



**CARE AND SHARE**<sup>SM</sup>  
FOOD BANK FOR SOUTHERN COLORADO

A Member of  
**FEEDING  
AMERICA**

# ABCs of Food Banking



Food banking can be a complicated business to explain. We always like to start off by asking, “Do you know the difference between a food pantry and a food bank?” Oftentimes, the answer is “no.”

## HERE'S A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HOW FOOD BANKS WORK:

Food banks are different than food pantries, soup kitchens, or emergency shelters. We supply the food to these agencies (which we call our partner agencies), who in turn distribute the food directly to neighbors in need. **Our Distribution Centers in Pueblo, Colorado Springs, and Alamosa are specifically designed to receive and distribute millions of pounds of food annually, up to 25 million pounds, to people experiencing hunger.** This requires specialized equipment (forklifts and pallet jacks), a fleet of refrigerated trucks, large freezer and refrigeration units, thousands of volunteers, and staff with the logistical expertise to coordinate distribution efforts throughout our 52,000 square mile service area.



Care and Share Food Bank is an affiliate of Feeding America, the largest domestic hunger relief organization. **Care and Share is one of five Feeding America food banks in the state, and the only food bank dedicated to serving the 31 counties that comprise Southern Colorado.** Feeding America ensures that there is no

duplication of services between food banks nationwide by establishing service areas boundaries. This means that every county in each state is being served by a designated food bank.

Feeding America has agreements with national retailers, such as Walmart and Target, to designate local food banks as the sole recipients of donated food. This is because of our capacity to receive and transport large quantities of food effectively and efficiently. Our food safety guidelines and qualifications ensure that all food, both perishable and nonperishable, is inspected by our trained staff and volunteers before it is distributed to our partner agencies.

Food banks like Care and Share do food sourcing and distribution really well. The food we provide to our partner agencies allows them to stretch their dollars for the work that they do really well, such as job training, housing assistance, medical care, and other critical services.

## WHERE DO WE GET OUR FOOD?

We receive millions of pounds of donated food from many places, but we have to pay to get the food to us, whether our drivers pick it up locally or we pay a trucking company to transport the food from another part of the country. Here's how it all works:

The largest source of the food that we receive comes from **Feeding America**. Being one of 200 Feeding America food banks nationwide is a win, win, win



situation. Feeding America works with national manufacturers and growers who donate truckloads of food, we pay for the food to be processed, transported, stored, and distributed locally, and people in need have access to a variety of great food that might otherwise have gone to waste.

### Why do national manufacturers donate food?

Sometimes products aren't manufactured or labeled correctly. For example,

- o General Mills recalled 1.8 million boxes of Cheerios labeled gluten-free because there was a chance they weren't actually gluten-free. We received a truckload of this perfectly good cereal and our volunteers relabeled the packages with accurate ingredient information.
- o We received peanut butter that was made in the U.S., but labeled for the German market.
- o We also receive fresh produce that is deemed "ugly," which means that grocers don't accept because it may be too small, too large, or misshapen, and they know that consumers won't purchase it. We love ugly food!

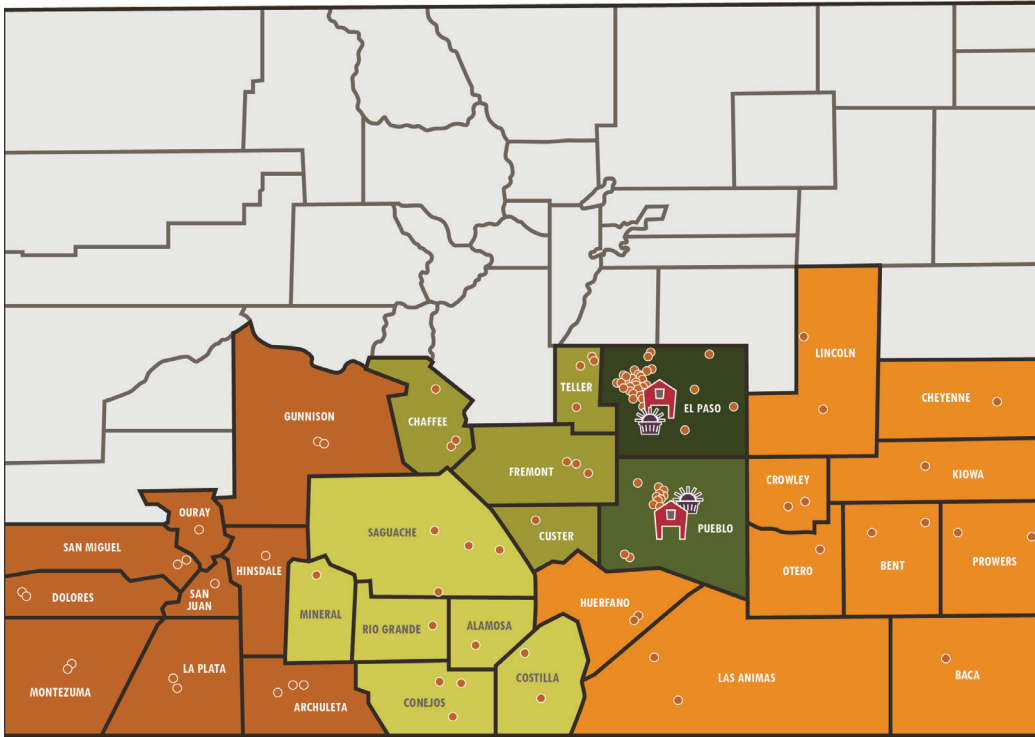
**Reclamation food** comes from local grocery stores, restaurants, local farmers, and other businesses. This food could have damaged packaging, could be near the expiration date, or is not moving off the shelves fast enough. This is perfectly good, safe food that would otherwise go to waste. Our drivers pick up the food throughout the week and distribute it to our partner agencies, who give it to people who need it.

We receive **donated food from community members**. This source of food represents a small but important portion of the overall 22 million pounds we distribute to neighbors each year. On average, food-drive-food accounts for about 500,000 pounds of food annually.

**We buy food**, like produce from local growers, cereal, canned foods, frozen foods, pasta, rice, and meat from growers, ranchers, and brokers. We can buy in very large quantities, which allows us to keep expenses down. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've been purchasing more food on our own than ever before due to supply chain issues and a decrease in donated food.

We also receive **grant funding that is earmarked for food**, so we purchase that food at wholesale and then distribute it for free to our partner agencies or through programs like Mobile Food Pantries and School Pantries.

In partnership with USDA Foods, **we administer The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and Everyday Eats, formerly known as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)**. These programs provide nutritious food to seniors and people living on low incomes. The USDA gets this food through state contracts with vendors. The food comes to Care and Share, is packaged by our volunteers, and delivered to our partner agencies based on the number of people they serve.



## HOW DO WE DISTRIBUTE OUR FOOD?

We have a service area of 52,000 square miles, so transportation requires a lot of planning. We have an amazing staff of 12 truck drivers that collectively travel more than 222,000 miles each year. All of our trucks are refrigerated so they can safely transport perishable food items. They have established routes that are planned in collaboration with our Regional Programs teams to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. Their routes are planned so that week one, two, three, and four are the same from month-to-month so that our partner agencies can plan their food distribution schedules accordingly.

Some of these drivers are called over-the-road drivers, and they deliver large quantities of food to our partner agencies throughout our entire service area. Care and Share has more than 270 partner agencies throughout 31 counties. Our Over The Road Drivers' primarily deliver, although they will pick up loads of produce from local farmers on their way back to our warehouse.

We also have local drivers. They are based out of our Colorado Springs and Pueblo Distribution Centers. The primary role of these drivers is to pick up donations from local food donors, such as King Soopers, Safeway, and Albertsons; although they do provide some deliveries to our local partner agencies as needed.





size of the food donations from local stores, it sometimes makes more sense for us to create direct relationships with our partner agencies and the store managers. This allows our partner agencies with the capacity and desire to pick up food donations directly from the store to do so, which decreases the time we spend picking up smaller donations from stores within our service area and increases the amount of food our partner agencies have to distribute to those in need. We currently have more than 50 agency-enabled partners that pick up food directly from City Market, Cosco, Kum & Go, King Soopers, Starbucks, and more.

## DIRECT SERVICE PROGRAMS

In areas with limited access to grocery stores, partner agencies, or other food resources, we will bring in our Direct Service programs. With community partners, we host monthly or bi-monthly Mobile Food Pantries. Modeled like farmers markets on wheels, these pantries deliver fresh vegetables, fruits, and other staple pantry items like protein and grains to families and communities.

Care and Share launched our first Mobile Market in May 2020. The Mobile Market is like a grocer on wheels, designed to take food directly into hard-to-reach neighborhoods that have high concentrations of need. This model lends itself serving individuals and families who do not have reliable transportation. We have since invested in a second one, based in and primarily serving Pueblo County.

In 2021, we opened our first Care and Share owned-and-operated food pantries, called Sunny Side Markets. Currently, we have two Sunny Side Markets, one in Fountain and one in Pueblo. These food pantries are modeled after grocery stores to give neighbors a dignified and personalized shopping experience.



Many of our local **partner agencies** in El Paso County come to pick up their food at our Colorado Springs distribution center. Likewise, local partner agencies in Pueblo County pick up their food directly at our Pueblo facility. We have a few partner agencies, from places like Cañon City, that make the trek to pick up their food, but most outlying partner agencies receive deliveries from our over-the-road drivers.

Currently, we have a driver based out of our San Luis Valley Distribution Center to deliver food to our Southwest region partners. We are expecting the third Distribution Center to be operational by 2023.

We use a system called **Agency Express** so that our partner agencies can see a live-inventory of what we have available every day, which can vary greatly not only from one day to the next, but throughout the course of each day. They order this food, at no cost, on a first-come-first-served basis for either pick-up or delivery, and our warehouse professionals put their orders together. Our partner agencies also use Agency Express to schedule time to come in and select reclamation food that our local drivers have picked up on their retail store donation routes. For outlying areas, reclamation food is boxed up and made available through Agency Express.

Many times we receive a product that we know there won't be enough of to meet the demand, so we put a limit on the amount that each agency can receive. Also, some items (food received through community food-drives and frozen meat) need to be allocated based on the number of people that each agency serves, such as 1/2-1 pound per person served.

There is another way that our agencies receive food, which is called **agency enablement**. Depending on the



## WHY DO WE DO WHAT WE DO?

Anyone can be impacted by hunger in an instant, whether it's because of a sudden job loss, an unexpected emergency, or a natural disaster. Some of our neighbors experiencing food insecurity are living paycheck-to-paycheck, while for others, the nearest grocery store is a town or two away.

We want everyone to have the same opportunity for equal access to a variety of nutritious and culturally meaningful food for themselves and their families, which allows us to embody our values of dignity and respect for all.

We have learned that when our children, families, and seniors need our help, compassionate supporters are ready to selflessly step up and lend a hand. As we look to the future, we feel inspired to envision all the possibilities of what we can achieve, together.

While there will be challenges ahead, we know that it is essential to continue providing equitable access to food for our neighbors in need, because no one should go hungry.