

# FOOD BANK OF THE ROCKIES™

Building a  
Hunger-Free  
Future







Photo by Larry Robinson / The Grand Junction Daily Sentinel

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**FOOD BANK**  
OF THE ROCKIES™

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# Expanding to Meet the Need Today, Tomorrow, and Beyond

**The stories we heard from neighbors and Hunger Relief Partners this past year had a common, heart-breaking theme: I'm working harder and trying harder, it's just not enough.**

Extra hours worked and sacrifices made no longer cover the rising cost of living expenses, leaving hundreds of thousands of people in our region to face impossible choices between having enough to eat and having heat, medication, housing, or reliable transportation. One neighbor we met used to be a Food Bank of the Rockies donor; now, she comes to us for support. "It's been really, really hard, and I'll tell you what: if it wasn't for Food Bank of the Rockies, I would be in very bad financial trouble. Pretty much all the food I eat I get from the Food Bank," she shared.

As more people turn to us and our Hunger Relief Partners for nourishment, we are operating with too little space and reduced federal support on top of the challenges of inflation. We need to do more, and we have a bold, audacious plan to do exactly that. This winter, Food Bank of the Rockies is opening a brand-new, purpose-built distribution center.

This new building, located a few miles east of our current facility, will mean nourishing more people with the fresh, familiar foods they want and need; collaborating with our Hunger Relief Partners more effectively to meet community needs, changes, and challenges; saving more than \$500,000 annually on operating costs and enabling us to distribute even more food; and addressing the root causes of food insecurity through workforce training programs and additional community partnerships. With support from people like you, the possibilities enabled by this new facility are endless.

Throughout our service area, one in eight people lives with food insecurity. Hunger rates are at a more than 10-year high, making this not just a concerning issue, but a public health crisis. Even though Food Bank of the Rockies has increased our food distribution volume five-fold over the last 20 years, it's still not enough. Our purchasing power has been squeezed due to higher food costs and the need to purchase a larger portion of our total food supply. Those factors and others have impacted what we are able to do with one dollar. Just a few years ago, one dollar allowed us to provide enough food for four meals. Today, it helps us provide enough food for three meals.

In the shadow of these challenges are powerful opportunities and hope. We will continue to show up for our neighbors facing food insecurity no matter the hurdles and are optimistic about the impact we will be able to make, together, on hunger across our region. In this annual report, you will learn more about the new distribution center, encounter stories from our community members, and discover the exciting ways Food Bank of the Rockies showed up for our neighbors when they needed us most this past fiscal year.

Together as a united community committed to ending hunger, we are accomplishing the boldest move ever undertaken in Food Bank of the Rockies' history with our new distribution center — building a legacy of hunger relief for our neighbors today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.



*Erin Pulling*  
**Erin Pulling**  
President & CEO



*Christina Bowen*  
**Christina Bowen**  
Board Chair



# Fiscal Year 2025

OUR FISCAL YEAR 2025 NUMBERS REFLECT THE HIGHEST NEED FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE SEEN IN OVER 10 YEARS

Neighbors Served 383,079

21% OF PEOPLE SERVED WERE CHILDREN



Total Pounds of Food Distributed  
85,425,087

Meal Equivalent for Pounds Distributed  
71,187,573



Meals Distributed on Average Per Day  
195,034

Percentage of Pounds Distributed that was Fresh Produce



28%

Service Area Covered  
150,000  
SQUARE MILES

Largest food bank distribution area in the contiguous U.S.



Volunteer Hours Logged  
142,106

Equal to 68 full-time employees



# How We Help

Hunger cuts across demographics and borders, indifferent to the past or future chapters of a person's life. Food Bank of the Rockies meets individuals in the present, ensuring that anyone who needs it gets the nourishing food they need to thrive.

GENEROUS SUPPORTERS



FUEL EVERYTHING WE DO

## Where Food Comes From

94% of funding goes directly into our hunger-relief programs and supports all of the ways we attain food to distribute to our community members.



## Sorting and Packing Food for our Neighbors



Each year, more than 22,500 volunteers help us sort, pack, and get food into the hands of our neighbors across Colorado and Wyoming. We could not do this work without their dedication and generosity!

## Distributing Food to our Communities



We deploy dozens of refrigerated semitrailers each month to urban and rural communities throughout Colorado and Wyoming to bring food directly to where it is needed most.

The hundreds of pantries, programs, and relief organizations we support through food and resources to nourish people experiencing hunger in their communities.

Specialized programming for after-school, summer, and weekend meals for children.

Monthly food boxes administered by the USDA at no cost to income-qualifying older adults at least 60 years of age.

Weekly food boxes delivered to patients who screen positive for food insecurity to help improve health and nutrition.



## Looking Ahead

We are hopeful for a day when Food Bank of the Rockies is no longer needed and everyone has enough nourishing food and resources to thrive. But until then, we will keep pioneering more impactful, fulfilling ways to meet the needs of our community members.





# FOOD BANK OF THE ROCKIES





# Building a Hunger- Free Future

## **What Food Bank of the Rockies’ new distribution center will mean for our community for generations to come**

Step into the current kitchen at Food Bank of the Rockies’ Denver Distribution Center and it’s almost impossible to imagine upwards of 2,600 kids’ meals being prepared there daily. Almost impossible, because that’s precisely what Jonathan Knight, executive chef and director of culinary operations, did every day of fiscal year 2025, with the help of three staff members and up to 12 volunteers.

“Right now, we can just barely keep up with the kids’ meals and our physical space is at its max,” Knight shared.

Crammed elbow-to-elbow into the tiny 1,700-square-foot space, kitchen staff and volunteers quickly realize how much of an impact more room could have on the Food Bank’s fresh-meal opportunities. In fiscal year 2025, Food Bank of the Rockies served nearly 80,800 kids with nourishing food. That’s no small feat, yet it’s only a fraction of what Knight and his crew — including nearly double the number of volunteers — will be able to accomplish in the 7,300-square-foot commercial kitchen they’ll have at the new distribution center.



Hunger rates are at a more than 10-year high and expected to rise, making the Food Bank's larger, purpose-built distribution center more important than ever.



**Executive chef and director of culinary operations Jonathan Knight stands in his future kitchen. The kitchen will have the capacity to eventually produce 10,000 kids' meals daily.**

"I want to do more from-scratch cooking, but we don't have the space or the type of equipment to support large-scale production," Knight explained. "With extra square footage and the kitchen having its own dock, we'll have more options to send out a larger quantity and variety of foods. And with new updated and modern equipment, we can cook more food faster and with higher quality."

Beyond bringing more nutritious and kid-approved meals to our communities, Knight is excited to welcome upwards of 12 students a year to the Food Bank's future culinary training program while ramping up daily meal production from 2,600 to 10,000.

The excitement felt by Knight about the new building is shared across the Food Bank's staff, Hunger Relief Partners, and volunteers, all of whom will benefit from the significantly larger, 270,000-square-foot building — 118,000 square feet larger than the current Denver-area warehouse.





Just how much will the additional space, increased efficiencies, and streamlined operations impact Food Bank of the Rockies' day-to-day work?

Take a look:

## Triple the amount of cold storage space

will allow for larger quantities of donated food and desirable items like fresh produce and protein to be accepted and safely stored

200,000 more volunteer hours annually will add the

## equivalent output of 96 full-time employees

## More than \$500,000 will be saved annually thanks to solar panels powering 90%

(and eventually 100%!) of the building's energy needs, plus consolidating operations by combining the current two Denver warehouses and leased off-site truck parking into one comprehensive 14-acre property

## Quadruple the kitchen space

offers the opportunity to expand into providing fresh meals for community members experiencing homelessness

## 67% more food storage space

means millions of more pounds of food being sent into the community — and more desirable food items available to partners at all times

## Solar panels, electric car-charging stations, 189 tons of cardboard recycled annually, and 95,000 pounds of annual compost production

will increase the Food Bank's sustainability measures

## An expanded workforce development program

will give more people a chance to build skills and credentials to enhance future career opportunities

"Our new distribution center is more than square-footage numbers, concrete, and steel; it represents full plates and full lives," shared Food Bank of the Rockies President and CEO Erin Pulling. "It is the embodiment of the community coming together with a shared belief that every family — every person — deserves the nourishment they need to thrive."

Added Chief Impact Officer Monica Buhlig: "This new building increases our capacity to advance our mission. We will be better able to nourish our neighbors, around whom we center our work. We will also be able to offer more support to our network of Hunger Relief Partners, who are instrumental to serving neighbors. Our new building is designed based on partner feedback and will enable us to better serve our partners by being able to store more food — and more varieties of food — for them until they are able to access them."

# Summer Meals Let Kids Be Kids

Sarah, Meska, and Kosar are three of dozens of kids that enjoy nourishing meals at Food Bank of the Rockies' meal sites throughout Thornton when school is out of session for the summer.

The city of Thornton partners with Food Bank of the Rockies to offer free, nutritious meals and snacks at several Portable Playground Program locations during the summer. Sites are chosen based on levels of need in the area and also include fun activities like crafts, games, and the opportunity for kids to just be kids without worrying about food.

"I got to eat yogurt, cereal and milk, peanut butter, and little carrots," shared Meska. "My favorite was the cereal. The food makes me feel happy. It allows me to be energetic and not be hungry."



Since Food Bank of the Rockies was founded in 1978, the population of Colorado has more than doubled and the average home price has increased by 734% — from \$66,400 to \$533,692. As the cost of living climbs, inflation ramps up the prices of basic necessities like food, and affordable housing becomes less attainable, more people are turning to the Food Bank and our hundreds of Hunger Relief Partners for help. All of these factors made a new distribution center not just necessary, but vital for the health of our neighbors and communities right now and for generations to come.

"Our vision and plans for this distribution center were centered in efficiency and capacity. We embraced this audacious goal because our community deserves nothing less," said Pulling. "By creating a space that maximizes the power of volunteers, streamlines operations, and builds capacity, we are ensuring that for decades to come, people facing hunger will find the support they need when they need it most."

Food Bank of the Rockies serves half of Colorado and all of Wyoming, with around 70% of the annual food distributed passing through Denver on its way to our other distribution centers in Grand Junction and Casper, Wyoming. With the capacity to eventually distribute up to 100 million pounds of food every year, the new building will benefit every community across our service area with more high-quality and familiar food.

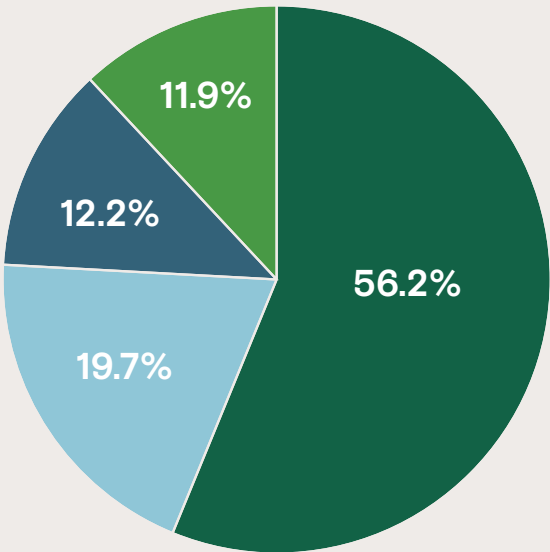
"The new distribution center may be hundreds of miles from the Western Slope, but its impact will be felt in every corner of our region," said Sue Ellen Rodwick, Western Slope Director. "With the majority of our food flowing through Denver before reaching our communities, this expansion means faster, more reliable access to nutritious meals — helping us meet growing demand and better serve the 1 in 8 people facing food insecurity across the Western Slope."





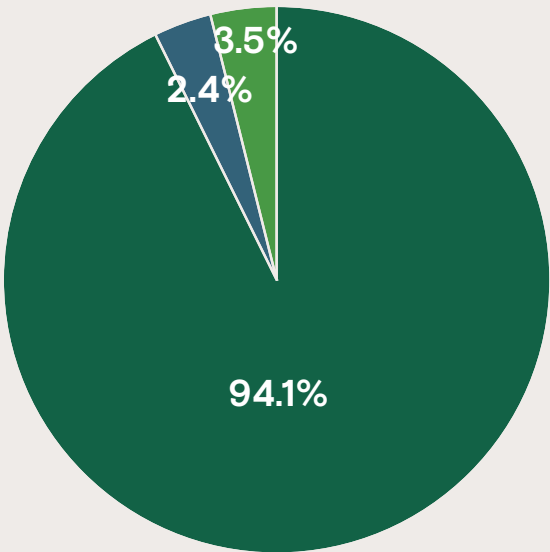
Around 70% of the food distributed by Food Bank of the Rockies passes through Denver before reaching the other distribution centers in Grand Junction and Casper, Wyoming. The new building will have the capacity to eventually distribute up to 100 million pounds of food annually, benefitting every community across our service area.

### Where our funding comes from



- Individuals
- Foundations
- Corporations & Associations
- Government

### How we use our resources



- Operations & Programming
- Fundraising
- Administration



The new building will allow us to enjoy the economies of scale in several ways. By combining our two physical buildings and operational teams, we can increase our capacity to do our work while lowering our operational cost and carbon footprint to do so. This paves the way for us to aggressively pursue new ways to deliver on our mission.

## KELLY GREEN

Chief Operating Officer



From the purchasing side of food sourcing operations, we are really looking forward to the new building allowing us to expand the variety of food offered to partners as a result of increased storage capacity. More food items available means we can better meet the needs of our partners and neighbors with regards to their food preferences and items familiar to them.

## COLLEEN DASZKIEWICZ

Purchasing Manager



Our warehouse and facilities teams are looking forward to new spaces and room to grow! The layout and flow of the warehouse present opportunities for efficiency and new processes. We are also looking forward to being in one facility rather than split across two due to space constraints.

## ERIN MOHNEY

Director of Operations



The volunteer operations team is most excited about the prospect of inviting more community members to our already amazing roster of regular and one-time volunteers. The people we meet every day remind us of our commitment to our neighbors to provide nutritious food, show compassion, and have a positive impact on our community.

## KATE WIDMANN

Volunteer Operations Manager



A dedicated room for repackaging bulk items like fresh fruit and dried goods will allow the Food Bank to increase the amount of nutrient-dense food it distributes to community members.





Rodwick's sentiments were echoed by Danica Sveda, executive director at Food Bank of Wyoming, Food Bank of the Rockies' Wyoming branch. "The new Denver facility will expand capacity, efficiency, and innovation, allowing our teams to source, store, and move more food than ever before," Sveda shared. "This increased capability directly strengthens our work in Wyoming, ensuring we can reach more neighbors with the nutritious food they need."

One in eight people in the Food Bank's service area lives with food insecurity; hunger levels locally and nationally are at a more than 10-year high. Across Colorado, nearly 13% of the population experiences food insecurity, including 172,540 kids. Those numbers are humbling, and they're expected to increase over the coming months and years due to significant changes in food assistance programs such as the

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps).

Last fiscal year, we distributed enough food for 71 million meals — and it still wasn't enough. Hundreds of thousands of our neighbors are being forced to make impossible decisions between buying enough food to be sustained and paying for life's other necessities. This bold move to increase our space and expand our reach is about more than a new building: it's about ensuring all our neighbors have the food they need to thrive.

Hunger isn't going away, but with this new distribution center, we can put into place the foundation for a brighter future. Building a hunger-free future is about more than food — it's about community. And that community begins with each of us. 🌱



Being able to welcome three-times as many volunteers will be the equivalent of having 96 more full-time employees.

# Nourishing Neighbors Through Donations of Time

**When we say we can't do what we do without our volunteers, we mean it. Last year, volunteers donated more than 142,100 hours across Colorado and Wyoming. That's equivalent to 68 full-time employees – a truly incredible gift.**

We are so grateful to every volunteer who chooses to spend their valuable time furthering our mission of igniting the power of community to nourish people facing hunger, and each year we honor especially outstanding individuals and groups. Please join us in celebrating this year's Colorado volunteer award recipients.

**Martha King** volunteers at the Denver Distribution Center five days a week, organizing and packing food for people living with food insecurity. In honor of Martha's steadfast dedication, she was chosen as the 2025 Betty Van Hook Memorial Award winner, an award given to people who emulate Betty's passion, spirit, and servant heart.

"We're all in this together, and some of us are much more fortunate than others," shared Martha. "The more we can contribute and support each other, the better our society will be. Food is a basic human need. When you don't have it, everything else just kind of falls apart."

Seventeen individuals who volunteer together at least two Saturdays a month, nicknamed the **Saturday Morning Regulars**, were the 2025 Community Group of the Year. The group includes Linda Berteau, Paul Berteau, Karla Castillo, Larry Cook, Zaq Dohallow, Jon Fahey, Blaine Grady, John Guala, Chuck Johnson, Amy Karr, Nadine Meux, Todd Minnich, Zachary Mokrycki, Don Novotny, Keri Trinkle, Steve Satler, and Thomas Walker. Together, they play an instrumental role in ensuring the Food Bank's program for older adults, Everyday Eats, operates efficiently.

Not only do Martha and the Saturday Morning Regulars donate their time, but this year they also contributed financially to the Fulfilled Capital Campaign in support of Food Bank of the Rockies' new Denver-area distribution center, anticipated to open later this year. The facility will support three-times as many volunteer opportunities daily, expanding our reach, getting more food to more people, and better supporting our incredible volunteers.

Since its inception in 2014, **Ardent Mills** employees have been living out their value of service through volunteering with and donating flour to Food Bank of the Rockies. Over the years, they have contributed nearly 8 million meals to nourish our community and were honored as this year's Corporate Group of the Year.



MARTHA KING



SATURDAY MORNING REGULARS



ARDENT MILLS



DOUG CLEMENTS





Dedicating their time, energy, and compassion to help people experiencing hunger, our volunteers play an integral role in fulfilling Food Bank of the Rockies' mission.

"At Ardent Mills, we are committed to putting service into action every day, striving to make a lasting impact," said Nick Benham, Vice President, Corporate Controller at Ardent Mills and former Food Bank of the Rockies board chair. "With deep roots in agriculture and food, we feel a strong connection to the Food Bank's mission [and] we are proud to support their efforts."

Recognizing an individual that exemplifies the values of the Food Bank and has dedicated themselves to their role, the Rising Volunteer of the Year for 2025 was **Doug Clements**. Doug has volunteered on the receiving dock at the Denver Distribution Center since 2020, building strong relationships with staff, other volunteers, and Hunger Relief Partners, and improving processes and the experience on the dock for all.

"Working on the dock you get to meet the people you're helping; it's something I look forward to every week," Doug shared. "The line is so thin between being okay and not being okay. Volunteering here, you realize how fortunate you are. You can see who you're helping. We are lucky that we get to deal face-to-face with the people that are going to take that food to the people that actually need the help."

On the Western Slope, **Rick Caudel's** steadfast dedication and drive are shining examples of putting our mission

into action, and his impact has been nothing short of remarkable, making him the 2025 Volunteer of the Year. **Allen Sundmacher and Lori Bryant** have volunteered at the Etkin Family Distribution Center since December 2024, and these Rising Volunteers of the Year shine with positivity and bring joy to those around them.

Whenever the Western Slope volunteer team needs last-minute help, they can count on employees from **Swire Coca-Cola**, who bring their full energy and heart to every volunteer shift and were honored as this year's Corporate Volunteer Group of the Year. A group of 20 volunteers from **West Rockies Church of Delta** are the 2025 Community Group of the Year, infusing their work with efficiency and enthusiasm, and rising to the challenge of any task given to them.

With every hour donated, box packed, and pallet of food distributed, there are fewer people experiencing hunger in our community. Thank you so much, volunteers. We couldn't do this work without you.

Over the last two years, volunteers on the Western Slope have increased their hours donated by 49%, and we are beyond grateful for their commitment to and passion for our mission.



RICK CAUDEL



WEST ROCKIES CHURCH OF DELTA



ALLEN SUNDMACHER  
AND LORI BRYANT

# Supporting Our Neighbors for Generations to Come

Betsy Poell made her first gift to Food Bank of the Rockies as a monthly donor in 2005 as soon as she secured her first post-college job. The more she learned about the Food Bank over the next two decades, the more she felt compelled to support its mission.

“Food is a basic need, but nourishment is different,” Betsy shared. “And that’s something the Food Bank is doing so well: providing people with nourishment.”

Betsy and her husband, William, continued to increase their monthly gifts, especially when COVID hit. A few years later, their 7-year-old son, Gus, tragically passed away from a sudden illness.

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**Food is a basic need, but nourishment is different. And that’s something the Food Bank is doing so well: providing people with nourishment.**

– Betsy Poell

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“When Gus died, we realized we were fortunate in that we have everything we need financially. We also knew that our friends and family would want to do something to support us during that time. We didn’t want to collect money, but knew our community would want to help,” Betsy shared. “That’s when we decided to channel that support to Food Bank of the Rockies in Gus’ honor.”

That act alone made a significant impact on the Food Bank’s mission to nourish people facing hunger, but Betsy wasn’t done yet. She invested time and energy into getting to know more about Food

Bank of the Rockies and participated in a focus group for the Fulfilled Capital Campaign in support of the Food Bank constructing a new distribution center. It was then that Betsy, William, and their family decided to make the largest single gift they’d ever made through the JJP Family Foundation.

“Our money is being used well and we can afford to bless other people,” said Betsy of the gift. “I really benefitted from my connections with the Food Bank as a donor and from having a place to channel support after Gus died. It’s been a real partnership. I’ve always felt an affinity for the mission and hunger relief.”

Throughout the various phases of the Fulfilled campaign, so many incredible individuals and foundations like Betsy and the JJP Family Foundation, as well as corporations and even our own volunteers and staff, have stepped up to support Food Bank of the Rockies’ work and dream of reaching more people with more food. The first corporate gift to Fulfilled came from CoBank.

“CoBank has invested more than \$2 million over 20 years in Food Bank of the Rockies; our missions align,” said Ashly Ligouri, Senior Manager of Corporate Social Responsibility at CoBank. “CoBank’s mission is rooted in supporting rural America, agriculture, and fresh food, and we believe that strong communities start with healthy people. Food Bank of the Rockies helps make that a reality.”

CoBank’s gift of \$250,000 was just part of the company’s commitment to hunger relief. Their employees have also been loyal volunteers and donors to the Food Bank for several years.

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**“We try to live by the belief that with great need comes great responsibility, and we have the responsibility to help people in need.”**

– Randy Hertel

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Long-time Food Bank of the Rockies supporters Randy and Gwenn Hertel also took a special interest in the new building. As executive vice president of Majestic Realty, Randy was pivotal in the acquisition, entitlement, and construction of the Food Bank’s future home at 20600 E. 38th Avenue in Aurora, Colorado. Thanks to Randy’s passionate support, Majestic Realty’s subsidiary, Commerce Construction, was instrumental in helping create a purpose-built facility to fuel our region’s charitable food ecosystem for decades to come, and have contributed nearly \$1.6 million in in-kind support for the project.

Randy and Gwenn have centered their lives around service to their community by addressing critical issues like food insecurity, and the new building was the perfect opportunity for Randy to combine his professional expertise with his commitment to hunger relief. In addition to providing in-kind support, Randy and Gwenn also contributed a leadership gift of \$1 million to help make this project a reality.

“Gwenn and I have been blessed in so many ways. We try to live by the belief that with great need comes great responsibility, and we have the responsibility to help people in need,” shared Randy.





Cal Fulenwider, Chair of the Fulfilled Capital Campaign, was similarly inspired by the potential a new distribution center could have on food insecurity across our region.

“My family and I have been volunteers and supporters of Food Bank of the Rockies for more than 18 years,” Cal said. “When I was asked to join the Fulfilled campaign project to support the construction of the new distribution center, I jumped at the chance. I know this new distribution facility will increase our capacity to make a remarkable impact throughout the communities we serve.”

Cal is especially passionate about hunger-relief programs directed at children; his family has even “adopted” two elementary schools where over 50% of the student population is made up of kids living in poverty. Partnering with Food Bank of

the Rockies’ Totes of Hope® Program, now, every Friday, kids and their families receive enough food to carry them through the weekend and arrive back at school Monday morning fully nourished.

Showing just how passionate about hunger relief Food Bank of the Rockies’ supporters are, a group of volunteers spearheaded a fundraising challenge and raised over \$100,000. The majority of volunteers who chose to contribute to the campaign already donate incredible amounts of time sorting, packing, and assisting Hunger Relief Partners in getting the food they need to nourish their community members.

One of the volunteers, Mike Kenyon, experienced food insecurity as a child. He recalled how he would walk to a government center to collect canned goods, powdered milk, and cheese. Eight

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**I know this new distribution facility will increase our capacity to make a remarkable impact throughout the communities we serve.**

– Cal Fulenwider

years ago, Mike began volunteering with Food Bank of the Rockies as a way to give back. He joined dozens of other volunteers in financially supporting the Fulfilled Capital Campaign.

“I see families suffering today like we did in the 1950s,” he shared. “Some donate [to the Food Bank] because they suffered from food insecurity when they were younger — that’s my own story. Volunteering is critical for me. Now, I can make people’s lives better.”



# Finding Support During Times of Need



**Isabel**  
Lakewood, CO

Isabel works as a pastry chef and recently began attending a mobile pantry with her partner, who is unable to work.

“Having a single income is really hard and having food really, really makes a difference,” shared Isabel. “Getting food from the Food Bank has been huge, especially being able to save a little bit of money and not having to worry as much about paying bills. It’s nice to see so many people who also need food; it makes me feel like I’m not alone, like I’m not failing.”

She continued: “Things feel impossible in a lot of ways right now and it’s great seeing that there are people who say, ‘This is unacceptable,’ and want to help. It’s hard to admit that you need help. I’m doing my best, but it feels like it’s not enough. But it’s not your fault that it’s not enough, it’s really not.”

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**“**  
**It’s great seeing that there are people  
who want to help.**

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**Susan and Karen**  
Delta, CO

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**“**  
**It’s fun to see what we’re going to get.  
I like the veggies.**

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Susan and Karen grew up in Paonia and have known each other since they were 5 years old. Susan, who carpooled with Karen to the Delta Mobile Pantry, said she finds the protein products especially helpful, like the packet of chicken legs she got at a recent mobile pantry, which she stretched further by making soup.

Susan said this year has been especially difficult after her sister, with whom she shared a house, passed away. If she brings home something she doesn’t eat, she gives it to other families who can use it. Nothing goes to waste.

“I have a neighbor with lots of kids. Anything I’m not going to use I pass on, so it benefits more than just my household,” said Susan.

Added Karen: “It’s fun to see what we’re going to get. I like the veggies; I make a lot of soup.”





Anyone can experience food insecurity. Hunger cuts across demographics and borders, indifferent to the past or future chapters of a person's life. Food Bank of the Rockies meets individuals in the present, ensuring that anyone who needs it gets the nourishing food they need to thrive.



**Ron**  
Denver, CO



**Cindy**  
Medicine Bow, WY

“  
**There's a lot of people that are one big car repair away, or the water heater goes out, or the dryer goes out, and that's enough to put a family in a crisis.**  
”

Ron and his wife found themselves in need of food assistance for the first time in their lives this year.

“For a lot of families, it's about a crisis, not necessarily prices,” Ron shared. “My wife had some major surgeries this year and isn't able to work as much. So it's one of those issues where a program like this allows us to loosen up a little extra money from the budget for other things.”

He continued: “There's a lot of people that are one big car repair away, or the water heater goes out, or the dryer goes out, and that's enough to put a family in a crisis. And that's what a program like this mobile pantry does: it allows us as a family to step back from the edge a little bit.”

Access to a grocery store isn't a guarantee in Wyoming communities like Medicine Bow, where the nearest place to stock up on food and necessities is an hour away. In places like this, our Hunger Relief Partners play an irreplaceable role in nourishing our neighbors. At Medicine Bow Food Pantry, residents like Cindy can easily access the food they need to thrive. Cindy is an older adult and lives with and cares for her mother. It's difficult for Cindy's mom to be home alone, and Cindy relies on the pantry both for food and camaraderie.

“It's such a community space, where people can catch up and have fun,” shared Cindy. “It's nice that we can come here and just get one little package or one lemon — get what you need for a recipe or all the things you need for a week.”

“  
**It's such a community space, where people can catch up and have fun.**  
”

# Working Together to Make Good Food Go Further with the Food Rescue Program

Picture the produce section in your favorite grocery store. Piles of shiny apples stacked into tidy pyramids, perfectly yellow banana bunches, the greenest of green kale and cilantro stacked neatly: it's a scene all of us know and, for better or worse, have come to expect. But fruit and vegetables don't always grow into the shapes and hues that qualify them to be showcased, just like cans get dented, labels get torn, and one egg of a dozen gets broken. So what happens to that food? Often, these items that have the exact same nutritional quality as their prettier counterparts go to waste, simply because they have a slight cosmetic imperfection.

Annually across our nation's food system, 92 billion pounds of surplus food — 31% of the total food supply — is generated annually. That's 145 billion lost meals, enough to feed the entire American population one meal a day for

14 months. Fortunately, food donations have been on the rise over the last few years as more businesses improve their donation programs in recognition of the "win-win-win" opportunity: cost savings and tax incentives, reduced food insecurity, and positive environmental impacts.

Last fiscal year, 57% of the more than 85 million pounds of high-quality, nutrient-dense items Food Bank of the Rockies provided to neighbors came from our Food Rescue Program. And with our new distribution center opening this winter, we aim to increase that amount thanks to expanded freezer, refrigerator, and dock space. It's an exciting opportunity to accept more food from more donors and further enhance our region's charitable food network.

"It's this beautiful ecosystem of everyone working together to capture surplus food and put it to good use," said Mark

Weslar, Food Sourcing Director at the Food Bank. "By collaborating with partners on the manufacturing, retail, and agricultural levels of the food system, we are able to capture food in our community and keep it in our community. We couldn't feed folks like we do without the Food Rescue Program."

Truck driver Jeremy Duran has worked for Food Bank of the Rockies for 11 years, with the last seven dedicated to the Food Rescue Program. He witnesses the immediate impact made by the food he drops off at Hunger Relief Partner sites to distribute to neighbors.

"Sometimes as soon as you take the food off the truck, it's already being put onto tables for people to grab," Jeremy shared. "You actually see the people who are getting it, and that feels good. Knowing that good food is going to be nourishing neighbors is the most important part of the program to me."



Of the more than 85 million pounds of food distributed by the Food Bank in fiscal year 2025, 57% came from the Food Rescue Program thanks to dedicated partners like Sprouts.





For Sprouts Farmers Market, one of hundreds of Food Rescue partners, Food Bank of the Rockies is the main place they send surplus food. The fact that their Denver-area warehouse is located a stone's throw from the Food Bank's new distribution center makes the potential of the organizations' collaboration even more exciting.

"At Sprouts, we don't want to waste any food. If we get a pallet of pluimcots when we were supposed to get apricots, say, we have to reject it even though there's nothing wrong with the fruit at all," shared Robert Martinez, Sprouts Distribution Center Quality Assurance Manager. "We try to donate everything to the Food Bank to get it to families as fast as possible. We take pride in the high-quality product we donate."

That sentiment is shared by all of our Food Rescue partners, including recipients like Catholic Charities. There, through five shelters that serve around 500 meals a day, as well as summer and school-year programs that serve around 2,000 meals a week, Catholic Charities puts to use anything and everything they get from Food Bank of the Rockies.

"We are producing a lot of food and, to be honest, we can't do it without these donations," shared Mary Larson, Director of Warehousing and Food Services for Catholic Charities. "Especially right now in the economic environment we're in, we simply do not have enough money in our budget to feed our clientele three meals a day, 365 days a year."

“

**We try to donate everything to the Food Bank to get it to families as fast as possible. We take pride in the high-quality product we donate.**

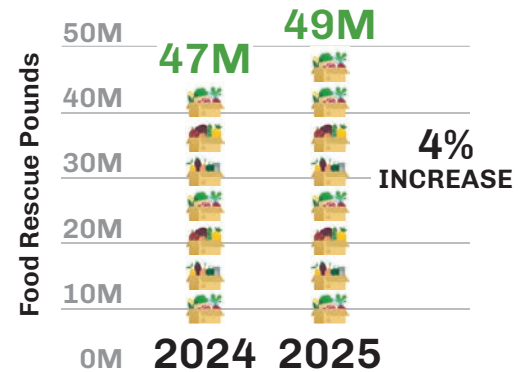
– Robert Martinez,  
Sprouts Distribution Center  
Quality Assurance Manager



The same is true at SECOR, a Food Bank Hunger Relief Partner that directly serves over 425 families weekly in addition to programs such as Food for Thought, which distributes 2,250 food bags weekly to kids during the school year. "The Food Rescue Program is our lifeblood; without it we wouldn't be able to do what we do," said Jonathan Daniels, SECOR's operations manager. "Food costs are just going up and up and up, and there's no way we could feed as many people as we do without the Food Rescue Program."

From large-scale donor partners like Sprouts to smaller-scale donors like Talbott Farm, from which the Food Bank sources surplus peaches and other

#### YEAR-OVER-YEAR INCREASE IN RESCUED FOOD



fruit, and Van Winkle Ranch, a Western Slope partner that donates locally raised beef, Food Bank of the Rockies welcomes opportunities of all sizes to increase the percentage of surplus food being rescued.

"It's a community effort and our food donors are really engaged and care about the impact they're creating and the good they're able to do with their surplus food," shared Weslar. "We're all in this together to increase sustainability and benefit our neighbors. It takes a village: from the transportation team to donation partners rescuing incremental food at the retail level, we're more tenacious than ever to capture every donated food opportunity that's out there."





# Board Members

Board Members as of October 2025

## Officers

**Christina Bowen**  
Board Chair

**Marylou Houston**  
Vice Chair

**Raju Patel**  
Board Treasurer

**Sean Choi**  
Board Secretary

## Members

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Errol Brown       | Kate Kimball       |
| Dru S. Chiesa     | Jesse Ogas         |
| Yee-Ann Cho       | Mark Spiecker      |
| Sonja Dimond      | Tiffany A. Todd    |
| Reid M. Galbraith | Michael Tousignant |
| Neelima Joshi     |                    |

# Leadership Team

- Monica Buhlig**, Chief Impact Officer
- Heather MacKendrick Costa**, Chief Financial Officer
- Aditi Desai**, Chief Marketing Officer
- John Freer**, Interim Chief People Officer
- Kelly Green**, Chief Operating Officer
- Steve Kullberg**, Chief of Staff
- Jennifer Lackey**, Chief Development Officer
- Erin Pulling**, President & CEO



Back row (L to R): Yee-Ann Cho, Kate Kimball, Errol Brown, Michael Tousignant, Sean Choi, Sonja Dimond.  
Front row (L to R): Raju Patel, Christina Bowen, Marylou Houston.





# Taking Action Against Hunger, Together

It's hard to overstate just how impactful Food Bank of the Rockies' new Denver-area home will be for our community. We outgrew our current distribution center 14 years ago, and in that time have done everything in our power to keep up with the need no matter the hurdles. We've leased additional food storage, office, and truck-parking space; we've maximized our warehouse and dock space to the point where each pick-up and drop-off requires a carefully choreographed dance; and we've squeezed every cent of every dollar to not just feed our community members, but truly nourish them.

This new building isn't just an opportunity for us to accept, store, and distribute more food; it's our chance to strengthen and grow the charitable food ecosystem across our region for decades to come. Right now, one in eight people in our service area lives with food insecurity. We don't know what next year or the years beyond that will bring, and we remain hopeful that the need for food decreases rather than increases. But hope without action does not bring change, and with this new distribution center we are taking a step toward building a hunger-free future for all of our neighbors. It's an ambitious, big, and bold move, and we couldn't have gotten here without each and every one of you. Moreover, we need all of us to continue to innovate together and energize one another to support our neighbors, because it is only when all of us are nourished that our community as a whole can thrive. 🌱





# FOOD BANK OF THE ROCKIES™



Help us build a hunger-free future.



[foodbankrockies.org/fulfilled](https://foodbankrockies.org/fulfilled)