

30 Years of the Alaska Food Coalition

In 1996, food advocates from Fairbanks, Wasilla, Palmer, Dillingham, Kodiak, Bethel, Nome, Juneau, and Anchorage began comparing notes. Their communities were far apart, but many were running into the same barriers to getting food to Alaskans who needed it.

That grassroots effort became the Alaska Food Coalition.

Thirty years later, the coalition connects food banks, pantries, meal programs, tribal organizations, and advocates across the state. Members share what they are seeing in their communities and learn what is working elsewhere. They also bring local experience into conversations about statewide policy.

That matters in a state as large and varied as Alaska. Food insecurity may look different in Bethel than it does in Anchorage, but no region is untouched. When coalition members speak with lawmakers, they can show how a single policy decision affects communities from Southeast Alaska to the Arctic.

Today, 1 in 6 Alaskans experiences food insecurity. Thirty years after its first members gathered, Alaska still needs a strong statewide coalition asking hard questions and pushing for practical solutions.

Join the Alaska Food Coalition at foodbankofalaska.org/afc



Food Bank of Alaska is a proud member and fiscal sponsor of the Alaska Food Coalition.



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SEPTEMBER IS

Hunger Action Month



One thing at a time, we can make a difference for Alaskans facing hunger.

OCTOBER



DINE OUT
AGAINST HUNGER

October 22–29

NOVEMBER

Thanksgiving Events

Cordova
November 18

Mat-Su Blessing
November 21

Anchorage Blessing
November 23

Scan here to get **Food Bank of Alaska** news and ways to help delivered to your inbox.



ANC RESTAURANT WEEK



Anchorage Restaurant Week returns October 22-29, bringing local restaurants and diners together to support Food Bank of Alaska. Enjoy special menus, try a new restaurant, and help provide food for Alaskans facing hunger.

OCT. 22-29

DINE OUT
AGAINST HUNGER

FOODBANKOFALASKA.ORG/ARW



Keeping Food Moving as Need Grows

Nearly five decades into this work, Food Bank of Alaska has moved food through good years, difficult years, and emergencies. Right now, the pressure is coming from several directions at once.

More Alaskans are asking for help, while food and freight cost more. Changes to SNAP may also leave some households with more paperwork and fewer places to turn when something goes wrong.

The latest data estimates that 1 in 6 Alaskans experiences food insecurity. Our partner agencies were seeing the increase before the statewide numbers caught up. They see it in longer distribution lines and in families visiting a pantry for the first time.

That pressure reaches our warehouse, too. We are purchasing more food because fewer donated products are available. Then we must pay to move that food across a state where many communities can only be reached by air or water.

Food Bank of Alaska can respond because hundreds of organizations and individuals are already part of the work.

Local pantries know their communities. Transportation partners like Matson and TOTE help us bring food to Alaska, while our statewide network helps us get it where it needs to go. Donors give us the flexibility to act when circumstances change.

And sometimes, we have to pivot. An emergency can create a need we did not see coming, while an unexpected donation or new opportunity to purchase food can help us respond quickly. **That ability to adapt means we can act when our communities need us most.**

In this newsletter, you will see what the newest hunger data tells us and what it costs to reach communities across Alaska. You will also learn about changes coming to SNAP.

Thank you for helping us buy food when donations run short and cover freight when the last mile is especially expensive.



Cara Durr
Chief Executive Officer
Food Bank of Alaska

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Our Mission Food Bank of Alaska is dedicated to eliminating hunger in Alaska by obtaining and providing food to partner agencies feeding hungry people and through anti-hunger leadership. We believe that no one deserves to be hungry.

A Record High After Years of Rising Need

New data confirms what food pantries across Alaska have been seeing: more people need help affording enough food.

Feeding America's latest Map the Meal Gap study estimates that 115,780 Alaskans experienced food insecurity in 2024. That is 15.6% of the state's population, or about 1 out of every 6 people.

It is the highest Alaska rate recorded since the study began using 2009 data.

The statewide average does not tell the whole story. Food insecurity is increasing among children and older adults. Black, Hispanic, and Alaska Native Alaskans continue to experience disproportionately high rates. Some of the highest rates are found in rural and remote communities, where nearly every household expense is higher.



Volunteers at a Mobile Food Pantry distributed milk and other groceries to local families this summer.

How Food Bank of Alaska Responds

Last year, Food Bank of Alaska distributed 10.1 million pounds of food statewide.

That food reached Alaskans through more than 150 partner agencies, including local pantries and mobile food distributions. Senior food programs and organizations distributing federal food through TEFAP are also part of the network.

Your support helps Food Bank of Alaska purchase food when donated supplies fall short and cover the cost of moving it across Alaska.

The same warehouse and transportation relationships are available when a disaster interrupts normal supply routes. Local partners tell us what their communities need, and Food Bank of Alaska works to get it there.

For many families, the problem is simple: household income does not cover household costs. Rent must be paid. Fuel is necessary for getting to work. Food becomes the part of the budget that can be reduced, even when there was not enough in the cart to begin with.

The newest Map the Meal Gap findings describe conditions in 2024. They do not yet capture the economic pressure families have faced since then or the effects of newer changes to federal nutrition programs.

Local food programs are already seeing those pressures in longer distribution lines and more first-time visitors.

What It Costs to Move Food Across Alaska

It's Not Just the Food. It's the Freight.

A gallon of milk was \$12.67 in Kotzebue last fall. The milk itself was only part of that price.

The rest reflected what it took to get it there: fuel, freight, storage, and the final trip into a community far from Alaska's road system. Many communities can only be reached by air or water. Every mile impacts what it costs to move food, especially when distance, weather, and limited transportation options add complexity.

During Food Bank of Alaska's response following the remnants of Typhoon Halong, we shipped three containers of food to western Alaska. Each held enough food for about 27,500 meals valued at approximately \$40,000.

The final leg of the trip cost roughly \$16,000 for one container of food. That was freight alone at 40% of the cost of the food.

At the same time, food donations continue to decline nationally. As inventory management becomes more efficient, there is less surplus available to food banks nationwide.

Three years ago, Food Bank of Alaska purchased approximately 10% of the food we distributed. Today, we estimate that purchased food accounts for about 20%.

We are paying for more of the food and more of its journey across Alaska.

As economic pressures increase and our operations continue to be impacted, we rely even more heavily on the financial support of our community. And although economic pressures mean that the dollar does not stretch as far today as it once did, our purchasing power remains strong. Financial gifts go further because of our network of in-kind support in food and transportation, the volunteer hours our community provides, and the purchasing power we have through Feeding America, which helps to stretch each dollar.

In 2025, Food Bank of Alaska distributed 10.1 million pounds of food statewide, a jump from 7.9 million in 2024 – a testament to both the need and the incredible response from our community. Moving that much food across Alaska comes with a cost far beyond the food itself. Donors helped pay for both the food and the distance.

The cost of moving food across Alaska is part of what makes hunger so difficult to address in our state. Your support helps Food Bank of Alaska purchase food, cover freight, and keep deliveries moving to the growing number of neighbors and communities in need.

When more Alaskans need help, every action matters.

Volunteer, give, or speak up for Alaskans facing hunger.

Visit foodbankofalaska.org or scan the QR code to take action.



SNAP Rules Are Changing

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, commonly known as SNAP, helps more than 65,000 Alaskans afford groceries each month. In rural communities, where food costs are often highest, SNAP also brings federal food dollars into the local economy.

Federal changes are coming to the program. H.R. 1, signed into law on July 4, 2025, will gradually expand work reporting requirements for some adults and parents, change some eligibility rules, and give states new administrative responsibilities.

For households, that could mean more notices and deadlines to track. A missed form or reporting deadline could interrupt the grocery benefits a family relies on.



SNAP helps Alaskans afford the groceries that work best for their households.

Food Bank of Alaska's SNAP Outreach team works with the Alaska Division of Public Assistance to help eligible Alaskans understand the program, apply, and complete recertification.

As the new rules take effect, clear information and application support will become even more important.

SNAP remains one of Alaska's most important tools for helping households afford food. Food Bank of Alaska will continue helping Alaskans access available benefits and speaking up when policies make that access harder.

Learn more at foodbankofalaska.org/snap.