2023 Annual Report
Dear hunger-relief partners,

I’m sure we all vividly recall the struggles faced during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. For us here at the Great Plains Food Bank, the need for food assistance increased by 45 percent (in 2020) as more people than ever were in need. As we navigated these challenges, we were hopeful that this was a one-time occurrence, and we would return to pre-COVID levels quickly. That, however, wasn’t the case. In 2023 we served the most people ever in our 40-year history as an organization; higher than during the pandemic.

Last year, 156,479 children, older adults, and families turned to the Great Plains Food Bank and our network of feeding programs for food assistance. That’s one in five individuals and one in three children across North Dakota turning to us because they were unsure where their next meal was coming from. Despite food donations decreasing to levels not seen since 2016, we were able to supply them with nearly 11.2 million meals. We were only able to meet the increased demand because of you. Thank you!

In 2023, we celebrated our 40th anniversary, looking back over the decades of impact we have had and looking forward to the incredible work and future ahead of us. Our work has evolved from feeding people to ending hunger and as an organization we look and operate differently than we did 20 years ago, even differently than two years ago.

With our eyes on the future, we are excited to share that we are launching a bold campaign to help achieve our vision of a hunger-free North Dakota and Clay County, Minnesota. This transformational campaign will 1) bolster existing and innovative new direct service programs, ensuring every person has the nutrition they need to thrive, 2) sustain our work long-term by investing in our endowment fund, 3) replace, update and increase our statewide fleet of trucks, and 4) design and build a state-of-the-art facility that meets the growing and changing needs of the organization, through adequate and efficient space, and a facility that fosters the creativity and workforce needed for innovative new hunger solutions. We can’t wait to share more details of this campaign and how you can be a part of it!

There is so much incredible work being done at the Great Plains Food Bank and we are so proud of where we have come and where we are headed. On behalf of all of us at the Great Plains Food Bank, we know we wouldn’t be where we are without you. You are a key partner in this work and it’s only because of your support that we are moving closer to ending hunger today, tomorrow, and for good. For that, we are forever grateful.

As our most loyal partners in hunger-relief, please don’t hesitate to reach out via phone (701.232.6219), email (msobolik@greatplainsfoodbank.org) or in person.

We will only end hunger, together.

Sincerely,

MELISSA SOBOLIK
Great Plains Food Bank
CEO

KATHLEEN SCHNEIDER
Great Plains Food Bank
Chair, Board of Directors
WHAT WE STAND FOR

OUR MISSION
End Hunger Together.

OUR VISION
A hunger-free North Dakota & Clay County, Minnesota.

OUR VALUES
We do all things in the spirit of passion, service and innovation.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
We champion understanding, acceptance and respect for individual differences including race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, physical or mental ability, religious belief, national origin, citizenship, ancestry, age, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation including gender identity or expression, political viewpoints and other ideologies, or discharge status from the military or status as a protected veteran.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Kathy Schneider (Chair)
Jasper Schneider (Chair-Elect)
Stacey Ackerman (Treasurer)
Jim Herrington (Secretary)
Margaret Asheim
Levi Bachmeier
Aaron Becher
Ruth Buffalo
Jennifer Hauge
Stacie Loegering
Emma McIntrye
David Maring
April Poitra-Walker
Jennifer Weisgram

This roster reflects our current board of directors.

In 2023 we marked 40 years of service, having delivered over 230 million meals to neighbors in need across North Dakota and Clay County, Minn., since 1983.
A record 156,479 *individuals served,* more than during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our fleet of trucks traveled nearly 250,000 *miles* serving those in need.

13.4M *pounds of food* supplied.

11.2M *meals* provided.

4,758 volunteers provided 13,852 *hours of service.*

1 in 5 *individuals* and 1 in 3 *children* across North Dakota sought food assistance last year.

Worked with 205 partner food pantries, shelters, and soup kitchens in 102 *communities.*
# FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Statement of Activities for Year Ended June 30, 2023

## PUBLIC SUPPORT & REVENUE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Funding</th>
<th>FY23</th>
<th>FY22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private Contributions</td>
<td>$5,965,912</td>
<td>$5,066,723</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Contracts &amp; Grants</td>
<td>$1,457,355</td>
<td>$626,393</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Way &amp; Private Grants</td>
<td>$1,398,737</td>
<td>$934,337</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Revenue</td>
<td>$1,283,094</td>
<td>$758,641</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investments &amp; Other Income</td>
<td>$323,947</td>
<td>$(239,491)</td>
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<tr>
<td>USDA Commodity Food Value</td>
<td>$3,960,956</td>
<td>$5,389,005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donated Food Value</td>
<td>$15,201,747</td>
<td>$15,908,255</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Public Support &amp; Revenue</strong></td>
<td>$29,591,748</td>
<td>$28,443,863</td>
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## EXPENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>FY23</th>
<th>FY22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs &amp; Services</td>
<td>$25,729,781</td>
<td>$28,559,104</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fund Development</td>
<td>$1,133,949</td>
<td>$979,950</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management &amp; General</td>
<td>$468,612</td>
<td>$457,393</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$27,332,342</td>
<td>$29,996,447</td>
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## CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Net Assets</th>
<th>FY23</th>
<th>FY22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets at Beginning Year</td>
<td>$13,429,784</td>
<td>$14,982,368</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Assets at End of Year</td>
<td>$15,689,190</td>
<td>$13,429,784</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Change in Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>$2,259,406</td>
<td>$(1,552,584)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## EXPENSES*

- **94%** Programs & Services
- **4%** Fund Development
- **2%** Administrative & General

*Includes the value of donated food distributed of $20,675,556.

## SOURCES OF FUNDING

- **57%** Private Contributions
- **14%** Government Contracts & Grants
- **13%** United Way & Private Grants
- **12%** Program Revenue
- **3%** Investments & Other Income

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Great Plains Food Bank’s auditors have expressed an unmodified opinion on our financial statements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. Those financial statements, which are available on the Great Plains Food Bank’s website, include associated notes that are essential to understanding the information presented here.

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Thank you

Every investment you make in support of our shared mission is an investment in your neighbor. We are committed to thoughtfully stewarding your donations to provide hunger-relief and build food secure communities across North Dakota and Clay County, Minnesota.

The Great Plains Food Bank can distribute food for 2 meals for each charitable $1 it receives.
STORIES OF HOPE

"Things are expensive. It’s easy to spend $120 and not have much to show for it.”

-Randy

Randy lives two miles away from Pembina, N.D. To get to town, he drives a scooter with enough power to pull a small trailer. “This is my only mode of transportation,” he said.

He lives on a gravel road and the scooter doesn’t have suspension, but the vehicle provides enough independence that he can go and buy groceries once a month. On a hot August afternoon, the scooter also allowed him to pick up food at a Great Plains Food Bank Mobile Food Pantry distribution. He receives $152 in federal food assistance each month, but that amount doesn’t go far. “Things are expensive,” he said. “It’s easy to spend $120 and not have much to show for it.”

Part of the challenge, he said, is his lack of transportation. If he had a car, he could drive to Grand Forks or Thief River Falls, Minn., communities that have a Walmart. “I could probably get two to three times as much food,” he said. But he can’t afford a car.

Randy, 65, served in the U.S. Air Force for four years. He also worked as a truck driver, on a farm, and at a call center. Twenty years ago, he lost a leg due to complications from a blood clot and has been receiving disability payments since then. He lives in a rent-to-own house with his Australian blue heeler and gets his healthcare through the Veterans Administration. For these appointments, he can request transportation to the clinic in Grafton, which is about 50 miles away. He is a Type 2 diabetic and says that eating healthy food is difficult.

At the mobile food pantry, he picked up oranges, carrots, zucchini, potatoes, mac and cheese, and frozen meat. He was grateful because he only had cans of kidney beans and French cut green beans at home. “It’ll be a couple weeks before I can buy groceries again,” he said.
Heather admits she’s not the most likely person to wait in line to pick up food items at a local mobile food pantry distribution. She and her husband have good, steady jobs. She is getting ready to start her 11th year of teaching. Her husband is a veteran of the U.S. Army. But even with secure employment, food expenses keep going up for the family. They have three children ages 8, 6, and 2 and making sure all their needs are met can be financially challenging.

By participating in a Great Plains Food Bank Mobile Food Pantry stop hosted by the Amen Food Pantry in Dickinson, Heather hoped she could remove some of the stigma that comes with asking for help. Maybe she could even encourage others to take part. “You can pay $23 for eight pounds of frozen chicken,” Heather said. “That’s a problem.”

Three years ago, Heather didn’t think much about food costs. Now it’s one of the things she tracks carefully. In particular, she finds that fresh fruits and vegetables are expensive. Still, these are her children’s favorite foods. She anticipated the items she received through the mobile food pantry would help her stretch the family’s food budget for the month. “It gives us some grace,” she said. “It gives an opportunity to spend money on something else.”

With three young children, those “something else” expenses are many. Their youngest child is in full-time daycare. Family health insurance costs keep going up. The kids keep growing out of clothes. She also needed to budget money for back-to-school supplies. “Food assistance is beneficial for families with small children who are still growing. It’s one way we could assure they get good nutrition,” she said.

After waiting in line for about five minutes, Heather received cabbage, apples, potatoes, and oranges, among other items. She expected everything would be eaten within a couple of days. “We’ll plan our meals around it. Raising a family is expensive,” she said. “We can all use some help.”
Hornbacher’s provided 966,498 pounds of food that otherwise would have gone to waste to the Great Plains Food Bank in 2023. Additionally, Hornbacher’s donated $267,449 to feed those in need through its two annual fundraisers, Check Out Hunger and Feed Hope, which asks customers to make a financial donation at the checkout lines at their nine different locations in Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo.

Grown, processed and delivered entirely by the church itself, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) donated 40,000 pounds of pasta, protein and other items to the Great Plains Food Bank that was quickly made available through its network of 200 partner food pantries, shelters and soup kitchens across North Dakota and Clay County, Minn. In addition to the donation, LDS generously takes time to give back by volunteering inside the Great Plains Food Bank and at stops of our Mobile Food Pantry.

For the 18th year in a row, local students came together to collect food items to fill the floor of the Fargodome and collect monetary donations to benefit the Great Plains Food Bank as part of the annual Fill the Dome event. In 2023, students collected more than 100,000 pounds of food and more than $30,000 that immediately went to feed children, families and seniors struggling with hunger in the area. In total, Fill the Dome has provided more than 2.5 million pounds of food and nearly $740,000 since 2007. That is enough to provide more than 4.9 million meals for those in need.

The largest single giving day in the history of the Great Plains Food Bank, donors answered the call in full force this Giving Hearts Day by donating enough to provide more than 1.7 million meals to help feed children. Thank you for helping kids learn, grow and thrive!
Stock the Shelves

Each fall surrounding Hunger Action Month, the Great Plains Food Bank works with Corwin Automotive and Valley News Live on its annual Stock the Shelves campaign to feed neighbors in need. Corwin generously matches donations made to the campaign up to $50,000 while Valley News Live dedicates much of its on-air time to educating the public about hunger to ensure neighbors have access to the food needed to feed their families. In 2023, a total of $211,222 was raised, which was enough to provide 422,444 meals for those in need.

USDA helps farmers, Great Plains Food Bank

Through a new, temporary program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Great Plains Food Bank purchased more than $1.8 million worth of meat, poultry, produce, dairy and other items that were directly grown and produced by farmers and ranchers throughout North Dakota. The Local Food Purchase Agreement (LFPA) program provides funding to organizations like the Great Plains Food Bank to support local farmers, ranchers and producers while also feeding those in need. Through the program in 2023, the Great Plains Food Bank purchased food from a total of 26 different organizations throughout North Dakota that was immediately distributed to neighbors struggling with hunger.

Hunger-Relief Champions

Each year the Great Plains Food Bank lifts up individuals, businesses, churches or organizations for their extraordinary contributions and commitment to helping us end hunger together as our hunger-relief champion award winners.

2023 Hunger-Relief Champions:
- Bjorn Solberg (Hugh’s Gardens)
- David Shultz (Shultz + Associates)
- Amy Riccio (Moorhead Public Schools)
- Bremer Bank

Packathon 2023

Held for two days each at each of our facility locations in Fargo and Bismarck, the 2023 Packathon was among our largest yet. A total of 17 organizations fielded 200 total volunteers who selflessly took time out of their busy days to fill shifts packing food products to help feed those in need along with making a financial contribution to assist us transport and distribute this food to families in need.
ENDING HUNGER TODAY

In addition to sourcing and distributing more than 13 million pounds of shelf-stable and fresh food to our network of 205 partner food pantries, shelters and soup kitchens in 102 communities, we are committed to equitable service to fill gaps in food assistance through a range of direct-service programs.

**Childhood Hunger**

One in three children throughout North Dakota and Clay County, Minn. sought food assistance from the Great Plains Food Bank in 2023. More kids than ever were fed through the Great Plains Food Bank BackPack Program (156,102 bags provided in 163 communities), School Pantry Program (147,960 meals provided serving 113 schools) and Youth Summer Meals Program (29,470 meals at 14 meal sites), ensuring children have access to food over the weekends, holidays and summer break when other food resources may not be available.

**Mobile Food Pantry**

Providing food assistance to rural communities with limited access to a food pantry or grocery store, our mobile food pantry made stops in 68 communities and distributed 782,689 meals to those in need in 2023.

**Healthcare Programs**

Helping patients in a clinic setting who are screened for food insecurity by their healthcare provider, we worked with 17 healthcare partners in 30 sites providing 58,333 meals to patients in 2023.

**SNAP Outreach**

The Great Plains Food Bank staff assisted 810 individuals with SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) applications, which generated an estimated $532,543 in total benefits in 2023.

**Senior Hunger**

In addition to serving seniors through our network of food pantries and mobile food pantry distributions, we provided 234,598 meals in 38 communities to seniors living on fixed incomes through the Great Plains Food Bank Senior Food Pack Program.

**Pop-Up Food Pantry**

Working with partners directly in the communities we serve, we hosted a total of six pop-up food pantries in two different communities providing 118,804 meals to neighbors facing hunger. Many of these meals included culturally-specific items for our New American communities.
ENDING HUNGER TOMORROW ——

Kitchen Coalition provides nearly 14,000 meals in first year ——

Piloted in the Fargo area in January 2023, Kitchen Coalition pairs restaurants and caterers passionate about ending hunger with local shelters, and focuses on an often overlooked yet large demographic facing food insecurity – the unhoused population. In fact, more than one in four individuals who utilize the Great Plains Food Bank each year report not having access to reliable housing. Without housing, they also struggle with access to refrigeration or utensils such as a can opener or even a bowl. Kitchen Coalition addresses a number of these concerns by offering prepared meals.

“I work closely with our events team,” said Amber Orvik of Brew Kitchen and Catering. “If they have a 500 person event and only 400 people show up that’s 100 meals that didn’t go out. I then go out and collect those meals and repackage them.”

The meals are then delivered to shelters and feeding sites to be distributed. “The meals we get here are a blessing,” said Tracy, who utilizes the program through the Downtown Engagement Center.

In a short amount of time, the program has grown from providing as many as 335 meals in a single week and provided to a total of 13,843 meals in 2023. Those are meals that otherwise would be going to waste. Individuals receiving meals through Kitchen Coalition cannot stress the importance enough of having these meals to look forward to each day.

“It doesn’t matter what you’re eating as long as it’s a hot meal,” said one neighbor struggling with hunger.

Kitchen Coalition partners:
Downtown Engagement Center
The Jeremiah Program
Brew Kitchen and Catering
Fargo VA
F5 Project
Power Plate Meals

Amber Orvik of Brew Kitchen & Catering unloads meals to be served to hungry neighbors at the Downtown Engagement Center in Fargo.

Power Plate Meals generously donates meals to help feed those in need through the Kitchen Coalition Program.
Boundless Collaborations: Improving food access in tribal communities

The statewide food banks of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming are collaborating to improve equitable food access in partnership with tribal communities.

Our goals with Boundless Collaborations

- Increase awareness and understanding of the history, culture and contemporary experience of the Native Nations and tribal communities of the Mountain Plains region.
- Develop sustained partnerships through trust and respect to ensure continuity of food access projects.
- Invest in community-led solutions to food access that respond to the unique assets and needs of Native Nations and tribal communities.
- Fully embed this work into our food banks, ensuring boards and teams are trained and engaged to do this work effectively.
- Collectively learn how to best support greater food access in Native Nations and tribal communities, document learning and share it with our network peers.
ENDING HUNGER FOR GOOD —

More North Dakota children are now being fed —

The Great Plains Food Bank and advocates worked tirelessly during the North Dakota legislative session to improve access to school meals for children. Two bills were passed that will advance the work of ending childhood hunger.

No more school lunch shaming

Thanks to House Bill 1494, schools can no longer:

- Deny a student a meal due to a negative lunch balance.
- Throw out a meal that has already been served to a student.
- Limit a student's participation in sports or activities due to a negative meal balance.
- Require students to perform services to pay off a negative meal balance.
- Identify or stigmatize a student for having a negative balance.

2,000 additional North Dakota students now receiving free school lunch and breakfast

Following a lengthy process the North Dakota legislature increased the income threshold for free school meals, meaning that an additional 2,000 students statewide now have access to free meals. The income threshold moved up to 200% of the poverty level; a family of four making up to $60,000 annually now qualifies for the program.

FARM BILL 2023

Once every five years, Congress works to update and pass a large piece of legislation known as the Farm Bill. In addition to programs that assist farmers in feeding the world, the Farm Bill includes funding for critical nutrition programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and was up for renewal in 2023. While the year ended with a continuing resolution in place to keep Farm Bill funding at its current 2018 levels, the Great Plains Food Bank was at the table advocating for strong nutrition programs that are crucial to feed those across North Dakota and Clay County, Minnesota, throughout the year.

Kathleen O’Neill (right) joined Great Plains Food Bank CEO Melissa Sobolik (left) at a roundtable to discuss the importance of strong nutrition programs as part of the 2023 Farm Bill. Kathleen had fallen on hard times and assistance through SNAP helped her with needed food assistance.
Doing all things in the spirit of passion, service & innovation.