



News Release
For Immediate Release
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SEMO FOOD BANK'S SUMMER MEALS FOR KIDS CAMPAIGN SURPASSES GOAL, RAISES MORE THAN \$80,000

Sikeston, MO (Aug. 5, 2026) – Thanks to the generosity of individuals, businesses and community partners across Southeast Missouri, Southeast Missouri Food Bank's Summer Meals for Kids Campaign exceeded its goal, raising more than \$80,000 to help provide more than 320,000 meals for children and families during the summer months.

By the end of the campaign, community support had far surpassed the goal of providing 200,000 meals to families and children who lose access to school breakfast and lunch programs during the summer months.

"The response from our community shows what happens when neighbors come together with a shared purpose," said Clay Schermann, Chief Development Officer for Southeast Missouri Food Bank. "Every donation, every partnership and every act of generosity helped ensure more families had food on the table this summer. We are incredibly grateful for everyone who stepped up to support local families. While this campaign has come to a close, the need continues, and we're excited to keep working alongside our communities to make sure children and families have the food they need throughout the year."

The need remains significant. Newly released USDA food insecurity data shows that more than 20,000 children in Southeast Missouri experienced food insecurity in 2024, up from about 18,000 children the year before.

For parents like Bethany in Pemiscot County, summer means stretching every grocery dollar a little further.

"My girls, they want to eat all day long," Bethany said with a laugh at a SEMO Food Bank distribution. "Through the summer, I have to actually plan the meals out and cook bigger meals because everybody's at the house."

Her experience reflects what many families across Southeast Missouri face when school is out and the meals children normally receive at school are no longer available.

Over the summer, SEMO Food Bank conducted and scheduled more than 60 mobile food distributions, including 15 A Better Childhood (ABC) Mobile Pantry distributions that support families with school-age children. These distributions delivered nutritious food directly to communities, helping families fill the gap left when school breakfast and lunch programs were unavailable.

Community members also found other ways to help. Harps Food Stores customers in SEMO Food Bank's service area purchased 294 Summer Blessing Bags, filled with kid-friendly food items that were distributed through local food pantries serving the same communities where the donations were collected.

SEMO Food Bank serves families, children, veterans and seniors through a network of 140 partner agencies and direct-service programs across a 16-county service area. Southeast Missouri has some of the highest rates of hunger in Missouri, with 1 in 5 individuals, 1 in 4 children and 1 in 8 seniors living in homes that are food insecure. The six most food-insecure counties in the state are in Southeast Missouri. To learn more, visit semofoodbank.org.

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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 5,600 senior citizens and weekend backpacks of food during the school year to 1,100 students in area 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.