

FOOD

FOR THOUGHT



GOD'S PANTRY FOOD BANK LOOKS TO A STRONG FOUNDATION IN 2026

A Letter From the CEO

Your generosity in 2025 brought hope to thousands of neighbors facing food insecurity in Central and Eastern Kentucky. In the face of steep challenges, our community showed up in a big way! **In 2025, donors like you provided food to 279,580 people, serving over 41 million meals.**

In rural communities, hardship seems to hit even closer to home. Families across Kentucky are facing the unexpected, often painful reality that disruption to food assistance causes. More than 17,000 of our neighbors right here in Central and Eastern Kentucky are federal workers. The shutdown meant these families and individuals were faced with uncertainty – not just about income, but about how to put food on the table, pay their bills, and care for their families. **This year, we anticipate that number to climb as we weather the aftershocks of the recent government shutdown and due to new SNAP regulations.**

Prolonged shutdowns like the one we saw in late 2025 often impact children, seniors, and people with long-term health conditions, putting them at greater risk as programs and benefits face interruptions. **But thanks to generous and caring neighbors, God's Pantry**

is still here, serving as a safety net for neighbors experiencing hunger in our 50-county service area. That's a lot of ground to cover, and we are so grateful to those in our community who gave of their time, talent, and resources to keep God's Pantry Food Bank open, running, and ready to assist.

As you'll read in this letter, your compassion can make a profound difference for neighbors facing hunger. Many of the challenges we collectively faced in 2025 still lie ahead. The need remains great, and the goodwill is strong—but we can't meet this moment without your help.

Your support has never been more critical. **Together, we can build a strong foundation—one that ensures families and individuals never have to face hunger alone.**

Sincerely,

Michael J. Halligan
President & CEO

GOD'S PANTRY FOOD BANK REMAINED OPEN DESPITE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Standing Strong



National Guard, Lexington

This fall, thousands of Kentuckians were in crisis.

During the longest government shutdown in US history, millions of Americans were coping with uncertainty. **17,000 federal employees live and work in Central and Eastern Kentucky.**

Federal employees in aviation, health and human services, and transportation—along with active-duty military personnel—suddenly found themselves without a paycheck or a reliable way to provide for their families.

Then, another blow: the shutdown led to disruptions to SNAP benefits, a lifeline program that nearly 250,000 Kentuckians rely on. This meant even more neighbors having to make impossible choices between food, rent, and medicine. The numbers don't lie. Reports from across the country indicate that the need for food assistance increased by as much as 75% in some areas – especially near military bases.

Programs like SNAP are vital! They nourish strong communities and support economic stability, to the tune of \$40 million every month in Central and Eastern Kentucky. Farmers markets, grocery stores, and small businesses all benefit. Without those programs in place, thousands of food-insecure neighbors were facing crisis.

Despite the ongoing challenges, God's Pantry Food Bank remained open. Feeding Kentucky provided an emergency boost of \$5 million to food banks across the Commonwealth to continue to serve and meet this challenge. These funds allowed us to purchase food and ensure that these resources are distributed efficiently and fairly throughout our communities.

If you share our belief that everyone deserves reliable access to nourishing food, please consider giving to God's Pantry Food Bank. Every \$1 you donate helps provide 6 meals for neighbors right here in our community.

Thank you for caring for your neighbors and for your generosity to help ensure a nourished life for every Kentuckian!



Jonathan, Transportation Specialist

SERVING NEIGHBORS, SHARING HOPE:

Freddy's Story

For Freddy Turner, helping others isn't just something he does—it's who he is. A lifelong Owsley County resident and farmer, Freddy spends his days tending his garden and doing yard work for neighbors. But every Tuesday, you'll find him at Owsley County Food Place, a partner pantry of God's Pantry Food Bank, volunteering to make sure families have what they need.

"I hate not being able to help," Freddy says. "That's why this food bank is the most wonderful thing that has come from this county. I get a box for myself, and I also volunteer to take it to others."

Freddy has been part of the pantry for 16 years, watching it grow from a small site in Booneville to a larger, covered facility that serves people rain or shine. "We can now serve people better," he says proudly.

The need is greater than ever. Rising grocery prices mean new faces show up every week. "I've noticed five or six new people signing up every day," Freddy explains. "Because produce is so high, and going to the grocery store is expensive."

For Freddy, it's more than just food. "It means life. You can quit bad habits, but you can't quit eating," he says. Living on a fixed income, his local pantry makes an enormous difference. "I thank God because I can't buy food like the food I get here. I just don't have the money to buy it."

Freddy's story is a reminder that food assistance isn't just about meals—it's about dignity, community, and hope. And thanks to volunteers like Freddy and supporters like you, neighbors across Owsley County know they're not alone.

Donate today and help ensure every Kentuckian has access to the food they need to thrive this winter.



Give securely online by scanning this code or visiting us at godspantry.org/wintermeals



Freddy, Owsley County



FOOD RESCUE: GOOD MEALS AND GOOD FOR THE PLANET



In 2025, **13.4 million pounds of food** was rescued throughout our 50-county service area. Food waste is an urgent crisis:

38% of all food goes unsold or uneaten

92 billion pounds of food goes to waste every year

145 billion meals end up in landfills

51% of waste comes from the food industry (restaurants, manufacturers, etc.)

Food rescue accounts for nearly **25% of the total food gathered and distributed by our organization**. Instead of ending up in landfills, this food was provided to people experiencing hunger, an approach that benefits everyone by allowing us to nourish more neighbors while reducing food waste.

God's Pantry employs a team of Regional Resource Engagement Specialists to ensure that grocery stores, markets, and restaurants can participate. These staff members act as a conduit between the **500+ stores and restaurants that donate and our 120+ partner agencies that receive these donations**.

Because our service area is so broad, we have regional team members in Lexington, London, Morehead, and Prestonsburg, as well as manager-level staff to ensure the success of this program.

Jenny Goodman, our Regional Resource Engagement Specialist based in London, KY, describes the job in one word: support.

"I serve 13 counties, over 80 agencies, and over 100 retail stores. No two days are the same," she says, "and that's the great thing about it. Whether I'm supporting agencies, donors, or staff at the warehouse, regardless of who calls, my job is to support them."

Thanks to the generosity of our donors and the efforts of our Food Rescue Team, **over 9.4 million extra meals** were provided last year to neighbors facing food insecurity across Central and Eastern Kentucky.

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