



**Food Finders**  
**Food Bank, Inc.**  
*fighting hunger, giving hope*

# Annual Report

## 2023



PARTNER  
FOOD BANK OF  
**FEEDING**  
AMERICA



# A Message from the President/CEO

Dear Friends:

I am proud and filled with hope as I reflect on my first year leading this organization. Food Finders Food Bank and our agency partners were challenged this year with the highest rate of food insecurity and the most significant one-year increase since 2008. Thanks to the generosity and compassion of the communities we serve, we did our best to meet this need without skipping a beat - I am most proud of this.

Highlights from 2023 include launching a grocery rescue effort, which saw a reported 118% increase in the amount of retail food redistributed to neighbors facing hunger.

We launched our updated strategic plan, positioning us for new Feeding America metrics centered around equitable food distribution. We also increased our efforts around advocacy and bringing attention to federal, state, and local legislation that affects the charitable food system and those we serve.

One of my goals this year is to visit agency partners in all 16 counties. Meeting and connecting with people doing the groundwork of food distribution is the best part of my job and what brings me the most joy. Their kindness reminds me of the strangers and neighbors who helped my mom and me when she struggled to make ends meet during my childhood.

My mom was often too proud to ask for help, and I did not fully recognize the impact of people sharing food or resources with us until I came to work at Food Finders.

Hopefully, you have noticed our increased efforts to collect and share stories of volunteers, partners, neighbors, and friends across our 16-county service area. Increasing knowledge about food insecurity and highlighting the voices of those we serve are critical to our mission. Food Finders is working to ensure our partners and programs are supported and successful as they carry out this critical work.

In gratitude,

*Kim Crites Muller*

## Mission

We provide food and connections to life-stabilizing resources when our neighbors need us most.

## Vision

By eliminating food insecurity, we provide a pathway to empowerment, hope, and self-sufficiency.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Dr. Jennifer Bay**  
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## Commitment to Community

We believe nourishing food is central to life; therefore, we seek like-minded supporters to help us ensure basic needs are met.



## Sharing Food, Creating Community: Carol and Dorothy

On a very cold day in 2022, Carol drove by Food Finders' Fresh Market pantry to pick up some items for an elderly neighbor. While Carol was familiar with Food Finders through church connections, she had never visited the pantry and accidentally showed up too early. As Carol drove into the parking lot, she noticed Dorothy sitting on a bench in front of the market and asked her if she wanted to warm up in her car while they waited for Fresh Market to open. "Her and I just had the most wonderful conversation," Carol explained, "I think it was destined that we would meet. We have become extremely good friends ... we're just like sisters to each other." Since 1962, Carol Collins has lived in the Greater Lafayette area. Dorothy, however, recently moved to the area, having relocated from Mississippi to be closer to her son.

Carol and Dorothy's connection is apparent to the staff at Food Finders. We spoke with Megan Miller, who observed Carol and Dorothy's friendship grow over her time as a Development Assistant. Megan shared, "They used to finish each other's sentences and connect over meals and on the benches at the Fresh Market before the pantry opened. Both would consistently check in on each other and just laugh and enjoy life together." Food Finders happened to be where Carol and Dorothy met, but they remain active in the education program. While the education classes at the Fresh Market and Katy Bunder Food Resource and Education Center provide a space for learning, they also offer a place for neighbors to make connections.

Carol and Dorothy's favorite classes are those with Barbara Norrick, a Nutrition Education Program Advisor with Purdue Extension.

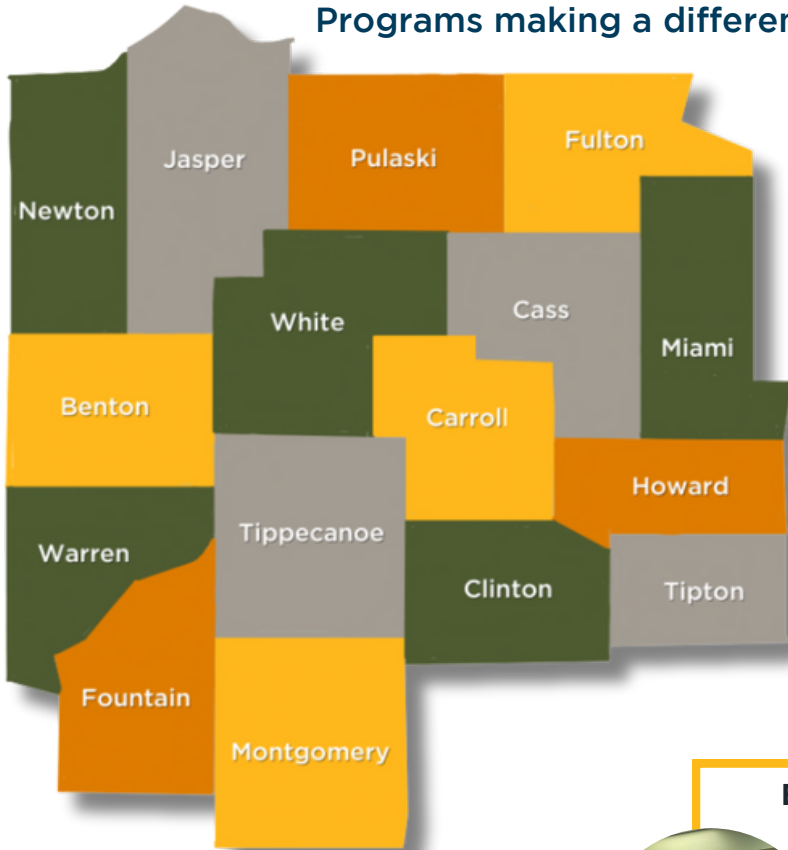
"Ms. Barbara is a joy to the class," Dorothy shared. Carol added, "I so enjoy Ms. Barbara ... when I see her classes on the schedule, I never miss." Norrick's classes include topics ranging from food safety skills to helping neighbors make healthy choices while buying and preparing food.

Together, Carol and Dorothy have cultivated a community-minded relationship. Not only do they take and prepare food for fellow neighbors, but they also help new community members navigate local social services. Carol ensures an elderly person in her neighborhood is well-fed, often preparing recipes from the food she gets at Fresh Market "to ensure she is getting a more balanced diet," explained Carol. She continued, "Dorothy and I together have helped share with others ... how to prepare what is offered at Fresh Market." Reflecting on the rise in food insecurity, Carol and Dorothy want their neighbors to know that they have options at Food Finders. "There is very much a need," Dorothy states, emphasizing the importance of giving back.

As we wrapped up our conversation, Carol reiterated, "We're just like sisters ... we think alike, we eat alike," and as Megan Miller noted, they finish each other's sentences. When we asked them what their takeaway from our conversation was, at the same time, Carol and Dorothy stated, "you have to share with each other." They also emphasized their appreciation for Food Finders' volunteers and staff for creating an accepting and welcoming atmosphere. Carol ended, "There's a lot of good in what Food Finders is doing."

# Food For Today, Hope For Tomorrow

Programs making a difference across 16 counties.



## Agency Partners

We work directly with over 100 agency partners across our service area, providing them with nutritious food for those in need.



## BackPack Program

A backpack filled with supplemental, nutritious food is sent home with over 2,600 children each weekend in over 70 schools.



## Education Program

Classes provide ongoing learning on topics including meal preparations, finance, job readiness, budgeting, and wise shopping to maximize SNAP and all available food resources.



## SNAP Outreach

The SNAP Outreach Program sends coordinators to strategically selected community centers, faith-based organizations, and residential housing facilities to help eligible Hoosiers sign up for SNAP benefits.

## Mobile Pantry

Mobile pantries deliver one or more truck-loads of food each month to each county (except Tippecanoe) in our service area to supplement food distributed by agency partners.



## Senior Grocery Delivery

Food Finders offers free home grocery delivery to qualifying seniors in select counties. This program provides groceries; including protein, dairy, and fresh produce options.



## Fresh Market

Fresh Market is a low-barrier, grocery store style pantry in Tippecanoe County that provides meat, fresh produce, dairy, eggs, and more.

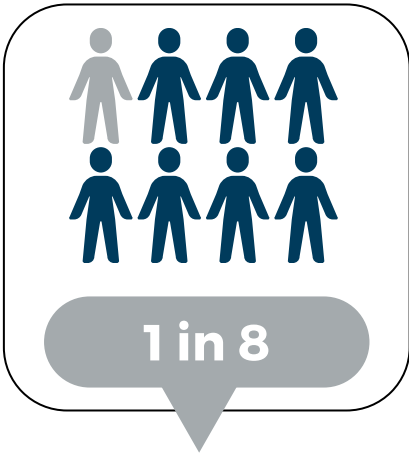


## Resource Coordination

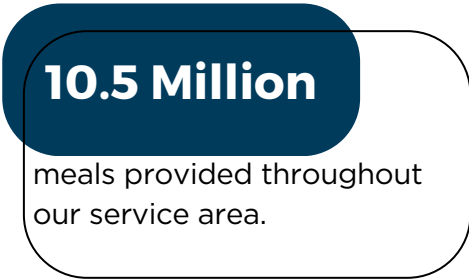
Resource coordinators help connect neighbors to local resources, such as healthcare, childcare assistance, job training, employment, and more.



# By the Numbers\*



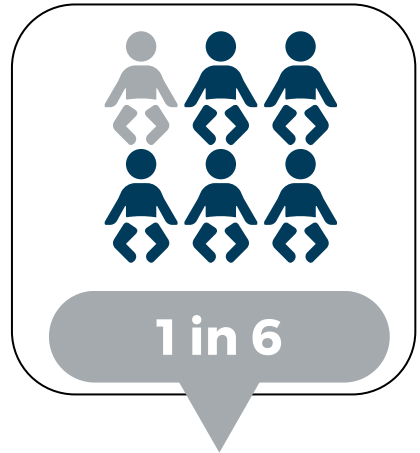
**65,000**  
people in our 16-county service area are facing hunger.



meals provided throughout our service area.



pounds of food distributed throughout our service area.

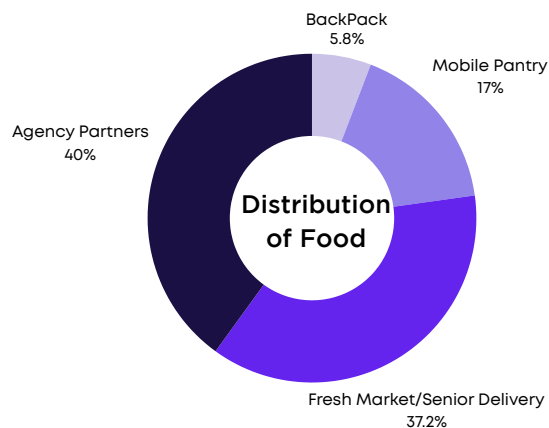
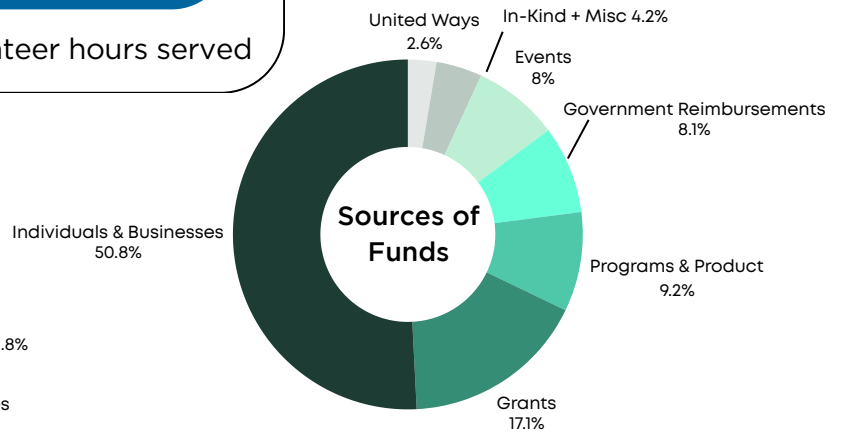
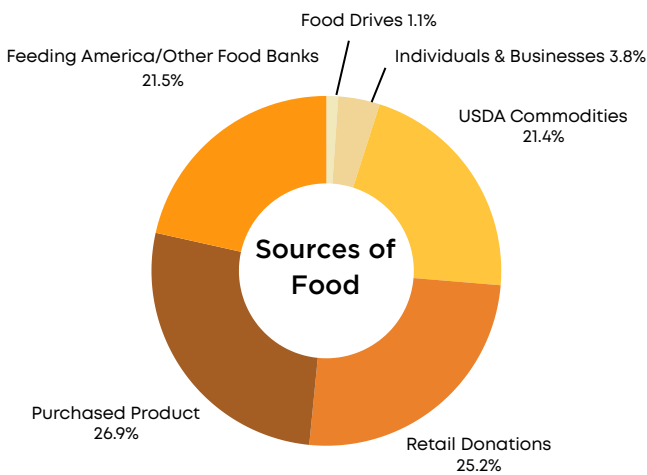


**15,770**  
children are facing hunger in our 16-county service area.

Expenses	
Programs	<b>95.5%</b>
Admin/Development	<b>4.5%</b>



volunteer hours served



**\*Numbers are unaudited**



## THE GIFT OF TIME – DR. RICK MEILAN’S VOLUNTEER STORY

After spending nearly 20 years working as a Professor of Forestry and Natural Resources at Purdue University, Rick Meilan retired and rededicated his time to volunteering for Food Finders Food Bank. As Meilan was preparing to turn in his office keys, he read a story in the *Journal and Courier* indicating that Food Finders needed volunteers. He saw this as an opportunity to fulfill a promise he made to himself shortly after moving to Indiana. So, after a brief stop on campus, Meilan continued to Lafayette to begin volunteering with the food bank.

Meilan became interested in Food Finder’s mission after attending a presentation by Katy Bunder (former president/CEO) on Purdue’s campus. “She gave a very compelling seminar,” Meilan shared, helping him recognize the extent of food insecurity in our 16-county service area, particularly Tippecanoe County. “I went home and told my wife, this is really a worthwhile organization and I plan to volunteer for them when I retire,” says Meilan. Since then, he has served Food Finders in various capacities – including produce donations. Meilan, a Molecular Tree Physiologist, grows fruits and vegetables during the summer; he delivers the excess produce from his garden to Food Finders’ warehouse for distribution.

After asking Meilan what he would like to share with others regarding the persistent need in our communities, he recalled a quote from a previous newsletter highlighting misconceptions about neighbors who seek our services. Upon Katy Bunder’s retirement, she was asked about the challenges she faced during her tenure as president/CEO. Bunder explained, “The most frustrating thing is the persistent belief of some that those who use food pantries are taking advantage of the system and are lazy and unwilling to work. Most people we serve are elderly, disabled, or working jobs that do not pay well.” Meilan reiterated these sentiments, stating, “Those misconceptions are just patently untrue. People clearly need assistance. I scanned that interview and shared it with people.”

Blair DeLong, Food Finders’ Director of Volunteer Engagement and Programs, spoke to his dedication: “Rick Meilan embodies the essence of giving: the gift of time. Since 2022, he has volunteered over 460 hours across multiple programs, from repacking food, stocking shelves at the Fresh Market, and assisting in our warehouse. Rick’s ongoing commitment leaves a lasting imprint on our community. Thank you, Rick!” Food Finders also wants to thank Rick for his dedication to our community.

# MAJOR GIFTS

The following individuals, corporations, and organizations supported Food Finders Food Bank with major gifts between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2023

## INDIVIDUALS

Victor and Carol Abell  
Ron Alting  
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Marilyn Asteriadis  
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Dennis and Sharon Schlott  
Marsha Selmer  
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Mary Jo and Tom Sparrow  
Laura Stevens  
Ronnie Wilbur

## CORPORATIONS

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The Andersons Marathon Holdings LLC  
The J.M. Smucker Company  
The Kellogg Company  
The Kroger Co. Foundation  
TJX Foundation  
Treasurer of Tippecanoe County  
Wabash  
Walmart Foundation

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Alfred J. McAllister & Dorothy N. McAllister Foundation  
Alpha Gamma Delta Foundation  
Central Indiana Community Foundation  
Community Foundation of Pulaski County  
Community Foundation Serving Howard, Clinton, and Carroll Counties  
James K. and Mary Jo Risk Family Foundation, Inc.  
Jasper Newton Foundation Inc.  
Lafayette Life Foundation  
Lafayette Rotary Club Foundation  
Montgomery County Community Foundation  
Negley Flinn Charitable Foundation  
Nisource Charitable Foundation  
Northern Indiana Community Foundation, Inc.  
Solar Quest Foundation  
The Community Foundation of Greater Lafayette  
The Molina Healthcare Charitable Foundation  
Tipton County Foundation  
Western Indiana Community Foundation

## ORGANIZATIONS

American Reformed Church of Demotte  
Area Five Agency On Aging & Community Services  
Area Four Agency on Aging  
Bauer Family Resources  
Brook United Methodist Church  
Carroll Buddy Bag Program  
Caston Education Center  
City of Lafayette  
City of West Lafayette

Delphi United Methodist Church  
Emergency Food & Shelter Program  
Fairfield Township Trustee  
Feeding America  
First Reformed Church of Wheatfield  
Grace Fellowship Church of Demotte  
Howard-Miami Mennonite Church  
Idaville First Church of God  
Indiana Family and Social Services Administration  
Indiana State Department of Agriculture  
Indiana State Department of Health  
Lafayette Urban Ministry  
Lewis Cass Buddy Bags, Inc.  
Logansport High School  
McGrawsville United Methodist Church of Amboy  
Montgomery Co. Youth Service Bureau  
Pulaski County Human Services  
Purdue University - Student Organizations  
Rensselaer Area Ministerial Association  
Riggs Community Health Center  
Rochester Foursquare Church (Faith Outreach Center)  
Rossville Community Backpack Program  
Southeast Fountain School Corporation  
Tri-County Junior/Senior High School  
UAW Local 685  
United Way for Clinton County, Inc.  
United Way of Cass County  
United Way of Greater Lafayette  
United Way of Howard County  
United Way of Miami County, Inc.  
Warren Central Elementary School  
West Street Christian Church of Tipton



Jim and Janet Beaty  
Jeanne+ and W. Dale Compton+  
Barbara Cook+  
Gary Davidson+  
Ned Derhammer+  
Lucille Haines+  
Sara+ and Solomon Hartman+  
Wilford H. Lahr+  
John and Marjorie Martin  
John and Prella McBride  
Judith McCoy+  
Robert Perkins+  
Ruthie Shook  
Kumares Sinha  
Mary Jo and Fredrick Sparrow  
Michael Wallpe+  
Robert Henry Perkins+  
+ deceased



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Lafayette, IN 47904

[www.food-finders.org](http://www.food-finders.org)



**Volunteers are vital to our organization and the fight to end hunger, and we would love for you to join our team of compassionate, community-minded volunteers.**

To learn more about volunteer opportunities at Food Finders, please visit [food-finders.org/volunteer](http://food-finders.org/volunteer), call us at 765-471-0062, or scan the QR code below.

