

Your IMPACT



FOOD BANK
of ALASKA

A Grateful Client

During the pandemic, Bern learned of the Mobile Food Pantry (MFP) through a neighbor who often shared whatever they could with him. This eventually led him to learn how Food Bank of Alaska supports numerous programs in communities across Alaska. He signed up for Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) also known as Senior Boxes in September of 2021. He now receives those each month and visits MFPs when he can access transportation.

In 2006, after an intensive neck surgery, Bern was left in the position of having to collect disability insurance. He managed to keep afloat for years, using his savings as a backup. As time progressed, those savings dwindled. Eventually he had to give up on having a car, because insurance and upkeep deemed this

no longer feasible. He now relies on public transportation for the most part. When you have serious medical issues, as he does, that means ongoing doctor appointments. Relying on the city bus and schedules often means a very long day just getting to and from an appointment or a stop at the grocery store.

At a time when his health reached a low point, he did try home delivery of meals, but this was not the best fit for him. Having

to leave home quite frequently for doctor's appointments and relying on public transport meant he often missed delivery times. Bern also used Anchor Rides a few times, but because he still has the ability to walk and ride public transport, he would rather free this up for people in greater need.

In the past, Bern was able to carry a good amount of groceries home, but over the past few years this has been a bit more

difficult. He has adapted by making more frequent visits enabling him to carry less each trip.

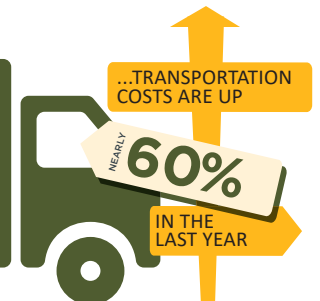
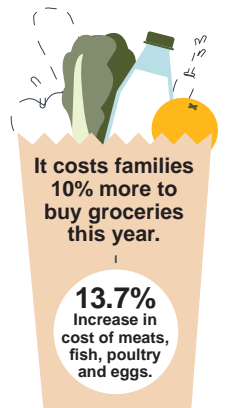
Accessing the MFPs and Senior Box Program have been a great relief both financially and physically. Bern has recently looked into volunteering at Food Bank of Alaska to show his support for the organization. His mobility and transportation issues have hampered his ability to see this through at this time, but not his spirit of wanting to give back. Even with his own current health issues, Bern has been doing his best to help a friend currently undergoing cancer treatment. Having a little relief in one area of your life (having food to eat), can ease your mind and enable you to help others in some way.



Bern Pedit

Rising Costs for Families and Food Banks

Households that are low-income spend nearly one-third of their budget on food.



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Outreach in Hoonah, Alaska

An alert on Miguel's phone goes off as he shows us around the Conex freezers at the tribal offices. "Another bear was spotted by Eagle Drive," he says. With a bit of confusion, my colleagues and I asked how he knew? We then learned that Hoonah uses the Nixle public safety alerts to keep their community members aware of bear activity on the streets. This was not the last time we would hear about these bear alerts during our visit as it was something everyone was excited to talk about.

Hoonah, Alaska (Gaawt'al.aan or Xu.nna), the "village by the cliff," was permanently settled in 1754 by the Huna Tlingit people of Glacier Bay. Today, it is home to around 931 residents, 42% of which are Alaskan Native. To visitors like myself, Hoonah may seem like its virgin beginnings. Bears still roam around the town, and clear waters expose otters, seals, and salmon to those watching from shore.

We loaded up in the back of Miguel's truck and took a ride up to the Salvation Army on Eagle Drive. It was a short walk up a couple flights of stairs, but because of the bears, we took the ride. Right when we pulled up, we were introduced to Ida Jean Brown, an Alaskan Native elder passionate about sharing her story to reach whoever will listen and spark change. It was not just Ida Jean we were introduced to while we waited outside the church; we got introduced to her 11-year-old grandson she is raising who is taller than her now and eager to tell us all about his amazing life in Hoonah along with all the good bear stories from the last couple of years.

When we got inside, Ida Jean, soon to be 66, sat down with me to discuss what her struggles are with food insecurity living off the road system in Southeast Alaska. Ida Jean has eight children she raised in Hoonah and now is a grandmother to her three grandchildren. When she was younger, she worked for the log ships. It was a good gig working four days out of the month and she was able to pay off her house in just 10 years until it led to a workplace injury. She recently had major neck and back surgery which has required her to fly to Anchorage regularly for follow up care. With the travel, she has missed many opportunities this year to forage for springtime commodities like fiddleheads and devil's club buds. She hopes that after the estimated year-long recovery from her recent surgeries, she will get in for hip and knee replacements as well.

Ida Jean says that she lives off the land a lot because of the unaffordable prices at the store.

She struggles with the soaring prices of basic commodities from the local store – sometimes paying \$60 for a 20-pound bag of rice, \$14 for a pound of celery and \$13 for a gallon of milk. Ida Jean says that she lives off the land a lot because of the unaffordable prices at the store. Last year, her Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and PFD did not come in but she was able to put up 69 cases of fish, deer meat, berries, and seal fat which lasted her all winter. Her son Frank, who lives with her and helps take care of her, hunts deer



Rebecca, Olivia, Miguel, and Gus (FBA Staff with the Hoonah Youth Center) outside their dry Conex storage.

and gets fish to help their family and community. As an elder, she can give her fish quota to younger fishers to catch fish on her behalf. Thankfully, there is a small community that will still help their elders get their subsistence when needed.

I asked if Frank or Ida had ever used SNAP benefits to buy subsistence commodities, but she had not known that was an option. She talks about how when they were both working, they had been able to buy their own nets and get a skiff, but now they cannot afford to get up-to-date tags, so it mostly sits. She said that most of the hunters in the community get all their food from subsistence. When she receives SNAP, it only pays for the basics. To get food from outside the community it costs \$160 one-way to leave Hoonah by plane. "Back in the day, it cost only \$15 to get a flight to Juneau," she said. Now online grocery delivery is utilized but has barriers. All their fresh produce comes in on the plane which raises prices at the Hoonah Trading Company Store.

Ida Jean has done her best to start her own garden to get fresh produce growing – rhubarb, cauliflower, zucchini, tomatoes, and raspberries – with the short growing season of mid-June to late August. She said, "That's what we do, live off the land." She is trying to teach the younger generation how she is still able to utilize more from the land. She proudly said, "I used to be able to skin a seal in less than 45 minutes but now I have a hard time filleting my own fish after all those years of working." Her son Frank tells her he is proud that he knows how to live off the land from what she has taught him and that he will never go hungry because of that.

This summer, the Hoonah Youth Center started feeding summer meals to children through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). We hope to continue providing meals for the school year utilizing the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Additionally, Food Bank of Alaska is currently working to find a partner to bring in The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP).

○ Hoonah, AK

ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT

Online SNAP Access for Alaska

Alaska is one of only two states that does not have an online Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) application. This has posed particularly significant barriers to Alaskans who do not have access to these applications for a variety of reasons including not having printing capabilities and not having a Division of Public Assistance office in their community. HB 168 creates an online application for state benefits including SNAP. This will allow Alaskans to more universally access SNAP and other important services, reduce the long application process, and cut down on the high administrative burden and costs both for Food Bank of Alaska (FBA) SNAP team and the state Division of Public Assistance.



Governor Mike Dunleavy signing HB 168.

2022 Capital Budget Food Security Wins

Governor Mike Dunleavy finalized the state budget on June 28th, and we are excited to share some incredible wins for food security! This budget represents a substantial investment in Alaska's food security and includes:

- \$10 million for statewide food bank/pantry infrastructure
- \$500,000 to Alaska Farmers Market Association for SNAP/WIC/Senior coupon doubling
- \$600,000 to DEED for Start-up & Expansion of School Breakfast Programs
- \$3 million to DNR for a Food Security Agriculture Incentive Grant Program

Food Bank of Alaska and our partners have seen unprecedented levels of food insecurity over the last two years in face of a global pandemic, rising costs, economic uncertainty, and supply chain disruptions. These capital budget investments act as a recognition that no Alaskan deserves to be hungry and will allow us to better serve our communities.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Alaska Legislature for including these important items in their budget, and to the Governor for supporting them. The success of these budget requests was made possible with the help of our partners and so many incredible advocates from across the state who participated in legislative meetings, submitted written comments, testified to committees, and engaged in this process. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to ending hunger in Alaska!

FBA Advocacy Team in Washington, D.C.

Chief of Advocacy and Public Policy Cara Durr and Policy and Advocacy Manager Ron Meehan travelled to Washington, D.C. for the first time since the start of the pandemic this June. They attended meetings and receptions with national partners at the Food Research and Action Center and Feeding America along with state anti-hunger leaders from across the country. They also had the opportunity to meet with Senators Dan Sullivan and Lisa Murkowski to discuss the impacts of rising costs, supply chain disruptions, and elevated levels of food insecurity on Alaska's anti-hunger network. We are excited that shortly after our visit the Keep Kids Fed Act was passed unanimously by Congress, which addresses some of the issues we highlighted during our visit. This timely bill provides schools, summer meal sites, and childcare food programs with extra resources and flexibilities so they can continue serving children through school year 2022-2023.

Senator Lisa Murkowski with Ron, Cara, and Bean's Café CEO Lisa Sauder.





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Sept. is Hunger Action Month!

Food shouldn't be an impossible choice! This September we ask you to join us with actions that help end hunger. Visit our website to learn more and download our calendar.

15th

FBA Open House

Visit our new facility and see how your support is making our mission possible.

23rd

Hunger Action Day

A day when collective efforts across the country are focused for greater impact.

Summer Meals Program: Bethel 4-H

Bethel 4-H is one of Food Bank of Alaska's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) partners. SFSP is a federal program that provides meals to children who are 18 or younger over the summer months while school is out. Bethel 4-H connects kids to service projects and activities in the community while providing them with a meal. This summer, they are projected to serve approximately 640 meals between June and August. Ronda Phillips, the Bethel 4-H Program Administrator, in addition to serving children meals, has a program for young teens in the community where they can join the teen counselors and help with projects like serving meals to the children. One of their projects this summer is to paint some of the public dumpsters in their community and work with youth in the garden. With the continuing rise of COVID-19 in Bethel, it has been a struggle for Bethel 4-H to grow their summer food program. They have a sign that gets placed on their door daily that states the maximum number of children they can have in the building. If the COVID-19 cases enter the "red status" (high levels), they would have to limit how many children could enter the building until numbers go back down. Thankfully, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) provided a waiver that allows our SFSP sites like Bethel 4-H to have parents pick up meals or deliver when COVID-19 locks down the community. The COVID-19 statistics tend to have a wave-like pattern from week to week; one week will be high, the next will be low. This makes it difficult for Bethel 4-H to plan their activities and distributions because there is no predictability, but they have made it work despite the pandemic. Bethel 4-H is committed to serving the children and teens in the community, as well as encouraging positivity and enrichment.



Ronda Phillips and 14 year old Lynnette Hoelscher help pass out meals to the younger children with Bethel 4-H.