Frequently Asked Questions About the Campaign

Nourish Alaska's Future

Who is Food Bank of Alaska and what do they do?
Food Bank of Alaska has been around for more than 40 years. At that time food pantries and others trying to feed their hungry neighbors were concerned about good food being wasted when it came off grocery store shelves.

Food banking was a new idea then – to have one organization responsible for the logistics of picking up and storing surplus food and making it available for pantries and meal programs, such Bean's Cafe, to distribute. So in 1979, volunteers incorporated Food Bank of Alaska as a non-profit organization for this purpose.

As government food programs for seniors, people needing emergency help, and children were created, Food Bank of Alaska took on the logistics and administration of these programs too. **Now, we supply food to more than 150 food pantries and meal programs in Anchorage, Mat-Su, and throughout the state.** From April 2020 through December we distributed almost 21,000 emergency food boxes to people who needed extra help because of COVID-19. With the help of volunteers, we provide Mobile Food Pantries throughout Anchorage. Last year we distributed groceries for a Thanksgiving meal to more than 11,000 families in Mat-Su and Anchorage. We provide outreach and support, so people in need can access SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly food stamps) and other government benefits they qualify for, and we advocate for policies that will help to end hunger. We are a member of the national Feeding America network.

> **Food Bank of Alaska's Vision:** A hunger-free Alaska
>
> **Our Mission:** Food Bank of Alaska is dedicated to eliminating hunger in our state by obtaining and distributing food to non-profit agencies feeding hungry people and through anti-hunger leadership. We believe that *no one* deserves to be hungry.

Why is this project needed?
125,650 Alaskans were food insecure in 2020 (Feeding America's Map the Meal gap, feedingamerica.org/map). Included in this number are 47,800 children, more than 1 in 4.

Food Bank of Alaska has occupied the same warehouse in the Ship Creek area of Anchorage for 25 years. The warehouse was perfect for the 2-3 million pounds of food we distributed when we moved in.

But in Fiscal Year 2018, we distributed 7 million pounds of food. Our Board of Directors realized that our building was holding us back from our number-one strategic goal – **to distribute *more* food to *more* Alaskan communities – especially in under-served rural areas.** We did not have the capacity to fully use all of the generous support available to help us move forward. As a result, Food Bank of Alaska launched the *Nourish Alaska's Future* capital project to purchase and equip a larger warehouse.

In FY19 we distributed 7.5 million pounds of food, stretching our capacity even further. Then, with COVID-19, in calendar year 2020, we distributed **almost 11 million pounds of food**. This included more than 21,000 emergency food boxes packed and distributed by volunteers to hungry families. We were only able to respond so effectively because Walmart donated off-site space at the former Sam's in Tikahtnu Commons.

How will this project solve the need?

With the *Nourish Alaska's Future* project we have purchased, and are now remodeling and equipping, an 85,000-square-foot, more efficient warehouse in Anchorage. When we move this summer, we will have:

- more than triple the capacity to receive, store, and ship food and more efficient storage systems,
- capacity to respond to emergencies as they arise,
- an area for staging food and shipping to rural Alaska to reach more communities where the need is acute,
- a 12,000-square-foot energy-efficient combined freezer/cooler, so we can accept, store and distribute more healthy, fresh food and minimize waste,
- dedicated workspace, so volunteers can stay socially distant, help when needed throughout the week without interfering with operations, and respond to opportunities as they arise,
- a dedicated, well-designed "shopping" area for partner food organizations,
- room to re-package bulk food that we can't accept now and preserve fresh food that we can't always distribute quickly enough, and
- enough space to bring the community and partners together to address hunger's underlying causes.

What difference will a bigger warehouse make?

The larger warehouse will make it possible for us to put all of your generous support to work feeding hungry Alaskans. Some examples:

- We'll have room to scale up operations and **be ready to respond to emergencies**, whether a global pandemic making it hard for Alaskans to feed their families, or a food emergency in a rural village, such as Newtok or Tuluksak.

- We'll be able to **accept more food,** such as bulk cereal, that we cannot accept now because we don't have the space for volunteers to re-package it into family-sized bags.

- Sometimes we receive large produce donations (think zucchini!) from farmers at the end of the season or from other sources. Sometimes the donation is more than we can get out to our partners before it goes bad. With the additional cooler and freezer space, we can **waste less** and feed more families.

- We can **increase our efficiency** with more space and an upgraded racking system for dry food. Right now, we very often have to move food that is in the way of getting to the food we need to access for distribution.

Why should I care?
Hunger holds Alaska back. And right now, more Alaskans are experiencing hunger than any of us can remember – an estimated 125,650. That's 1 in 6 overall, including 1 in 4 of Alaska's children. Your help with this capital project can bring these numbers down.

We expect that more of our neighbors will continue to need food assistance for some time. With your help, Food Bank of Alaska can add capacity to meet our strategic goal to distribute more food to more Alaskan communities, not just now but for the future. Your support will boost progress toward the vision we share – a hunger-free Alaska for our children and grandchildren.

Bottom line? This is what Alaskans do – we take care of our neighbors.

Who else is participating?
Check the list of donors on the *Nourish Alaska's Future* page on our website.

Does Food Bank of Alaska help my community?
To see where our 150+ partners are located, check out our online map at foodbankofalaska.org/help/statewide-resources. Please note that the list can change monthly.

Food Bank of Alaska works with three partner distribution organizations who collect and distribute food in their service areas – Fairbanks Community Food Bank, Southeast Alaska Food Bank in Juneau, and Kenai Peninsula Food Bank. If you live in one of these areas, the local food bank would welcome your support.