



2025 | IMPACT REPORT

REDUCING WASTE • EASING HUNGER





**MARISHA
MACMORRAN**
Executive Director

This past year brought significant challenges to our community. In the aftermath of Hurricane Helene and amid rising food costs and economic pressures, many families faced unexpected hardship. Across our region, the need for reliable access to nutritious food grew in both visible and unseen ways.

In response, our community stepped forward with generosity and resolve. We are deeply grateful to our food donor partners, whose ongoing support allows us to rescue high-quality food and redirect it to neighbors who need it most. We're equally thankful for our dedicated volunteers and staff, who show up each day with commitment and care—rescuing, packing, delivering and building connections that go far beyond a meal.

Most importantly, we honor the relationships at the heart of this work. Our cherished agency partners collaborate with us to meet evolving needs across the community, and those we share meals with continue to teach us about resilience, strength and the importance of showing up for one another. Together, we are more than a food distribution network—we are a community rooted in care.

In Gratitude,

MISSION

Food Connection eases food insecurity and reduces waste by redistributing surplus prepared food and connecting it to communities in need. We share this delicious and nutritious food with agency partners who serve the community and directly into neighborhoods where working families and seniors may not have access to healthy prepared meals.

VISION

Building a food rescue and distribution system where abundance feeds need - rooted in dignity, community and environmental responsibility.

VALUES

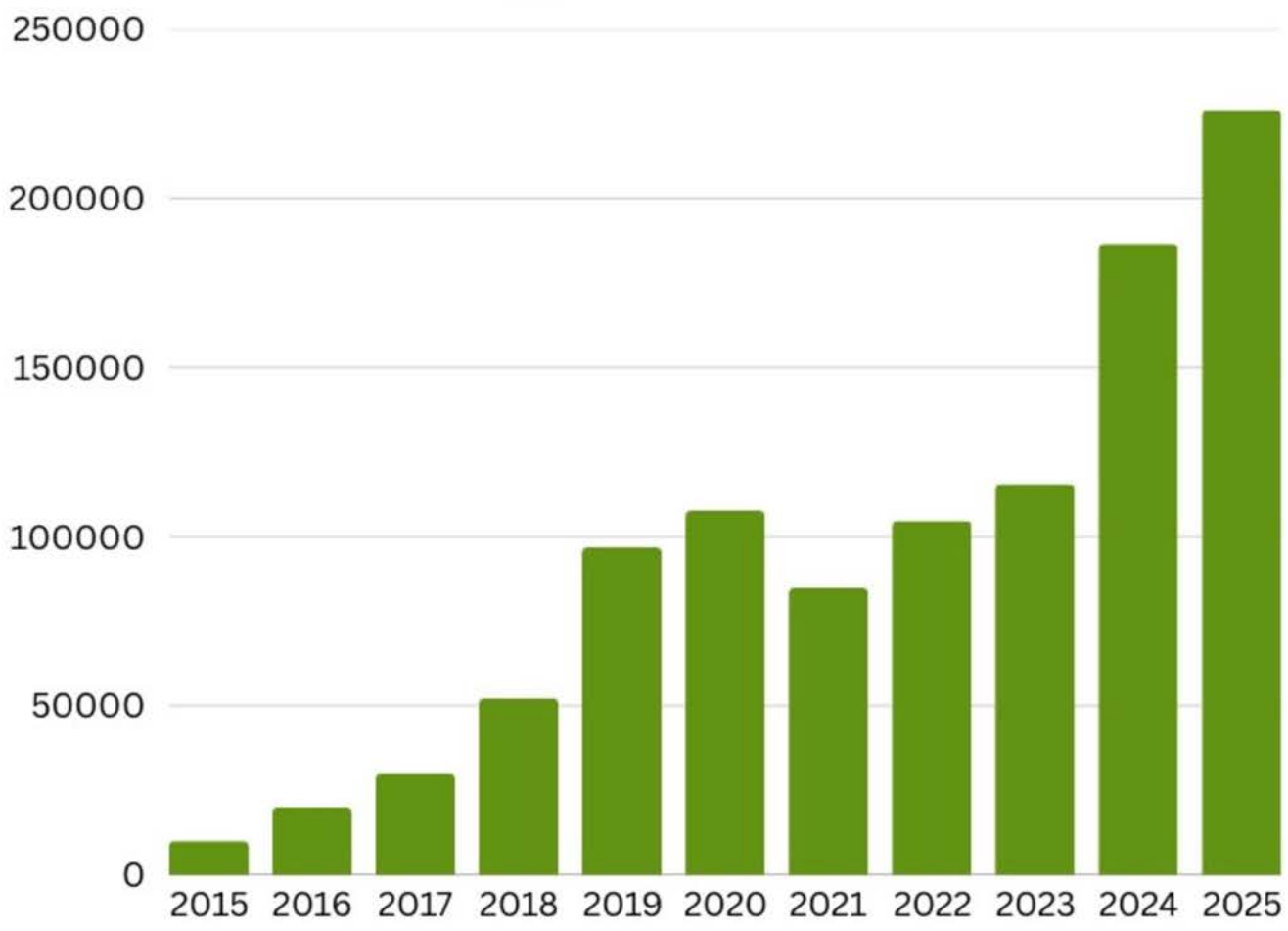
Food Access with **Dignity** and **Sustainability**



**226,193 MEALS
SERVED IN 2025**

1,034,530 LIFETIME MEALS SERVED

● Lifetime Meals Served



Food Connection has grown from a few thousand meals a year to more than 226,000 shared last year. When the pandemic intensified food insecurity, we adapted quickly to meet the need, and in 2022 launched our Mobile Meals Program to bring nutritious food directly into neighborhoods and expand access for those facing transportation and mobility barriers.



**Wednesday Mobile Meal Distribution at
Verner Early Childhood Learning Center**

"To have the food truck right here at Verner has been so convenient and helpful. I also find it a great way to recycle the excess in our society and in food businesses and restaurants. To provide a night that a mama doesn't have to cook is such a blessing and so valuable. I think it's a great way to leverage our resources because there's so much waste in the world and there's so much need too, and so it connects one with the other, which I think is brilliant and a good cause."

-Verner Parent

"Through partnership we are able to leverage Food Connection's unique capacity to provide high-quality, prepared meals directly to our students and families in a supportive, dignity-affirming "free food truck" environment. This approach removes barriers associated with other food resources, offering not just nourishment, but a positive, community-focused experience that directly supports the well-being of the students we serve."

-Gregory Hall II

IRL Afterschool Program Director at Asheville Middle School



**Chef Melissa McKnight
donating surplus food from
the Omni Grove Park Inn**

FOOD DONORS

**1,709 INDIVIDUAL FOOD PICK UPS IN 2025
AVERAGE NUMBER OF MEALS PER PICK UP = 132**

Our food donor partners demonstrate what community care, environmental stewardship, and social responsibility truly look like in action. By preparing and sharing their high-quality food, they not only celebrate the creativity our region is known for—they also help reduce food waste and ensure that nourishing meals reach neighbors. Their generosity transforms surplus into sustenance and reinforces the spirit of care that defines our community.

“Food Connection creates a meaningful experience for the individuals they serve—whether it’s children or adults—who may not have the opportunity to enjoy foods like lamb, filet mignon, or salmon. When we have those items left over, being able to share them is incredibly special. It’s more than just a meal; it’s a chance to connect through food and love.”

Chef Melissa McKnight - Omni Grove Park Inn
(pictured above)

OUR CHEF PARTNERS HELP US TURN ABUNDANCE INTO ACCESS ON A LARGE SCALE

112 TONS OF NUTRITIOUS FOOD IN 2025

- Asheville School
- Asheville Yards
- Bonclarken Center
- YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly
- Cragmont Assembly
- Camp Grier Summer Camp
- Camp Green Cove Summer Camp
- Care Partners
- Celine and Company
- Deerfield Retirement Center
- Eagle's Nest Camp
- Each One Teach One Through Food, Inc.
- Grassroots Aid Partnership
- Givens Highland Farms
- Gwynn Valley
- Highland Brewing Company
- Montreat Conference Center
- Mercy Chefs
- Mission Hospital
- Meals on Wheels
- Omni Grove Park Inn
- Orange Peel
- Pie.Zaa
- Ridgecrest Conference Center
- Sweeten Creek Mental Health and Wellness
- Sierra Nevada
- The Venue
- Asheville Independent Restaurants' Taste of Asheville
- UNCA University of North Carolina Asheville
- World Central Kitchen
- Warren Wilson College
- YMI Cultural Center
- Asheville Forager
- Black Bear BBQ
- Catering by Corey
- Chai Pani
- Cheddar's
- Celine and Company
- Dining Innovations
- Everyday Gourmet
- Fioreously Delicious
- French Broad Food Co-Op
- Gypsy Queen
- Grush's Cajun Dino Grill
- Luella's BBQ
- Longhorn Steakhouse
- Mission Hospital
- MiKasa Criolla
- Owl Bakery
- Omni Grove Park Inn
- Pack's Tavern
- Pie.Zaa
- Renaissance Asheville Downtown Hotel
- Restoration Hotel
- Red Radish
- Rocky's Hot Chicken Shack
- Starbucks
- Smash Events
- Salt Face Mule
- Sage and Spice
- The Farm
- The Hound
- Terramonga
- Vortex Doughnuts
- Whole Foods
- YMCA of Western North Carolina



Tuesday Mobile Meals distribution in Fairview
(All are welcome)

MOBILE MEALS

Beyond the Busline

5 weekly distributions-open to all with no questions asked-sharing meals with our neighbors living in areas with limited resources. 50% of these recipients are our elder neighbors.

Community Connectors

Engaging community members who take meals the final mile-directly to those in need.

Recovery Program

Supporting the health and wellbeing of our neighbors overcoming mental health and substance use challenges.

Elder Program

Connecting meals to our elder community who are living on fixed incomes and faced with health challenges.

Youth and Families Program

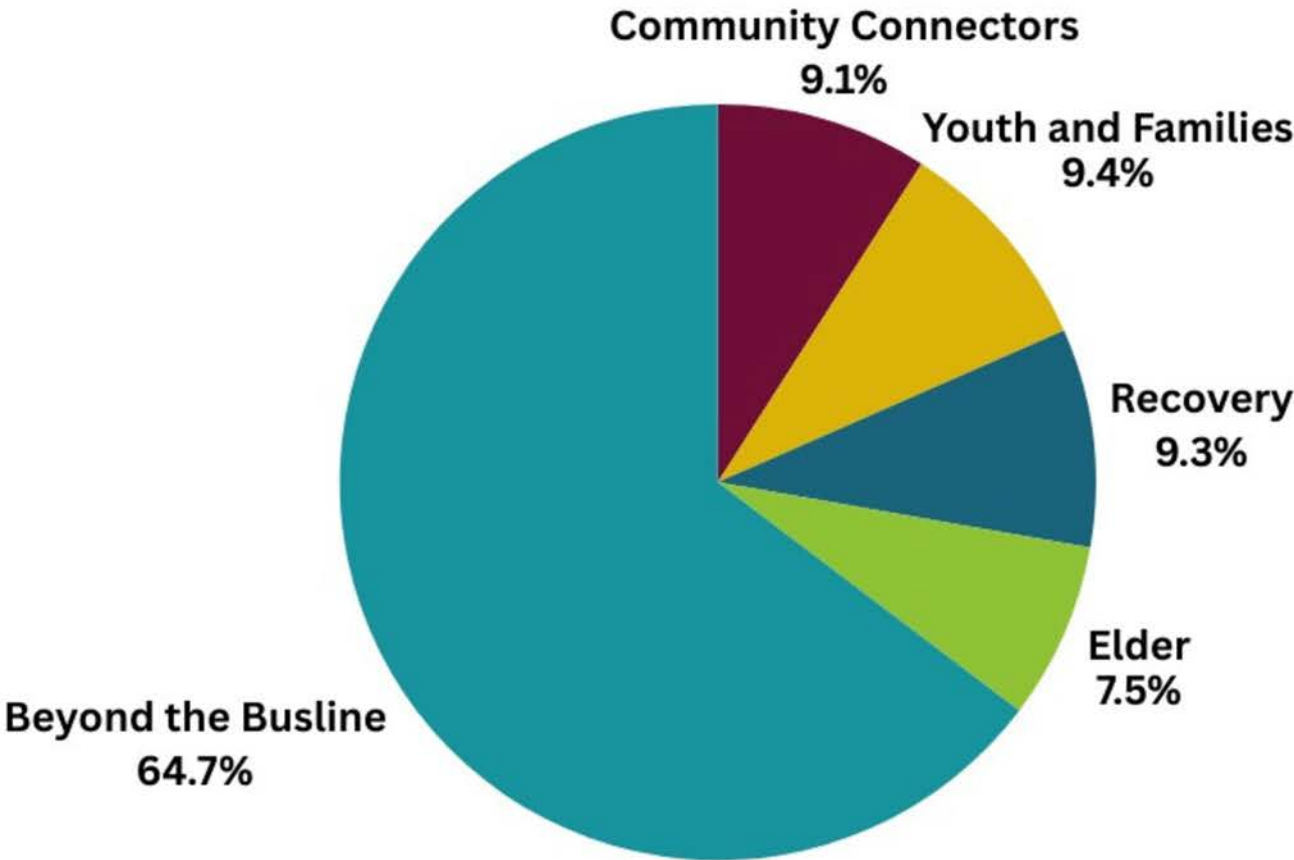
Serving families, teachers and staff at affordable afterschool, early learning centers and direct service providers.



106,171 MOBILE MEALS SERVED IN 2025

Our Mobile Meals program delivers individual, heat-and-serve meals directly into the community—meeting people where they are with care and consistency. More than a meal, each delivery represents connection, dignity and choice.

By offering a menu of thoughtfully prepared options, we honor personal preferences and the simple but powerful act of choosing what to eat. As we share meals, we also build relationships—creating moments of conversation, trust and hope that nourish far beyond the plate.





Delivering food to
Western Carolina Rescue Ministries

AGENCY PARTNERS

120,022 AGENCY MEALS SERVED IN 2025

By providing chef-prepared nutritious food, Food Connection makes a significant impact on the agencies we serve, including shelters, faith-based communities and nonprofits partners. This support allows these organizations to redirect their resources towards other critical programs, enhancing their overall capacity to serve those in need.

Through our partnerships, we foster a sense of solidarity within the community, ensuring that these agencies can focus on their core missions while we handle the complexities of food sourcing and logistics. Together, we create a stronger,

“After Helene we received over 15,000 of their delicious meals. Eleven large deliveries were delivered to us in just six days. This high quality heat and serve food came just in the nick of time.”

**-LaQuita Pickens
Western Carolina Rescue Mission**

BUNCOMBE

- ABCCM Costello House
- ABCCM Daily Bread @ Sunrise
- ABCCM Downtown Crisis Ministry
- ABCCM Hominy Valley Crisis Ministry
- ABCCM South Crisis Ministry
- ABCCM Transformation Village
- ABCCM Veterans Restoration Quarter
- AHOPE Day Center (Homeward Bound)
- Asheville FM
- Asheville Poverty Initiative 12 Baskets Cafe
- Bell United Methodist Church
- Big Ivy Community Center
- Black Mountain Helene Distribution Center
- Black Mountain Home for Children
- Black Mountain Open Table
- Blue Ridge Apartments Agency
- Bounty & Soul
- Bounty and Soul
- Cathedral of All Souls Church
- Collins Center
- Compass Point
- Deep Time Coffee
- Dream Center
- East Asheville Welcome Table
- Emmanuel Lutheran Church
- Equal Plates Project
- Food For Fairview
- Food Waste Solutions
- Francis Asbury United Methodist Church
- Givens Gerber Park
- Haywood St. Respite
- Hearts with Hands
- Hope for Tomorrow
- LEAF Community Arts
- Leicester Community Center
- Lighthouse Foundation Agency
- Loving Food Resources Agency
- Lunch at Crossroads First Baptist Church AVL
- Unete's MANOS Program
- Mercy Chefs
- Montessori Learning Community of Asheville
- Mountain Aging Partners (Meals on Wheels)
- OpenDoors
- Pandemic of Love

- Safe Shelter by Trinity UMC
- Sage and Spice
- Salvation Army
- Sandhill Kitchen
- Search and Rescue
- St. James Church Food Pantry
- Street Outreach Asheville
- Sunrise Community Center Agency
- Sunrise Respite / Blair Clark Respite
- Swannanoa Valley Christian Ministry
- Umoja
- Western North Carolina Rescue Ministries
- Youth OUTright

HENDERSON

- Amazing Grace Ministries Vintage and Thrift Shoppe
- Back on Track Addiction Ministries
- Boys and Girls Club Henderson County
- Hendersonville Rescue Mission
- Hope United Methodist Church
- Interfaith Assistance Ministry - Food Distribution Center
- Lighthouse Recovery House Hendersonville
- Love and Respect Community for Recovery and Wellness
- Love's Kitchen First Baptist Church
- MANNA FoodBank
- Oxford House Respite
- Providence Baptist Church
- Safelight

MCDOWELL

- BEAR Closet in Marion

TRANSYLVANIA

- Bread of Life

HAYWOOD

- Behavioral Health Group
- Friendly Fields Farm Sanctuary



VOLUNTEER DRIVEN

ECONOMIC IMPACT

\$213,855*



Volunteers from Hawthorne Residential Partners packing meals

“It’s meaningful work that connects sustainability with compassion. And it connects me to the awesome Food Connection staff and team of volunteers!”

-Volunteer Keith McCawley



275 Individual Volunteers
contributed
6,478.5 hours in 2025

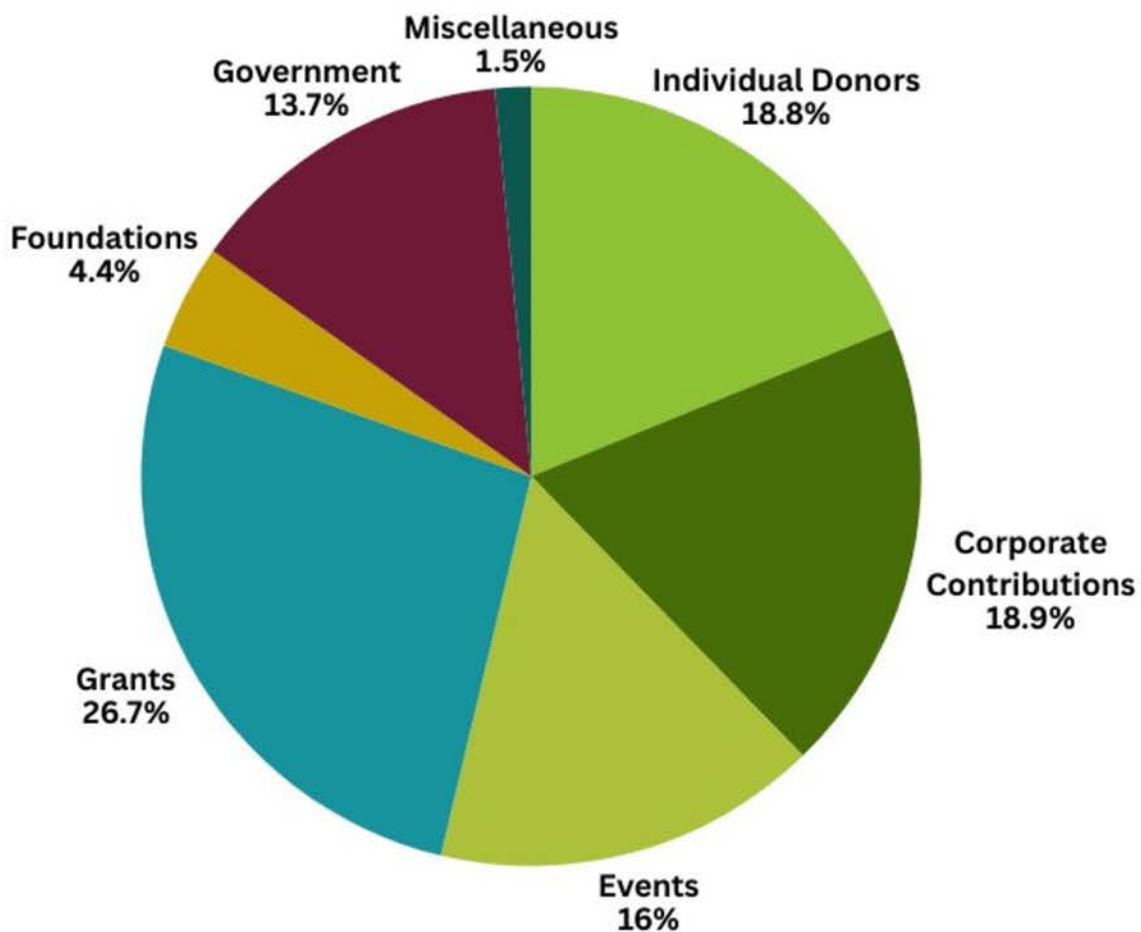


*\$33.01/hr Source: Independent Sector



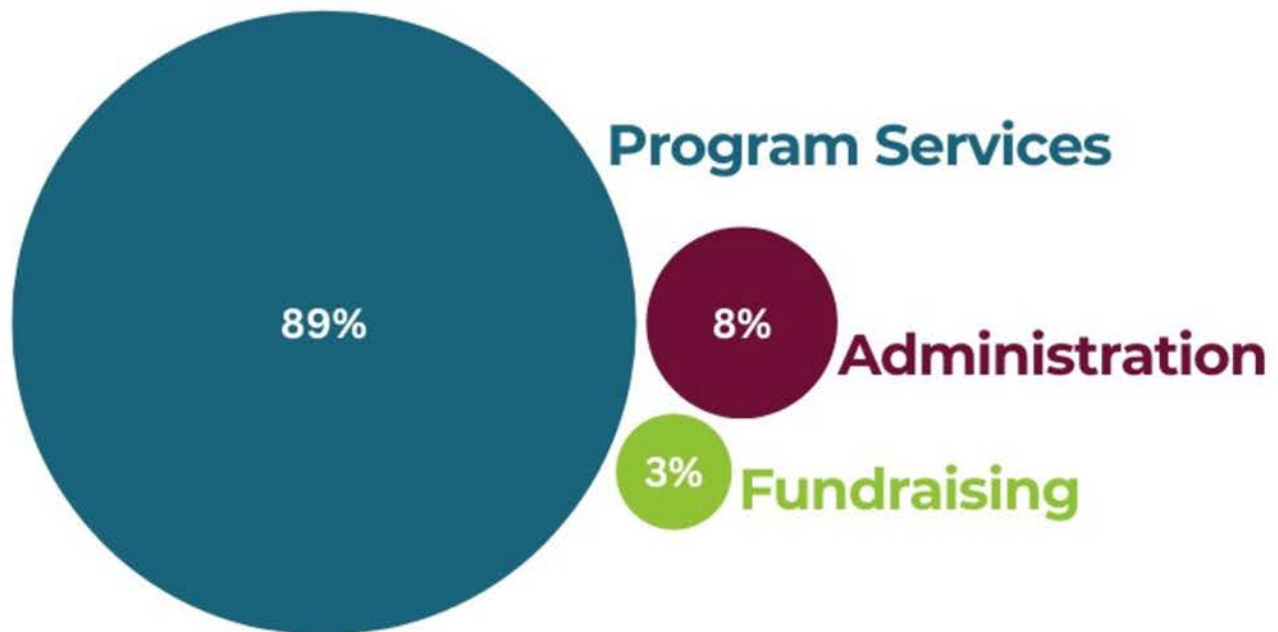
2025 FINANCIALS

\$1,915,000
in donated food





FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES



CONDENSED FINANCIALS

Total Revenue	\$3,135,560
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Total Expenses	\$2,766,974
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Net Revenue	\$368,586
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Team from Mission Health, sponsors of Chefs in Action 2025

Financial Supporters



“At Quility, we believe sufficiency isn't about having more—it's about recognizing that there is already enough when communities choose to care for one another. Food Connection lives that truth every day, turning rescued food into nourishment and hope for our neighbors. **We are proud to support an organization that reminds us the path to a sufficient world begins with connection.**”

Meredith Ellison - Quility
Corporate Sponsor

“At Best Buy Metals, we believe the strongest communities are built when neighbors show up for neighbors. Food Connection turns that belief into action every day. **Supporting their mission is simply part of being a good neighbor.**”

Tammy Potter - Best Buy Metals
Corporate Sponsor



Our work is made possible through the support of individual donors, family foundations, grants, local businesses and corporations.





“Food Connection is part of our annual giving because we believe everyone deserves access to delicious, fresh meals. Their work turns what could have been waste into dignity, nourishment, and hope for families, seniors, veterans and more.”

Nicole & Jenna Katz
Annual supporters

“We’ve been donating monthly to Food Connection since 2023, having followed the wonderful work of the organization since its inception. Food Connection represents a perfect intersection of our values: preventing waste, meeting the needs of food-insecure neighbors, and plugging in deeply to local businesses and partners. They have earned our trust and that of the entire community, and we’re so proud to be a small part of supporting their work!”





Why reducing food waste is critical for the health of our planet



Water Savings

It takes roughly 1 MILLION gallons of water to produce 160,000 lbs of food.



Methane Avoidance

Keeping 160,000 lbs of food out of the landfill is equivalent to taking 30 gasoline fueled vehicles off of the road for an entire year.



Tree Based Carbon Absorption

Reducing 160,000 lbs of food waste from landfills is like planting 1,000 to 1,200 trees to absorb CO₂. These trees would take about 20 years to sequester the same amount of CO₂ as the food waste reduction.



FOR THE PLANET: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

**In 2025 Food Connection rescued
224,030 pounds of fresh food**

Food Connection's efforts to rescue prepared food and redistribute it help reduce food waste, which is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.

Our work reduces the environmental impact of landfills and decreases the resources required to produce new food. This approach promotes a more sustainable food system, conserves natural resources, and supports a healthier planet.

**In the first ten years Food Connection
diverted 886,242 pounds (443 TONS)
of chef-prepared food from the landfill.**



Flori Pate (Founder) with Marisha MacMorran (Executive Director)

A DECADE OF IMPACT

When Food Connection first began, we served just a few thousand meals in our inaugural year. In 2025, we reached an exciting milestone—**serving our 1 millionth meal!**

Over the past decade, we have expanded our impact in meaningful ways, including launching our Mobile Meals program, growing our staff from 2 to 16 team members, and building a fleet of four vehicles to support food rescue and distribution efforts.

Most importantly, we have shared countless moments of love, dignity, and hope with our neighbors throughout our community.

2025

2015



LEADERSHIP

2025 Board of Directors

Ian Rudick, Chair

Whitney Rea, Vice Chair

Nora Latta, Treasurer

Terry Foley, Secretary

Jeff Eatherly

John Hash

Mike Schreder

Dave Rubin

Mike Fitzpatrick

Cathy Pidek

Karl Hosler



HURRICANE HELENE

In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Helene, Food Connection swiftly mobilized as our region faced widespread power and water outages. Recognizing the urgency, we rescued fresh produce, meats, and other essential supplies that were at risk of spoilage. Partnering with local relief organizations, our team ensured that these critical resources reached neighbors in need, providing nourishing meals and stability during a time of crisis.

What became clear in those early days—and remains true today—is that recovery does not happen overnight. For families experiencing home damage, displacement, or interruptions in employment, the path back to stability can take months, even years. Long after headlines fade and power is restored, the need for reliable access to food continues. We remain committed not only to immediate response, but to walking alongside our community in the long-term recovery process, strengthening resilience and connection across Western North Carolina.

**Together, we demonstrated what is possible
when compassion turns into action.**



Fairview Community Members picking up meals after Helene and taking them by ATV, dirt bikes and on foot to neighbors whom no one else could reach

RESPONSE

21,000 Fresh Meals in 30 Days

We are deeply grateful for the extraordinary support that poured in from across North Carolina. Food donors, nonprofit partners, businesses, and individuals sent food, funds, and encouragement to help our region navigate the immediate aftermath. That outpouring of care reminded us that in moments of crisis, community extends far beyond county lines.

26 Mobile Meal Distribution Sites

30 Agency Partner Recipients



Lovingly designed by
Founder, Flori Pate

Menu

Pork Cerdo
Chicken Pollo
Beef Carne de Res
Veggie Vegetables
Turkey
Extras

**THANK YOU
FOR BEING ON
THIS JOURNEY
WITH US!**



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