



February 2025

## Food Insecurities Newsletter



### Together We Can Fight Hunger

Food insecurity in West Virginia remains a significant issue, though efforts to address it continue to grow. Around 15.9% of West Virginia's population faces food insecurity. This is higher than the national average, which is typically around 11-12%.

In West Virginia, 266,370 individuals are struggling with hunger, including 73,650 children.



1 in 7 people face hunger

It is estimated that people experiencing hunger in West Virginia require an additional \$176,204,000 annually to meet their food needs.



1 in 5 children face hunger

# Food Insecurity Barriers

## 1. Poverty and Low Income:

One of the most significant barriers to food security is not having enough income to afford nutritious food. Many families live paycheck to paycheck and may not have sufficient funds to cover all their basic needs, including food. In West Virginia, where poverty rates are higher than the national average, this is a major factor.

## 2. Limited Access to Transportation:

Especially in rural areas like much of West Virginia, many people struggle to access grocery stores or food pantries due to a lack of reliable transportation. Without easy access to affordable supermarkets or farmers' markets, people may rely on convenience stores with limited healthy food options, leading to poor nutrition.

## 3. Geographical Isolation:

Rural areas, which make up a significant portion of West Virginia, often face barriers to food security because of limited access to resources. There may be fewer grocery stores, food assistance programs, or community gardens, making it more difficult for residents to access healthy food options.

## 4. Lack of Affordable and Nutritious Food:

Even if food is

available, it may not be affordable for many households, particularly for families living on low wages. Fresh produce, lean proteins, and other healthy food options can be expensive, leading families to rely on cheaper, less nutritious food, which can contribute to long-term health issues and further food insecurity.

## 5. Unemployment and Underemployment:

High unemployment rates or underemployment, where people work but still don't earn enough to cover all expenses, contribute significantly to food insecurity. In West Virginia, where the economy has faced challenges due to the decline of industries like coal mining, job opportunities can be limited, leaving many individuals unable to earn enough to support their families.

## 6. Health Issues and Disabilities:

People with chronic health conditions, disabilities, or mental health struggles may have a harder time accessing or preparing food. Medical costs can also take precedence over food expenses, and certain health conditions may make it difficult to access or prepare healthy food.

## 7. Lack of Education and Awareness:

Some people may not have access to or knowledge about how to make healthy food choices within their budget.

Without education on how to prepare nutritious meals affordably, people may default to processed foods or fast food, which are often less expensive but less nutritious.

## 8. Barriers to Government Assistance

### Programs:

While programs like SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) can help alleviate food insecurity, navigating the application process or meeting eligibility requirements can be challenging for some families. Some may not be aware they qualify for assistance, or they may face delays in receiving support.

## 9. Social Stigma:

There can also be a stigma associated with relying on food assistance programs, which may discourage some families from seeking help. The shame or embarrassment tied to receiving aid can prevent people from accessing the resources they need to feed themselves and their families.

## 10. Natural Disasters or Economic Shocks:

Events like floods, severe weather, or economic downturns can disrupt food supply chains or increase food prices, making it even harder for families to afford or access food. West Virginia, prone to natural disasters like floods, has experienced these types of disruptions in the past.

These barriers are complex and often interwoven, meaning that solving food insecurity requires a multifaceted approach that addresses economic, social, and logistical challenges.

# What is a mobile food pantry?



A mobile food pantry is a service that delivers food directly to communities in need, typically in areas with limited access to traditional food pantries or grocery stores. It's essentially a pantry on wheels—often using a bus, truck, or van—that provides food to individuals and families who are facing food insecurity.

## Here's how it generally works:

**Food Distribution:** The mobile pantry travels to different locations, such as neighborhoods, schools, churches, or community centers, on a regular schedule. People can go to these locations and receive food items, often including fresh produce, canned goods, dairy, and sometimes meats.

**Accessibility:** Mobile food pantries are particularly helpful in rural or underserved areas where traditional food assistance may be hard to reach due to distance or lack of transportation. They make it easier for people to access nutritious food without needing to travel far.

**Emergency Relief:** They can also be used in times of crisis, like natural disasters, where they quickly provide emergency food to those affected by events such as floods, fires, or severe weather.

**No Barriers:** Mobile food pantries usually have few requirements for accessing food, meaning they serve anyone in need without strict eligibility criteria. This ensures that people don't have to face complicated paperwork or wait in long lines.

In short, mobile food pantries are an innovative way to bring food directly to people who need it most, reducing the barriers of transportation and distance while helping to address food insecurity.



## Online Resources

### **Feeding America**

<https://www.feedingamerica.org/>

**Food Pantries** <https://foodpantries.org/>

### **United Food Operation**

<https://unitedfoodoperation.org/participating-food-pantries/>

### **Mountaineer Food Bank**

[https://www.volunteermvc.org/agency/detail/?agency\\_id=57842](https://www.volunteermvc.org/agency/detail/?agency_id=57842)

**Local WV FRN (WV Family Resource Network)** <https://wvfrn.org/>

**Catholic Charities West Virginia**  
<https://www.ccwva.org/>

**WV Department of Agriculture Food Distribution: Food Distribution Program call (304) 558-0573**  
[Food Distribution Program : West Virginia Department of Agriculture](https://www.wv.gov/Department-of-Agriculture/Food-Distribution-Program)

### **Local Community Action Agencies:**

#### **Central WV Community Action**

<https://centralwvaction.org/food-to-freedom/>

#### **Raleigh County Community Action**

<https://www.rccaa.org/>

#### **Nicholas County Community Action**

<https://ncapwv.org/>

**Community Action of South Eastern West Virginia** <https://www.casewv.org/>



# Additional Resources

## Food Banks & Pantries

### Barbour County:

Heart and Hand House, Inc  
45 Mason St, Philippi, WV 26416  
(304) 457-1295 - Open Daily, Monday-Friday from  
10:00am-4:00pm

Brownnton Helping Hands  
1300 Bear Mountain Rd | Brownnton, WV 26347  
(304) 739-2364 - Only on Emergency Basis- Monday-  
Friday 10:00am-10:00pm

Barbour County Family Support Center  
Junior Community Center | Junior, WV 26475  
(412) 720-2548 - Open Daily, Monday-Friday from  
10:00am-2:00pm

Hope's Food Pantry  
816 Hanger Rd | Belington, WV 26250  
(304) 823-3428 - Open every fourth Tuesday from  
6:00pm-7:00pm

### Grant County:

Helping Hands/Living Hands Ministry  
19 S. Main St. Petersburg, WV 26847 (304) 257-5029  
Dates and times are announced on Facebook and The  
Petersburg Buzz and WELD radio.

### McDowell County:

Five Loaves & Two Fishes Food Bank, Box 297,  
Roderfield, WV 24881, Phone (304)-585-7295

### Raleigh County:

Beckley Dream Center INC DBA Fishes and Loaves,  
224 Pinewood Dr, Beckley, WV. Phone (304) 252-  
3402. Hours: Tuesday-Thursday from 9am-12:30pm and  
then 1:30pm-4pm.

### Food Pantry:

Heart of God Ministries (304) 253-3994  
1703 S Kanawha St, Beckley, WV (Heart of God Ministries  
and Northgate Baptist - Supplies food to blessing box when  
possible).

Church of God Family Worship (304) 252-8474  
224 Pinewood Dr, Beckley, WV 25801

### Raleigh County Continued:

### Food Bank:

Calvary Assembly Church of God (304) 252-0717  
319 Sunset Dr, Beckley, WV 25801

Helping Hands Community Resource (304) 253-3467  
106 First Avenue, Beckley, WV 25801  
Hours: Tuesday-Friday - 9:00 am-12:00 pm

### Wyoming County:

God's Grace Ministry, 80 Orchard Ave. Pineville, WV  
Matheny United Methodist Church, Rt. 10 Appalachian  
Hwy, Matheny, WV (304) 682-8480

Itmann Food Pantry, 306 Moran Ave. Mullens, WV  
(304) 682-6061

Wyoming County Food Pantry, 155 Park Ave. Pineville,  
WV (304) 732-6446

### Webster County:

Cowen Food Pantry  
125 Railroad Avenue | Cowen, WV 26206  
(304) 226-3797 - Open every second Thursday from 9am-  
2pm



For more information or if you have any questions, please  
reach out to Linda Prutsok at [linda.k.prutsok@wv.gov](mailto:linda.k.prutsok@wv.gov) or call  
304-872-9200 Ext. 104.



# WARMING CENTERS

With winter weather bringing freezing temperatures to West Virginia, warming centers are open statewide to provide a safe, heated space for those in need. For the most up-to-date information on available warming centers in your area, please contact your county's non-emergency line.

WARMING CENTERS: FIND INFORMATION IN WEST VIRGINIA BY CALLING YOUR COUNTY NON-EMERGENCY LINE						West Virginia Department of HEALTH
Barbour County 304-457-5167	Berkeley County 304-263-1330	Boone County 304-369-9913	Boone County 304-369-9913	Brooke County 304-737-3660	Cabell County 304-526-8555	Calhoun County 304-354-9271
Clay County 304-587-2019	Doddridge County 304-659-3770	Fayette County 304-574-3590	Gilmer County 304-462-0400	Grant County 304-257-2140	Greenbrier County 304-647-7901	Hampshire County 304-822-7513
Hancock County 304-564-4100	Hardy County 304-530-0291	Harrison County 304-626-4900	Jackson County 304-372-2000	Jefferson County 304-725-8484	Kanawha County 304-348-8111	Lewis County 304-269-8243
Lincoln County 304-824-3443	Logan County 304-752-7662, 304-752-8817	Marion County 304-366-0196	Marshall County 304-845-1920	Mason County 304-675-9911	McDowell County 304-436-5700	Mercer County 304-425-8911
Mineral County 304-788-4106	Mingo County 304-235-8551 304-235-3832	Monongalia County 304-599-6332	Monroe County 304-772-3911	Morgan County 304-258-0305	Nicholas County 304-872-4911	Ohio County 304-234-3695
Pendleton County 304-358-3271	Pleasants County 304-684-0035	Pocahontas County 304-799-4567	Preston County 304-329-0579	Putnam County 304-586-9911	Raleigh County 304-255-0911	Randolph County 304-636-2000
Ritchie County 304-659-3770	Roane County 304-927-0911	Summers County 304-466-5613	Taylor County 304-626-4900	Tucker County 304-478-3927	Tyler County 304-758-4275	Upshur County 304-472-9550
Wayne County 304-272-6333, 304-272-6373	Webster County 304-847-2122	Wetzel County 304-455-6960	Wirt County 304-420-0911	Wood County 304-420-0911	Wyoming County 304-732-6953	Call 2-1-1 for additional resources

**Raleigh County/Beckley:** Community United Methodist Church in their Fellowship Hall located at 217 S. Heber St, Beckley, WV. Opens on nights when the temperature and/or wind chills reach 15 degrees or below and is open from 8pm-7am.

**Grant County/Petersburg:** The Bayard Fire Department, located at 100 Potomac Ave, Mt Storm, WV 26739. The First Baptist Church, located at 112 Virginia Ave, Petersburg, WV. Announcements are made by the local radio station and posted on social media.



# Strawberry Shortcake Fluff Salad



## Ingredients

- 2 pints fresh strawberries, sliced
- ½ loaf pound cake or angel food cake premade or boxed mix
- 10.5 oz mini marshmallows
- 8 oz whipped cream topping
- 14 oz sweetened condensed milk

## Instructions

1. Cut pound cake or angel food cake in half. Cut any dark edges off ½ loaf cake. Cut half the loaf cake into 1½ inch cubes.

*NOTE:* Cake can be from a bakery or box mix. It should be plain without any frosting/filling. For box mixes, use a pound cake or angel food cake boxed cake mix and bake according to package instructions.

2. Mix whipped cream topping and sweetened condensed milk together in a large bowl.

3. Stir in mini marshmallows.

4. Slice strawberries; add to bowl.

5. Fold ingredients together until well combined.

6. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

7. Serve within 1-3 days.

8. *TIP:* The sugar in the marshmallows will melt the longer it sits; usually by day 2. To fix texture, simply cut the remaining cake into cubes or stir in 1-2 tbsp vanilla or cheesecake pudding.

# Valentine's Day Owl



## Supplies:

- ❖ Paper plate
- ❖ Craft paint
- ❖ Paint brush
- ❖ Craft foam sheets: pink, red, black
- ❖ Scrapbook paper or old magazines
- ❖ Scissors
- ❖ Glue

1. Paint the top of your plate pink (or whatever color is desired) and let dry.
2. Cut out two large circles from the red craft foam (trace a cup to get perfect circles).
3. Cut out the following from the pink craft foam: two small triangles for ears, one slightly larger triangle for a beak, and two hearts to fit in the red circles.
4. Next, cut two tiny circles from the black craft foam.
5. Start assembling the owl's eyes by gluing your hearts onto the red circles and then the black circles onto the hearts. Glue the assembled eyes to the top center of the painted plate.
6. Glue the pink ears above the eyes and the pink beak below the eyes.
7. Fold the patterned scrapbook paper in half twice and cut out two large even hearts. Glue them on the sides of the plate to look like wings.