

HISTORY OF FEEDING SOUTH DAKOTA

1975

The Sioux Falls Ministerial Association formed a community food pantry. Their objective: to have a centralized place where those in need of food would go to receive groceries.

1983

Alyce McKay, Eleanor Frost, and Linda Lea Viken formed the Black Hills Regional Food Bank, Inc. The purpose of the food bank was to distribute donated food to non-profit agency partners serving people in need of food. With a humble beginning, the Black Hills Regional Food Bank initially distributed food out of a garage. By December, the food bank had moved operations to the National Guard Camp.

The Sioux Falls Food Pantry partnered with America's Second Harvest (now Feeding America) and changed its name to The Food Service Center, Inc to now add a food bank program to its operations. Local support and an allocation from America's Second Harvest allowed the organization to grow and thrive in its mission to relieve hunger in the region. In the year after it changed its name, The Food Service Center, Inc. distributed 82,273 pounds to twenty organizations in Minnehaha County.

1988

The Food Service Center moved to North Phillips Ave, where it remained until 2015. The Food Service Center distributed 166,954 pounds of food in Sioux Falls, a 103% increase in five years.



1994

To meet the need in the eastern portion of the state, the Food Service Center moved to a new warehouse on North 1st Avenue in Sioux Falls. Distribution reached one million pounds annually.

1995

After relocating several times in ten years, the Black Hills Regional Food Bank moved into a 14,000 square foot facility on North Maple Avenue. By the end of the year, the organization was distributing over 1.3 million pounds of food through the work of its 150 non-profit agency partners.

1997

The Black Hills Regional Food Bank became an affiliate of America's Second Harvest. By this time, the food bank in Rapid City was serving 9 counties, covering 19,321 square miles in western South Dakota.

2004

In January of 2004, The Food Service Center, Inc. in Sioux Falls and The Black Hills Regional Food Bank, Inc, in Rapid City merged and rebranded to the Community Food Banks of South Dakota, Inc. This merger brought together a combined 45 years of experience in providing hunger relief to people in South Dakota.

2010

A task force was established to create a distribution center in Pierre under the direction of the Mayor of Pierre. A food bank was needed to capture nutritious food that was going to waste only because it was nearing its best-if-used-by date. In May of 2010, the Charles H Burke Center for Hunger Relief opened in the former Pepsi warehouse. This



provided Feeding South Dakota with a centralized location in the state to distribute to 26 counties. Due to the overwhelming support of central South Dakota and the Pierre / Ft. Pierre communities, Feeding South Dakota celebrated a mortgage burning ceremony in December 2010. Within the first twelve months of operation, the distribution center in Pierre distributed its one millionth pound of food.

This same year, the Community Food Banks of South Dakota, Inc. was rebranded with a new name and logo. As the organization transformed from a pantry/food bank into a statewide hunger relief organization, “Feeding South Dakota” was chosen to better represent the mission and scope of work.

2012

By 2012, it was clear that all three food banks, and both food pantries, had outgrown their buildings. The food pantries in Rapid City and Sioux Falls were too small to serve the need in their communities. The food banks in all three locations were forced to turn away truckloads of food donations, especially fresh produce, meat, and dairy products, because of a lack of storage space.

This year, Feeding South Dakota embarked on a multi-year capital campaign, “Hand to Hand”, a fundraising campaign specifically aimed at increasing, updating, and expanding the facilities across the state.

2013

In January 2013, the food bank and food pantry moved into a new location on North Creek Drive in Rapid City. With many individuals served by Feeding South Dakota giving up fresh produce, dairy, and meat items to stretch their grocery budget, the expanded freezer and cooler facilities in the new building allow Feeding South Dakota to provide more of the food items most in demand.

This same year, Feeding South Dakota began its newest program: The Mobile Food Pantry Program. Food insecurity in rural areas of the state is a constant problem. Not only are individuals farther from



grocery stores, but many individuals in need also live far from any food assistance programs. Operating out of the food bank in Pierre, the aim of the Mobile Pantry Program is to bring food directly to individuals and communities dealing with hunger.

2016

In the spring of 2016, a new distribution center opened in Pierre. With 40% more food storage and distribution capacity, and a dedicated loading area for the mobile food pantry, the Charles H Burke Center for Hunger Relief is now better equipped to fight hunger in central South Dakota.

The final step in the statewide capital campaign and improvement came in the summer of 2016. The food bank and food pantry in Sioux Falls moved into a brand-new facility on North Westport Avenue. With well over double the storage capacity, including room for eight semi-trucks worth of frozen food and over five semi-trucks worth of refrigerated food, the new distribution center can better meet the hunger needs in the eastern portion of South Dakota.

2020

In December of 2019, news from China began to emerge of a new and highly contagious coronavirus (Covid-19) that had not previously been seen in humans. The first confirmed death of a human was reported to be on January 9, 2020 in Wuhan. By the end of January 2021, 447,000 United States citizens had died from Covid-19.

In March of 2020, it was clear that we were in the middle of a world-wide pandemic. To mitigate the spread of Covid-19, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) issued warnings to stay home, wear masks, wash your hands frequently and physically distance from anyone that did not live in the same household.

Communities and states across the country began to shut down, children were home-schooling, many people were furloughed or lost their jobs completely, the country was in a crisis.



With no income, thousands of individuals and families were forced to seek food assistance for the first time in their lives. Over the next few months, Feeding South Dakota, with the guidance and help of Feeding America, local governments, and the CDC, went to work in a massive way, serving on average two to two and a half times the normal amount of people we typically serve at any given time. The food pantries in Rapid City and Sioux Falls temporarily closed to instead serve people safely and more efficiently through mobile food distributions. Feeding South Dakota worked with its agency partners to help feed people in smaller and more rural areas by providing guidance and supplies to facilitate mobile food distributions. At the end of FY20 (June 2020), nearly 4.2 million meals had been distributed through our mobile food pantries to an estimated 335,000 South Dakotans in need, an increase of 2.8 million meals and 177,000 individuals.

In October of 2020, Feeding South Dakota announced the permanent closure of the food pantry program in Rapid City and Sioux Falls. We had learned that our efforts to distribute food since the beginning of the pandemic were safer and more efficient to continue with mobile food distributions than to reopen the food pantries. Rapid City continued to serve 14 neighborhoods in its community and Sioux Falls began serving 5 neighborhoods with a plan to serve 15 by the end of March 2021. A dream to take our mission outside of our walls, to feed people where they live and work became our reality.

