meals on Wheels deliver nutritious food to seniors where they are – in their homes, at senior housing, community and recreation centers.

*The number of seniors facing hunger in this country remains unacceptably high. After lifetimes of hard work, many of America's seniors are put in the terrible position of having to choose between groceries and medical care.*

## PREPARING NUTRITIOUS MEALS FOR SENIORS

The LCFB offers programs that alleviate the stress seniors face daily and ensures our seniors are receiving nutritious meals.

The LCFB administers the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, a USDA nutrition program that offers free monthly nutrition resources and nutritious foods.



# FEED.

## SERVING THE 10 COUNTIES OF COASTAL CAROLINA

The LCFB serves more than 200,000 food-insecure individuals every year. We couldn't do it without strong relationships with our 300 partners, a grassroots network of food pantries, soup kitchens, after-school programs, low-income senior centers, veterans' groups and shelters. Our dedicated staff works to equitably distribute food across 10 coastal counties of South Carolina. In order to improve our capacity to distribute food safely and efficiently to people in need, we provide our partners with fresh fruits and vegetables, equipment (coolers, freezers, etc), and support with nutrition materials and food safety training. Based on feedback, we know that most of our partners obtain a majority of the food they distribute from our facility. They simply would not be able to offer food assistance without our secure infrastructure of food resources.

## HOW DO WE WORK?



## DEMONSTRATING OUR COMMITMENT TO THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

The LCFB distributes food to people who experience food insecurity throughout the 9,000 square miles of our coastal South Carolina service territory. With a fleet of more than 15 refrigerated trucks, distributing nutritious food is our priority. We are proud of our AIB International certification, which demonstrates our commitment to food safety and high food quality standards. Additionally, we recapture millions of pounds of excess food from our retail partners, which saves them the cost of recycling or disposing of the food, to distribute to our community.



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# PRODUCE DISTRIBUTIONS PROVIDE HEALTHY CHOICES

Food insecure individuals often rely on easily accessible and inexpensive food options and often have higher rates of diet related diseases – like diabetes, heart disease and obesity – than their food secure neighbors. As our distribution of food continues to increase, the Lowcountry Food Bank's goal is to promote healthy, nutritious food choices to those in our community who struggle with hunger by providing fresh produce.

Client choice, farmers' market-style produce distributions enable us to serve people in rural and high-need areas where food access may be limited. These distributions are client choice, allowing people to choose the foods they want to take home to their families.



## EQUITABLE NUTRITION ALL AROUND

We see dramatic differences in food insecurity based on where people live. Ensuring equitable food distribution requires insight into common barriers to food access, including economic and social factors such as a lack of transportation and the stigma associated with seeking food assistance.

The LCFB is focused on creating strategies to accomplish the equitable distribution of food, which includes increasing food access, investing in core partnerships and resources to support our mission, and engaging in the communities we serve.

Ensuring equitable access requires the LCFB to focus on the most vulnerable populations in the counties we serve, especially in rural areas, and to tailor solutions to address our communities' needs by listening to them and addressing their unique concerns.





# ADVOCATE.

## ADVOCACY

The LCFB advocates on behalf of those experiencing hunger by taking the lead in increasing awareness about hunger and educating our community about the social and policy issues that surround food insecurity.

Hunger is a national crisis, though it is often hidden. The LCFB aligns with Feeding America's advocacy efforts to support federal nutrition programs that help children, seniors, low-income individuals and families, federal tax policies, and agricultural and nutrition programs.

Through our combined voice, we bring greater awareness to the fight against hunger.



## DISASTER RELIEF: ANTICIPATE, RESPOND, PLAN & IMPLEMENT

In addition to daily operations, the Lowcountry Food Bank, in partnership with more than 200 Feeding America partner food banks throughout the country, provides help and support prior to and following natural disasters. When disaster hits, the food bank collects and delivers food, water and supplies to impacted areas, providing significant relief and recovery aid for as long as needed. The LCFB works diligently behind the scenes with dozens of regional and national disaster relief organizations and community partners to help our neighbors get through the storm.

We are considered an emergency response agency and coordinate with the South Carolina Emergency Management Division to ensure we can distribute food to members of our community who may be stranded without access to food.



# EMPOWER.

## NUTRITION EDUCATION: BREAKING THE CYCLE OF HUNGER

Food insecurity is defined by the USDA as the lack of consistent access to enough nutritious food for an active, healthy life. The cycle of hunger has many factors; however, the LCFB sees food access as a crucial point at which the cycle can be broken.



When people do not have consistent access to healthy food, their risk of chronic disease increases. Without proper nutrition, chronic diseases cannot be properly managed and the symptoms of these diseases are exacerbated. To combat health-related diseases and lessen the symptoms of chronic food insecurity, we emphasize the value of fruits and vegetables in all forms - fresh, frozen, or canned - and low-sodium, low-sugar and fat-free options. This focus ensures our food-insecure neighbors are not only receiving the food they need, but also the skills they need to prepare healthy meals and snacks.

## FIGHTING HUNGER THROUGH NUTRITION EDUCATION AND SERVICE WITH DIGNITY

- Addressing the root causes of hunger
- Cooking courses
- Culinary nutrition education
- Health and wellness promotion and policy guidance

## FOODS TO ENCOURAGE HEALTH

The LCFB Nutrition Education programs ensure that our food-insecure neighbors learn the skills they need to select and prepare healthy meals and snacks. The LCFB partners with community organizations that provide support services, including medical care, financial literacy and counseling. This collaborative approach ensures we are empowering our community with the skills and resources they need to break the cycle of hunger and poor health.



# FEED. ADVOCATE. EMPOWER.

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR PEOPLE WHO NEED IT MOST



### HELP END Childhood Hunger

When school is out, millions of children can no longer rely on free or reduced-price meal programs to get the nutrition they need.

**You can help the children in our community by making a gift!**



### STAND AGAINST Senior Hunger

The Lowcountry Food Bank recognizes the need of many seniors in our community. Because seniors often live on fixed incomes and may be faced with healthcare costs beyond what Medicare covers, purchasing an adequate quality of food can be challenging.

**You can make a difference in a senior's life!**



### VOLUNTEER Your Time

The Lowcountry Food Bank cannot meet the need for meals across our community without the help of more than 50,000 hours of volunteering every year.

**Donate your time and make a big impact!**



Serving the 10 Coastal Counties of South Carolina  
[lowcountryfoodbank.org](http://lowcountryfoodbank.org) | 843-747-8146

