



Montana Food Bank Network's (MFBN) mission is to end hunger through food acquisition and distribution, education and advocacy. We believe that every person has the basic human right to access nutritious high-quality food that nourishes the mind, body and soul. Our network is made up of over 280 neighborhood food banks, community pantries, social organizations, homeless shelters, schools and many other organizations committed to ending hunger in Montana. We distribute food across Montana from Heron to Wibaux, Eureka to West Yellowstone and everywhere in between.

### **Hunger in Montana**

- 1 in 9 Montanans live in households that struggle with hunger, including 1 in 6 children.
- Poverty rate: 12.5% and Child poverty rate: 14.7%
- Causes include:
  - Economic insecurity (unemployment, underemployment, cost of housing, health care, etc.)
  - Underutilization of public food programs (people may not know they are eligible or are reluctant to participate in public programs)
  - Challenges accessing food (distance to supermarkets, higher cost of healthy food, especially in rural areas)
  - Montana is the third most rural state in the nation, averaging just 7 people per square mile

**Programs** MFBN is made up of more than 280 Network Partners working together throughout Montana in order to increase access to emergency food resources for Montanans living with food insecurity.

### **Food Distribution**

- Through 140 community food pantries, homeless shelters, senior homes & other MFBN partner agencies we distributed 12.2 million pounds of food to all 56 counties across Montana in 2018.
- These partner agencies provide direct service to individuals and families in need by distributing food and grocery products to clients in their service areas.
- Program partners include Mail-a-Meal, Hunters Against Hunger, Backpack, School Pantry, and Mobile Food Pantry.
- MFBN also provides food safety training, facilitates relationships with potential partners and grantors, and connections to Feeding America resources for all partner agencies
- In 2018, MFBN awarded \$39,575 in grants to partner agencies.

**BackPack Program** distributed 319,170 pounds of food to 116 schools, reaching over 4000 students during school year 2017 – 2018 and through summer 2017.

- The mission of the Backpack Program is to meet the needs of children living in food insecure homes by providing them with nutritious and easy-to-prepare food to take home on weekends and school vacations when other resources such as school breakfast and lunch programs are not available.
- MFBN involves additional resources and partners in order to ensure sustainability of the program.
- Since the program started in 2008, the Backpack Program has distributed 2,931,441 pounds of food to students in need.

**Grocery Rescue Program** saved 7,966,630 pounds of food from being thrown away in 2018.

- MFBN works with local and national grocery stores to develop food rescue programs that provide food donations directly to local partner agencies.
- This is perishable food that is close to expiration date but still fully edible and safe to eat.
- 54,750,014 million pounds of food has been rescued and donated to our partner agencies in Montana since the program started in 2006.

**Hunters Against Hunger** in conjunction with Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks distributed 45,627 pounds of Montana game meat in 2018.

- The fresh game meat is processed through 24 Montana meat processing partners then available for distribution through 25 MFBN partner food pantries.

**Mail-A-Meal** distributed 56,750 pounds of food directly to rural Montana households in 2018.

- The Mail-A-Meal program is designed to serve households living in rural areas in Montana that are referred to as food deserts. Some boxes are shipped to a central area location for pickup others are shipped directly.
- Since the program began in 2014, 4,028 boxes have been distributed to 24 counties throughout Montana.

**Mobile Food Pantry Program** distributed 16,940 pounds of food in 11 rural communities in 2018.

- The purpose of a Mobile Food Pantry is to provide emergency food assistance and services to food insecure individuals in rural areas of Montana that may be underserved or lacking in local food pantries and full service grocery stores.

#### **Outreach and Advocacy for Public Food Programs**

- Advocated for Farm Bill that protected SNAP and invested in TEFAP and our other nutrition programs
  - Engaged our MFBN network partners & members of the health community, faith leaders, farmers, senior advocates, disability rights groups, and others.
  - Submitted opinion pieces in newspapers, held in-person meetings with Senate offices, and shared regular communication on the importance of a strong Farm Bill with our Congressional leaders.
- Conducted in-depth surveys of food pantry clients at nine partner agencies throughout the state to learn more about the causes and consequences of hunger in Montana. Survey findings are shared in our 2018 *Hungry in Montana* report – find reports at [www.mfbn.org/research](http://www.mfbn.org/research)
- Through the **SNAP Outreach** Program, an additional 7 agencies were trained to complete SNAP applications, SNAP materials were distributed to 75 organizations, and MFBN and our trained agencies helped complete 409 client applications.
- Facilitated the statewide Food Security Council, bringing together representatives from the public and private sector, including State program administrators, nonprofits, and Congressional offices.

**Volunteers** worked at total of 5,158 hours. The equivalent of 2.5 full time employees.

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