

# History

It all started in 1983 then called the Greater Fargo-Moorhead Area food Bank where it distributed 189,000 pounds of food to 21 feeding programs. Since renamed the Great Plains Food Banks, programs, facilities and services have expanded to distribute nearly **14 million pounds of food to more than 300 charitable feeding sites** each year.

## History of the Great Plains Food Bank

The concept was first introduced by Tony Ingle, an executive at Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota. Ingle discovered a rather unknown movement called food banking while on a trip to Colorado in 1981. Grasping the enormous possibilities, Lutheran Social Services quickly began researching the potential for a food bank in Fargo-Moorhead. The Greater Fargo-Moorhead Area Food Bank opened its doors in 1983.

In 1990 Steve Sellent was hired as the organization's director. By this point, services had already expanded to supply food to 130 member agencies serving an average of 13,400 neighbors in need each month.

The award-winning Daily Bread program was started in 1992. Today, the Great Plains Food Bank recovers more than one million meals from area restaurants, hotels, schools, hospitals and grocery stores each year.

In 1997, the Disaster Relief Program filled its first need by providing more than 170 truckloads of food in the aftermath of the 1997 Red River Valley floods. The Great Plains Food Bank has since offered emergency assistance to victims of national disasters in North Dakota and nationwide including Hurricane Katrina and the Minot flood in 2011.

Following the completion of a \$2 million Heart to Hand capitol campaign in 1999 to fund a larger warehouse, the organization officially moved into its current 36,000 square-foot warehouse at 1720 3rd avenue north in Fargo in 2000.

Following continued growth, the Great Plains Food Bank hit a significant mark in 2007. That year the organization reached 75 million pounds of food distributed and was touching the lives of one in 12 individuals in North Dakota. And in 2008 unveiled plans and a vision for creating a hunger-free North Dakota and can now envision what it will take to solve hunger.

Additionally, programs include the children's Backpack Program and Summer Feeding Program, which helps children qualifying for free and reduced-cost school lunches with nutritious food on the weekends and during the summer. The Mobile Food Pantry and Perishable Food Distribution Program were put in place taking trucks directly into rural communities needing additional assistance where clients are able to grab the food they need off the truck and the Senior Food Pack Programs is currently helping low-income seniors across the state.

Today the organization is operating at levels not thought possible in 1983. Over 35 years of existence, more than 185 million pounds of food has been distributed and the Great Plains Food Bank serves over 97,000 individuals each year. Annually, 5,500 volunteers give nearly 21,000 hours of their time and \$18 million worth of food is received from 260 food industry donors.