



News Release

Contact: Heather Collier
573-475-7573
hcollier@semofoodbank.org

SEMO Food Bank Distributed 14.16 Million Pounds of Food in 2024 Amid Higher Food Insecurity

SIKESTON, MO (March 7, 2025) – Southeast Missouri Food Bank distributed 14.16 million pounds of food, providing 12.88 million meals, to neighbors facing hunger in 2024.

“Food insecurity increased, nationwide and locally, last year,” said Joey Keys, chief executive officer of Southeast Missouri Food Bank. “We’re thankful that with support of our donors and partners, we were able to continue working to meet the need of our neighbors facing hunger, but we know there is more work to do. As the need for food assistance grows, we know it is important to adapt to meet that challenge and ensure everyone has access to food, which we all need to thrive.”

To that end, in the second half of 2024, SEMO Food Bank’s staff worked with a grant-funded consultant to develop a three-year strategic plan.

“Our staff spent months analyzing data, reviewing operations, and exploring ways to serve our neighbors more effectively,” Keys said. “The result is a plan with a clear vision that keeps the needs of the individuals we serve at the forefront. I know 2025 is going to be an exciting year for us, especially because it also marks our 40th anniversary.”

The food bank serves families, children, veterans and seniors through a network of 140 partner agencies and direct-service programs in a 16-county service area. Southeast Missouri has some of the highest rates of hunger in Missouri, with 1 in 6 individuals, 1 in 5 children and 1 in 8 seniors living in homes that are food insecure. Seven of the 10 most food-insecure counties in the state are in southeast Missouri.

Other highlights from 2024 include:

- Providing monthly food boxes to 5,575 senior citizens
- Partnering with local school districts to provide food for the weekend to 1,119 students

- Distributing more than 2.6 million pounds of fresh produce, donated in part by local farmers and growers
- Holding 314 mobile food distributions, each providing 200 families with nutritious food

You can find the food bank's complete 2024 Annual Report online at <https://semofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Annual-Report-2024.pdf>

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About Southeast Missouri Food Bank

The mission of Southeast Missouri Food Bank is to end hunger and leverage the power of food to build healthy communities. The food bank provides food to 140 charitable and disaster relief programs in Southeast Missouri. These member agencies include food pantries, soup kitchens, domestic violence and homeless shelters. Southeast Missouri Food Bank also holds regular mobile food distributions and provides monthly boxes of food to 5,575 senior citizens and weekend backpacks of food during the school year to 1,200 students in 28 school districts. The food bank's 16-county coverage area includes Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Dunklin, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Reynolds, Ripley, Scott, Ste. Genevieve, Stoddard and Wayne counties. Those interested in helping can do so by making a tax-deductible contribution, donating food, or scheduling a time to volunteer. Visit semofoodbank.org for more information.