



# UNDERSTANDING THE FOOD BANK

## I. MISSION

Middle Georgia Community Food Bank (MGCFB) mission is to provide the maximum amount of food possible to our participating food pantries at the lowest possible cost in order to reach the maximum number of hungry neighbors in need.

## II. HISTORY

In May 1981, Rev. Ben Fore, Director of Christian Social Ministries of the Macon Baptist Association, visited St. Luke's Outreach Program in Atlanta. He returned to Macon with a dream. This dream he shared with twenty citizens of our area, and on March 1, 1982, with \$1,000 in startup funds from the United Way, the Macon Area Food Bank was incorporated. When we began, the Rev. Fore operated the Food Bank out of a donated pickup truck and a small storage area in the basement of the Macon Rescue Mission. In 1993, MGCFB became a certified affiliate with Feeding America, the nation's food bank, which led to increased food supplies and funding. Through the ensuing years, MGCFB has continued to grow to meet the needs of the Middle Georgia area. Today, MGCFB distributes over 6.6 million pounds of food annually through over 150 participating agencies and our programs.

## III. MGCFB SERVICE AREA

MGCFB serves 24 counties in middle Georgia: 1. Baldwin; 2. Bibb; 3. Bleckley; 4. Crawford; 5. Dodge; 6. Dooly; 7. Houston; 8. Jasper; 9. Jones; 10. Lamar; 11. Laurens; 12. Macon; 13. Monroe; 14. Peach; 15. Pike; 16. Pulaski; 17. Taylor; 18. Telfair; 19. Treutlen; 20. Twiggs; 21. Upson; 22. Wheeler; 23. Wilcox; and 24. Wilkinson.

## IV. NEED

In Georgia, 1,659,710 people are struggling with hunger and food insecurity, of those, 580,830 are children, or one in four.<sup>1</sup> In Macon-Bibb County, where MGCFB is based, the poverty rate is **27.8%**, nearly double the statewide rate of 16%.<sup>2</sup> Of the 24 counties served by MGCFB, **20** have poverty rates higher than the statewide rate.

### A. RURAL COUNTIES

USDA Rural Development has defined 22 of the 24 counties as rural (20,000 or less population) only Bibb and Houston counties do not meet USDA rural definition. The July 2016 US Census, America Community Survey shows 22 of the 24 counties MGCFB serves has a higher rate of senior population. The state average is 13.1%; MGCFB counties percentage of senior population ranges from 14.8% to 20.9%.

### B. CHILDREN

Inadequate food intake in children is associated with a number of serious health, behavior, and cognitive deficits, as reported in Child Trends. Food insecurity is associated with higher rates of behavioral problems in 3-year-olds; in school-aged children, psychosocial deficits, as well as higher anxiety and depression; and, in adolescents, higher rates of depressive disorder and suicidal

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<sup>1</sup> Feeding America Map the Meal Gap 2015

<sup>2</sup> US Census 2016 American Community Survey



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symptoms. Food-insecure children show smaller gains in math and reading achievement between kindergarten and third grade, and, among those ages 6 to 11, a higher likelihood of repeating a grade.<sup>3</sup>

## C. SENIORS

The Feeding America 2014 comprehensive report on senior hunger demonstrated food insecure seniors have significantly worse health outcomes. For example, they are 65% more likely to be diabetic, twice as likely to report fair or poor general health, 2.3 times more likely to suffer from depression, 19% more likely to have high blood pressure, 57% more likely to have congestive heart failure, 66% more likely to have experienced a heart attack, twice as likely to report having gum disease, and 91% more likely to have asthma<sup>4</sup>.

MGCFB strives to reduce food insecurity, hunger, and the associated negative health impacts by serving as an umbrella agency to the over 190 agencies who obtain food from us for their programs. These agencies in turn provide food at soup kitchens, after-school programs, shelters, senior programs, and other social service programs throughout our service area. The infographic shown below demonstrates how MGCFB meets our mission:

## V. MGCFB PROGRAMS

MGCFB also coordinates our own programs as follows:

### A. THE BACKPACK PROGRAM

Our Backpack program currently serves over 3,400 children in 53 K-12 schools. The goal of the Backpack program is to provide food insecure students with supplemental food for the weekend. The program supplies students in need with a box of nutritionally balanced food each Friday during the school year, and during school breaks. The Backpack program ensures children who rely on breakfasts and lunch at school have food when school is out. The program's success is supported by the wonderful 17 volunteer organizations involved, who pack boxes and transport food to the schools.

### B. MOBILE FOOD PANTRY

This program targets rural areas with few services and high need. The Mobile Food Pantry distributes boxes each month with enough nutritional food for an entire family. MGCFB partners with agencies in rural communities to identify families who would benefit to ensure those most in need obtain food. The Mobile Food Pantry serves an average of 100 families in each county every month. In 2017, we distributed 459,320 pounds to families in rural areas through this program.

### C. BROWN BAG PROGRAM

The Brown Bag Program provides seniors in the MGCFB service area with monthly food donations. The Brown Bag Program helps low-income seniors have improved health and nutrition. Each month MGCFB volunteers distribute an average of 1,433 "brown bags", each one with ten

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.childtrends.org/indicators/food-insecurity>

<sup>4</sup> The Health Consequences of Senior Hunger in the US 1999-2014 NHANES



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meals worth of food, throughout the counties we serve. In 2017, we distributed a total of 16,357 “brown bags” to senior households.

### **D. OPCAR**

Operation Partnership/Children at Risk or OPCAR provides snacks and drinks to youth programs. Programs that benefit from OPCAR include: DARE, Special Olympics, WAVE (Weapons & Violence Education), and other programs and camps for local youth. In 2017, MGCFB distributed 81,059 pounds of food through OPCAR.

### **E. USDA/TEFAP**

The USDA provides food for those eligible for the Emergency Feeding Assistance Program (TEFAP). TEFAP is available to our partner agencies in all of the 24 counties that we serve. In 2017 we distributed 2,852,470 pounds of USDA/ TEFAP food.

### **F. GNAP**

GNAP or Georgia Nutrition Assistance Program is the supply of food funded by the state of Georgia. MGCFB used GNAP to purchase food distributed to partner agencies across the 24 counties we serve. In 2017, we distributed 1,142,143 pounds of food funded through GNAP.

## **VI. VOLUNTEERS**

MGCFB relies on our many wonderful volunteers to help us provide food to those in need; during 2017, 12,657 volunteer hours were provided. Volunteer time in Georgia is valued at \$24.39 per the US Corporation for National and Community Service, meaning our volunteers provided \$556,042 value in service.

MGCFB welcomes volunteers at our warehouse in Macon and offers opportunities Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., for individuals or groups. Volunteers help pack boxes for MGCFB programs, sort food donations, and help in the warehouse.