



FOOD FOR FOOD BANKS: SUPPORTING THE ANTI-HUNGER NETWORK



Governor Dunleavy has included \$4.5 million in his proposed 2024 budget for the statewide anti-hunger network, to make direct food purchases.

Current Challenges

- Elevated levels of need and rising cost of food
- Reduced corporate and individual donations
- Decline in food from federal programs



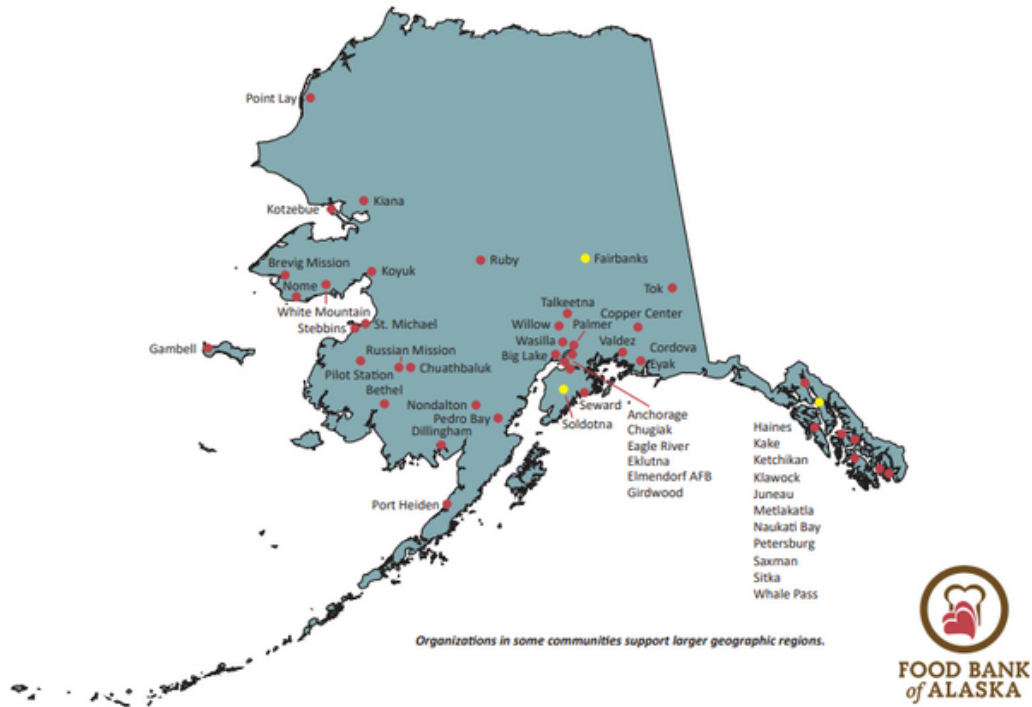
Direct funding works!

The Food Bank of Alaska and our partners were thankful to have received **\$1.68 million** last year to provide immediate relief to Alaskans in need. Food Bank of Alaska received **\$1,011,500** to support our partners throughout the statewide network, ultimately distributing over **583,000 pounds to 75 partners** statewide. The success of this program demonstrates the impact further investments could make to improve our ability to meet the need.

Notably, our three partner food banks received:

- \$420,500 to the Fairbanks Community Food Bank
- \$100,000 to the Kenai Peninsula Food Bank
- \$150,000 to the Southeast Alaska Food Bank

\$1.68 Million Distribution in 2023



Demonstrated Need

- “Future funding for food purchases will be crucial to our ability to meet the need of our agency partners and the public pantry we host every Thursday (seeing 200-300 people per week). We are on a pace to distribute more than 600,000 pounds which would break last year’s record. This will have a tremendous impact and allow us to keep our shelves stocked.”
- Chris Schapp, Southeast Alaska Food Bank
- “The funding would be a huge blessing to many folks across the Kenai Peninsula. Our neighbors are struggling and the demand for food is on the rise. Donations from stores are down for many reasons and this program would be a lifeline for the communities we serve on and off the road system.” - Greg Meyer, Kenai Peninsula Food Bank
- “The relief we will receive from this program is very much needed. We don’t have enough inventory to keep it going much longer and it rises every week. I have about 5 to 10 new village requests a week!” - Carey Atchak, Bethel Community Services Foundation Food Pantry
- “We’ve seen an increase in demand, distributing more than one million pounds of food last year. We serve 100-140 people a day, 5 days a week. Donations are down along with tighter giving from local stores. We encourage the legislature to support the Governor’s proposed funding for food purchases to help us meet the increased need.” - Eddie Ezelle, MatSu Food Bank
- “We service 19 villages and about 588 clients per month across our region. Many clients depend on the Food Bank due to not having accessible food in their village. Funding for food purchases in will allow our pantry to have enough food to feed the clients in the villages we serve.”
- Barbara Nunn, Bristol Bay Native Association Food Pantry
- “In the past year the demand on our food bank has doubled. Commodities fly off the shelves and community donations can no longer keep up. The funding proposed by the Governor would enable us to reach out further to impact the food insecurity in those distant rural communities.” - Rhonda Schneider, Nome Community Center
- “We need help-the need is rising and it's difficult to feed the families that keep coming week after week. The Governor's proposed funding for the anti-hunger network will provide food to help us keep feeding hungry families throughout Alaska. “
- LouAnne Carroll-Tysdal, Upper Susitna Food Pantry

Heidi Hedberg
Commissioner

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Department of Health

Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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\$1.7 million aid distribution benefited food banks, communities statewide

Sept. 6, 2023 — The Department of Health has announced the successful completion of a measure aimed at alleviating the strain on Alaska's food banks.

In February, Governor Mike Dunleavy reallocated \$1.7 million from an unutilized state program as a short-term bridge towards achieving long-term goals – to update and improve the processing of applications for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The program was then experiencing months' long backlog in redeterminations.

The funds were an instrumental first step to bolster depleted food banks across the state, allowing them to restock dwindling supplies; the repurposed funds also assisted with distribution, enhanced logistics and strengthened outreach to remote communities.

"We are proud to announce the positive outcomes of this effort, which provided crucial support to help feed Alaskans," said Gov. Mike Dunleavy. "This successful undertaking demonstrates our commitment to the well-being of all Alaskans."

"Redistributing these funds replenished Alaska's food pantries and food banks throughout Alaska," said Commissioner Heidi Hedberg. "As a result, while we worked to eliminate the backlog and improve the program as a whole, our most vulnerable citizens regained access to nutritious meals."

Organizations worked together to ensure the aid reached communities most in need.

"The impact of this effort cannot be understated," said Food Bank of Alaska CEO Jim Baldwin. The organization distributed 567,765 pounds of food to 82 partners statewide, from Ketchikan to Bethel and Gambell. "We were able to begin responding to the urgent needs of our communities by distributing more food to those impacted. We are extremely grateful for the Governor's swift response to address food insecurity in our state."

The program brought pallets of food to the Upper Susitna Food Pantry in Talkeetna, said Executive Director LouAnne Carroll-Tysdal. “As the need kept rising and more families signed up for services, we were able ensure that there was no gap in services and families in our communities were fed,” she said.

The Fairbanks Community Food Bank, Kenai Peninsula Food Bank (based in Soldotna) and Southeast Alaska Food Bank (based in Juneau) also distributed allocations to regional partners.

“This program was a huge blessing to many folks across the Kenai Peninsula,” said Executive Director Greg Meyer of Kenai Peninsula Food Bank. “We were able to distribute food through pantries in Kenai, Soldotna, Homer, and villages across Kachemak Bay, Anchor Point, Nikiski, Tyonek, Hope, Cooper Landing, Moose Pass and Sterling. We had many people so excited and grateful for extra food support at a time of food shortages.”

“It has made a tremendous impact keeping our shelves stocked and our pantries bountiful for nutritious foods being distributed,” said Southeast Alaska Food Bank Executive Director Chris Schapp. “We average 275-300 people each week at our pantry. We also set a record in our 27 years history serving Juneau -- for food distributed in Fiscal Year 2023, with 581,500 pounds being distributed.”

The backlog of older SNAP recertifications has been cleared. Additionally, the Division of Public Assistance (DPA) staffing plan has allowed for more efficient processing of applications to stay out of backlog.

“We are really seeing the needle move now,” said DPA Director Deb Etheridge. “We’re pleased that we moved to a 12-month SNAP certification period for most households, with a more efficient interim report midway through the certification period. We continue to improve staffing and workflow with new staff, and we’re looking forward to launching an online application for SNAP within the next six to nine months.”

“There is certainly more work to be done, but it is important to recognize that we have achieved some of our milestones,” she said.



More on how funds benefited communities in this [joint video press release from DOH and Food Bank of Alaska](#).

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