

# 2024

# IMPACT REPORT



# WELCOME TO OUR 2024 IMPACT REPORT



Throughout this year's report, you will read stories and see data that reflect the impact being made by MFBN and our network of agencies. Traditionally, we measure impact by meals provided, pounds of food rescued, and number of households served. We also listen and talk to those experiencing food insecurity to ensure we are providing the most relevant support possible. While these measurements of impact are extremely helpful in our current work, they don't entirely reflect just how much our network is "moving the needle" to reach our vision of a Montana free from hunger where everyone has equal access to nutritious food.

During our strategic planning process this year, we decided to shift part of our focus towards measuring meaningful impact with three goals: strengthen our network to improve overall service delivery, programs, and advocacy efforts; evaluate and improve our programs and processes through internal evaluation, accountability, and continuous improvement; and cultivate organizational culture to reflect MFBN's core values - Respect, Integrity, Responsibility, Justice, Equity.

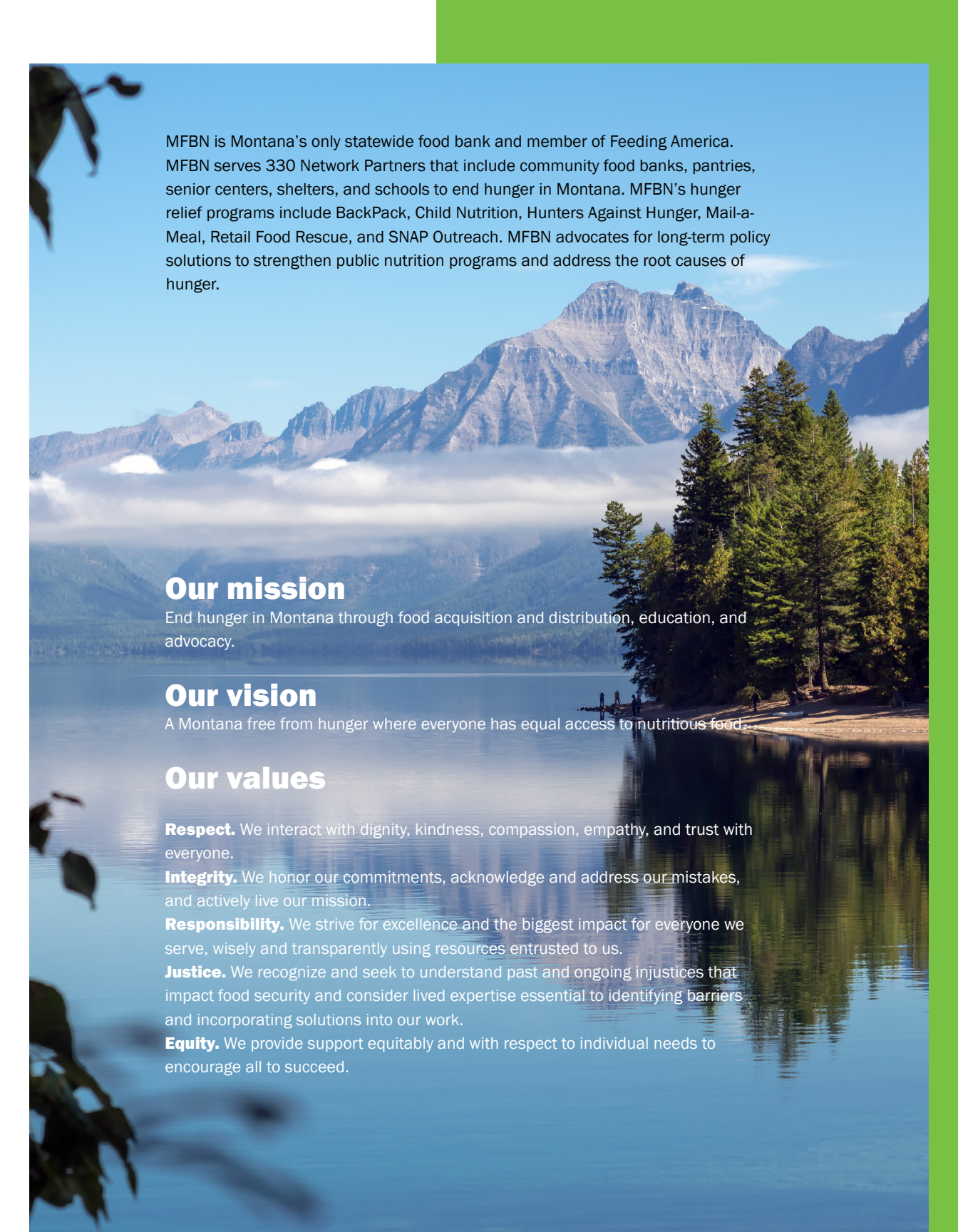
This new focus on measuring impact doesn't take away from the major achievements MFBN and our entire network have experienced over the past year. Distributing 13,425,759 meals, completing over 110 visits to Network Partners, facilitating 621 SNAP applications, and providing 7,745 food bags per month to students through the Backpack Program is significant and will remain the foundation of our collective work.

While we recognize that MFBN can't resolve the issues surrounding poverty and economic impact, we can improve access and nutrition for those facing food insecurity. Measuring how our work is influencing food insecurity now, as well as identifying gaps, is the first step. We can then make the strategic changes necessary to take us one step closer to making Montana hunger free.

MFBN acknowledges and appreciates that this vision can't be reached without the hard work and support of our 330 Network Partners, thousands of volunteers, and generous donors. The work is hard, but also rewarding. And, of course, there's always room for you to join us!

Thank you for joining us,  
Gayle Carlson, President and Chief Executive Officer





MFBN is Montana's only statewide food bank and member of Feeding America. MFBN serves 330 Network Partners that include community food banks, pantries, senior centers, shelters, and schools to end hunger in Montana. MFBN's hunger relief programs include Backpack, Child Nutrition, Hunters Against Hunger, Mail-a-Meal, Retail Food Rescue, and SNAP Outreach. MFBN advocates for long-term policy solutions to strengthen public nutrition programs and address the root causes of hunger.

## Our mission

End hunger in Montana through food acquisition and distribution, education, and advocacy.

## Our vision

A Montana free from hunger where everyone has equal access to nutritious food.

## Our values

**Respect.** We interact with dignity, kindness, compassion, empathy, and trust with everyone.

**Integrity.** We honor our commitments, acknowledge and address our mistakes, and actively live our mission.

**Responsibility.** We strive for excellence and the biggest impact for everyone we serve, wisely and transparently using resources entrusted to us.

**Justice.** We recognize and seek to understand past and ongoing injustices that impact food security and consider lived expertise essential to identifying barriers and incorporating solutions into our work.

**Equity.** We provide support equitably and with respect to individual needs to encourage all to succeed.

# GROUND BREAKING

## \$15 MILLION CAMPAIGN FOR BIGGER IMPACT.

In April of 2024, we launched the public phase of our 15 million dollar Campaign for Bigger Impact to advance our mission of ending hunger in Montana. The focal point of our campaign is a transformational new facility and distribution center at 5780 Alloy North in Missoula. To celebrate the beginning of construction on our new facility, we gathered at our new site with friends, supporters, partners, and leaders in food security. Together, we confirmed our collective commitment to equitable access to nutritious food by raising a glass and digging-up the first of many shovelfuls of dirt. Construction is now a month ahead of schedule, transitioning us into the new facility in June of 2025. When it is complete, our new distribution center will replace and double MFBN's current storage capacity to just over 56,000 square feet, with room for 1,600 pallets of shelf-stable goods, 160 pallets of fresh produce, and 300 pallets of frozen meat, vegetables, and other food. The added space will allow us to buy in bigger, more cost-effective quantities and take advantage of unexpected opportunities like large donations, along with processing incoming food more efficiently. The Campaign for Bigger Impact is the largest fundraising campaign in MFBN's more than 40-year history.



Photo by Kembel, Kosena & Company, Inc.

**“It’s inspiring to see the support we have received from foundations, corporations, and individual donors to help us get to this point in the campaign. They all understand the importance of this project that will help support hunger relief in Montana for generations to come!”**

Bill Mathews, Chief Development Officer



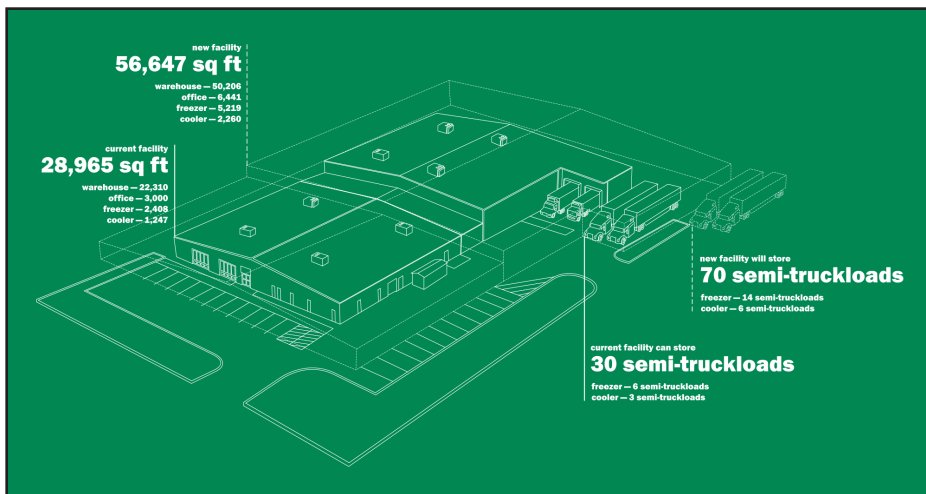
# AND GROUND BLESSING

Big Sky. Big Impact.

At our ground breaking celebration, we were joined by partners and leaders from the Blackfeet and Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes, Danielle Antelope and Shelly Fyant, who led all of us in a moving ground blessing ceremony. Shelly Fyant recently shared, **“I was honored to be asked to do a ground blessing for the land under and around the new facility in Missoula. These lands are abundant and have provided for many generations before us and, in part, with MFBN’s support, will sustain generations into the future.”**

**“What we’re doing today is thanking the land for allowing us to break ground for something that is going to be giving and continue to give to the people across Montana.”**

Danielle Antelope, Executive Director at FAST Blackfeet



# HOW MFBN MADE AN IMPACT IN 2024

## How does food arrive at our warehouse?

MFBN is the only statewide food bank in Montana. Each year we source millions of pounds of food and store it at our warehouse in Missoula until it can be distributed to our Network Partners across the state. We receive food from many sources, including regional producers and growers, programs through the United States Department of Agriculture, donations from grocery stores and individuals, and more.



### Breakdown of food distributed by pound

**RETAIL FOOD RESCUE** 9,262,915

**PURCHASED FOOD** 3,293,582

**USDA** 2,501,189

**DONATED FOOD** 1,085,625

### Total distributed food in pounds

**16,143,311**

That's 13,425,759 meals!

## What types of food do we distribute?

MFBN is committed to providing our Network Partners and their communities with nutritious foods, including regionally sourced dairy, produce, meat, and protein.

### Types of fresh food distributed by pound

**FRESH PRODUCE** 3,989,876

**MEAT & PROTEIN** 2,735,781

**DAIRY** 2,099,827

## How does food reach those in need?

MFBN relies on our statewide Network of Partners—including food pantries, schools, senior centers, and other community sites—to ensure that food reaches Montanans when they need it most.

### Total visits\*



\*some individuals have been served more than once

MFBN's advocacy and public policy team also works with community members and legislators on long-term solutions to hunger. Last year, MFBN engaged at the state, federal, and administrative advocacy levels for policies to strengthen SNAP and other public nutrition programs.

### Number of Network Partners served

# 330

### Students served by Backpack program

# 7,745

 every month

### Applications supported by SNAP Outreach

# 621

 ...equivalent to 718,186 meals.

## Financials

### Revenue and public support

In-kind	\$578
Special events	\$81,367
Grants	\$4,652,627
Earned income	\$3,486,051
Contributions	\$2,540,423
Donated food	\$25,402,549

**Total** **\$36,163,595**

### Expenses

Donated food distributed	\$25,407,891
Food distribution	\$5,590,097
Fundraising	\$1,106,836
General & administrative	\$428,313
Public policy	\$497,361
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$33,030,498</b>

# NOURISHING NATIVE NATIONS

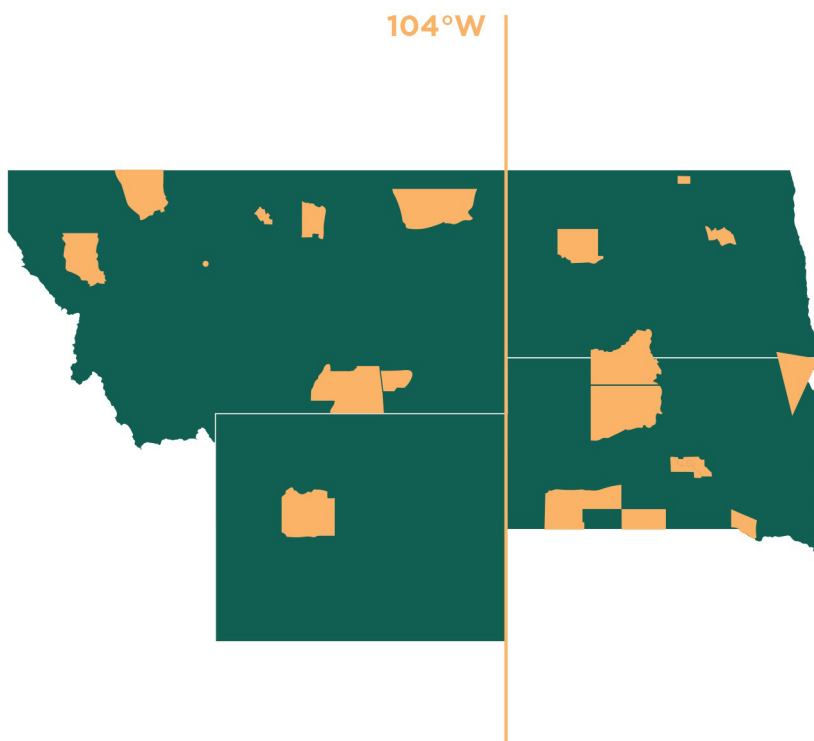
A project of the 104° West Collaborative.

In 2021, the statewide food banks of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming came together to explore new ways of supporting food access, food security, and food sovereignty in the Native Nations and tribal communities throughout the four states.

The 104° West Collaborative is new, but MFBN's work together with the three other states and with tribal communities is not. The four food bank's collective effort grows out of our shared experiences in building partnerships and identifying opportunities. With experience collaborating on joint disaster response efforts across state lines and our common membership in the Feeding America national network, we knew our impact would be enhanced by working together across borders. Each state food bank had strong internal commitments within our own organization, state, and boards of directors to work individually with tribal communities. When the four food banks recognized a need to work together, we understood that we could only take this step from a foundation of informed awareness and in consultation with tribal communities themselves.

After spending a year gathering data, conducting focus groups and interviews, visiting the reservations in our region, and deepening our understanding of the history, culture, and contemporary experience of the Native Nations and tribal communities, we committed to building the trust, credibility, and longevity needed for a collective, sustainable movement.

104° West is the line of longitude connecting Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming.





# MFBN'S **ADVOCACY** WORK

## **Supporting SNAP and TEFAP in the Farm Bill.**

This year, Congress was due to pass a new Farm Bill to reauthorize nutrition programs along with many other programs impacting agriculture and natural resources. Due to the fact that 80,000 Montanans rely on SNAP to help make ends meet and afford nutritious food, our top priority was making sure Montana's members of Congress heard and understood how crucial SNAP is for our state. Also at the top of the list was TEFAP, a program which provides commodities. It was important for members of Congress to understand that TEFAP commodities are an essential component of the food that MFBN distributes across the state. Both SNAP and TEFAP help fill food insecurity gaps for Montanans.

To amplify these messages to Congress, we prioritized collaboration. Big Sky Leadership Academy (BSLA) is where we build advocacy skills among people who have experienced hunger. We sent two of the nine 2023 BSLA graduates to Washington DC to advocate for anti-hunger issues. Two additional graduates joined MFBN's Amplify Montana Advisory Board to partner with us on policy campaigns. In other efforts, we joined 100 food banks in a Food Bank Farm Bill Fly-In at Capitol Hill. We also collaborated with a Network Partners to visit congressional offices and discuss how public nutrition programs affect Montana communities. Collaboration with Lived Experts, Network Partners, and national groups is essential for sending a strong message to lawmakers.

## **Throughout the year, Montana Food Bank Network advocated alongside Network Partners and Lived Experts, to inform lawmakers about the importance of programs including SNAP, TEFAP, the Child Tax Credit, and Summer EBT.**

### **Advocating for families with children.**

With 1 in 6 Montana children experiencing food insecurity, MFBN makes child nutrition another of its top priorities.

In an attempt to make a positive impact for an estimated 46,000 Montana children, we called on members of Congress to pass an expanded federal Child Tax Credit. This nationwide advocacy effort will continue until it's passed.

Finally, the exciting and essential new program, Summer EBT (also known as Sun Bucks), was officially implemented in Montana. Over the years, MFBN has advocated strongly for this federally-funded grocery benefit. During 2024, MFBN worked with state agencies to give input on the new Summer EBT program and communicated about the program to families.

# UNPRECEDENTED NETWORK GROWTH

**Every year, MFBN's partner network grows. This past year, MFBN welcomed an unprecedented 22 new partners to the network, up from an annual average of five to 10. April 2024 alone saw the addition of 14 partners.**

"As the only statewide food bank, we have seen the need and network itself grow tenfold," affirms Jonathan Lile-Sexton, MFBN's Agency Relations Coordinator. While some of these new partnerships are in larger cities like Billings, Kalispell, and Great Falls, many are in rural communities like Sun River, Forsyth, Absarokee, and Sheridan. "This shows us that the need isn't focused in one particular area but exists across the state in all communities."

Jesse Schraufnagel, MFBN's Programs Manager, agrees. "Hunger impacts everyone. If you are a senior trying to survive on retirement or social security, a single parent making ends meet, or a student living on their own for the first time, the cost of food and availability of nutritious meals is challenging." Schraufnagel explains that MFBN's extraordinary network growth this past year comes as local food pantries and meal programs struggle to purchase and secure the food they know their communities need. "That's where MFBN comes in as a network supplier and resource for them."

Of the 22 partners brought on this past year, two are campus pantries.

"The support MFBN has provided us has been incredible, and we could not do what we now do without them," says Parker Scott, Community Engagement Coordinator at Yellowjacket Pantry, which joined MFBN's network this past April 2024. "We have learned a lot from the MFBN team as well as those we have met through MFBN events. Our program and our clients are much better off now that we are working with MFBN for our food orders."

Marguerite Kibodeaux, Basic Needs Coordinator at Bounty of the Bridgers shared, "I cannot begin to emphasize how significant a reliable consistent source of food is for our program. There is simply no way we could rely on donations alone with the utilization we experience. A tremendous factor in student success and retention at public universities is food security. MFBN has been an invaluable resource in jumpstarting our Public Assistance Advising program within our department. The SNAP trainings provided by MFBN have been very educational and engaging for our student employees in the program. Food insecure students are able to access food to support a well-rounded healthy diet consistently, thanks to the support we receive from MFBN."

Across the state, MFBN partners with organizations large and small, working to make a financial and relational impact with each organization. Each of the 22 new partnerships has been formed to increase access to resources, help provide nutritious food, and to continue to nourish communities all across Montana.



# 22

**new partners joined  
MFBN's network**

## **College Campuses MFBN serves:**

- Bounty of the Bridgers - MSU Bozeman
- Flathead Valley Community College Student Food Pantry in Kalispell
- University of Montana Lend A Paw Pantry in Missoula
- Yellowjacket Pantry - MSU Billings







5625 Expressway | Missoula, MT 59808  
(406) 721-3825 | [mfbn.org](http://mfbn.org)

Support MFBN today and help us ensure that all Montanans have dignified access to the nutritious food they need to thrive.

