



EST.



2015

FOODSHARE
SOUTH CAROLINA
FEEDING A NEED IN OUR COMMUNITY

IMPACT REPORT
2021

A Program of



**School of Medicine
Columbia**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	01
FRESH FOOD BOX	02
EXPANSION AND OUTREACH	04
NEIGHBORSHARE	06
VEGGIE RX	08
CULINARY MEDICINE	09
COVID-19 RESPONSE	10
ADVOCACY	12
MEDIA ENGAGEMENT	13
FINANCIAL IMPACT	14
PROGRAM SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS	15



LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The last two years have been challenging for so many of us. At FoodShare South Carolina, we continue to navigate the pandemic and have been confronted with many vulnerabilities but also many opportunities. In the early onset of COVID, FoodShare shifted our Fresh Food Box process to a drive through model. As families lined up to receive their boxes, we could see and hear how the mental health and well-being of our participants was suffering. Single working parents were navigating online school and we were all hopeful that a swift return to normality would allow us to get back to work.

The FoodShare Midlands Hub temporarily moved to a weekly box distribution, doubling the number of families we were serving. Within a short period of time many South Carolinians lost their jobs or saw declines in work hours. The rates of food insecurity doubled across the United States and tripled among households with children according to the Census Household Pulse Survey. **Food insecurity among our most vulnerable and underserved populations is projected to grow** as a result of the ongoing pandemic and is likely to exacerbate current racial inequalities as people of color experienced disproportionate rates of food insecurity even before the pandemic.

Accessing affordable food has also been challenging due to the number of grocery store closures within the Midlands over the last several years. We know hunger is more complicated than the geography of a grocery store which is one reason we started FoodShare in 2015. Sure, we need groceries to be convenient, but it doesn't matter how close they are if families can't afford the food.



These challenges sped up the process by which **we onboarded an additional 14 member hubs in 2020 and 2021. Our team in Columbia grew from three to 11** in what seemed like overnight. **We launched NeighborShare**, a program that delivers fresh food boxes to our most vulnerable residents and those who lack transportation and/or support networks. Through our partnership with Diabetes Free SC and the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of South Carolina, **we've launched our Produce Prescription Program, Veggie Rx, in four rural clinics.** We committed ourselves to increasing our presence at local and state government conversations, and continuing our coalition building with the hiring of a new staff member to work on these issues.

As we move into a new year our sights are set on envisioning a food system that **nourishes all people.** South Carolina has a wealth of knowledgeable partners and organizations on which to draw upon as well as the experience to address the challenges that our communities are facing. We look forward to partnering with our current member hubs across the state as well as broader partners to achieve a more equitable food system. We know this will entail addressing root causes and must be guided by people with lived experiences, and we are committed to that.



FOODSHARE fresh food box

it's more than just a box of food.



Many communities in South Carolina do not have access or financial resources to eat healthy on a daily basis. Barriers include where people live, age, income, and whether reliable transportation exists. **Without healthy options, health risks increase.** Research shows the top three chronic diseases can be prevented and managed through changes in nutrition. Bringing fresh produce into our communities is a form of food equity and a primary tenant of our mission.

OUR STATE-WIDE IMPACT IN 2021

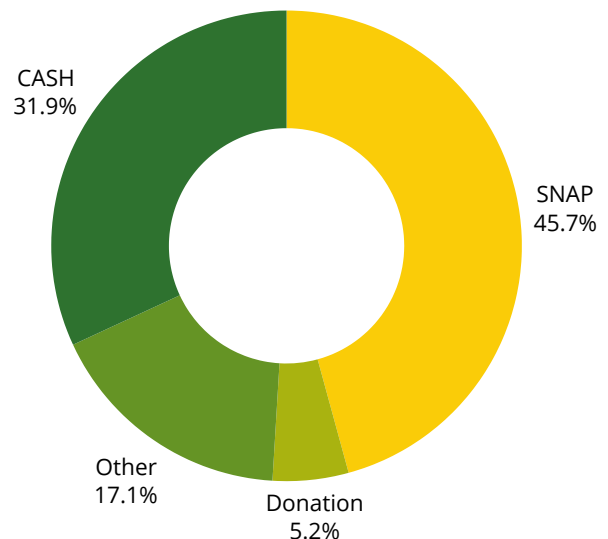
81,186 boxes
8,633 participants
45 counties



FoodShare's goal is to **enhance the quality of life** in our diverse communities by **increasing access** to fresh, affordable produce and providing quality cooking skills education. We **connect families** and communities to **fresh fruits and vegetables** through the use of our **Fresh Food Box**.

The Fresh Food Box is filled with 9-12 varieties of **top quality** fruits and vegetables. Unique recipes, tips and nutrition notes are included in every box to provide the encouragement and knowledge necessary to empower participants with the know-how and skills to prepare healthy, tasty meals.

FRESH FOOD BOX PAYMENT METHODS IN 2021



In 2021, across our nineteen county-based hubs, FoodShare South Carolina packed and distributed **tens of thousands of Fresh Food Boxes** to community members facing food insecurity. The only way we are able to get this job done is to rely on the generous support of a **strong volunteer force**. In 2021, volunteers contributed 2000 hours to FoodShare in Columbia and many more across the state. We thank each one of them for supporting their communities.



Expansion & Outreach

The FoodShare South Carolina Outreach team aims to build five to six county-based member hubs each year between now and 2025 by working with community coalitions and trusted non-profits.

These hubs will provide points for ordering and distribution of Fresh Food Boxes in communities around the state with the assistance of the FoodShare SC team. At the end of 2021, the FoodShare Member Hub Network is a thriving community of 19 organizations distributing boxes to 45 of the 46 counties in the state of South Carolina.

OUR STATE-WIDE COUNTY HUB GROWTH

2015

FoodShare launched in Columbia, SC

2018

Greenville - Mill Village Farms

2019

Spartanburg - Ruth's Gleanings

Orangeburg - ACE Food Hub

2020

Kershaw - United Way of Kershaw County

Lee - Mount Calvary Baptist Church

Bamberg - Southeastern Housing & Community Development

Chesterfield - Chesterfield County Coordinating Council

Lancaster - HOPE in Lancaster

2021

Laurens - SC Empowerment Centre (Launched March)

York - H.O.P.E./Helping Others Progress through Education (Launched April)

Cherokee - KNOW2 (Launched April)

Williamsburg - CMD's Pantry (Launched May)

Union - The RobinHood Group (Launched June)

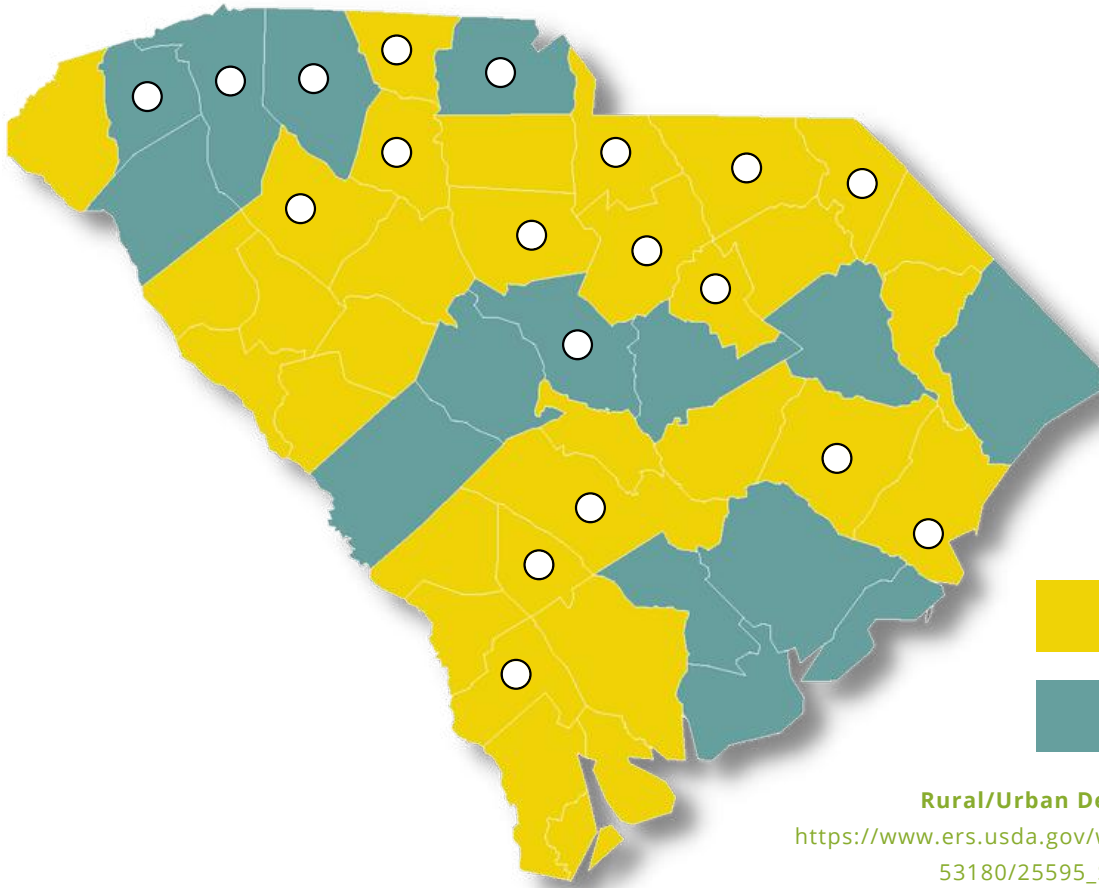
Hampton - Huspah Missionary Baptist Church (Launched July)

Marlboro - Old Marlboro Community School (Launched August)

Georgetown - Carolina Human Reinvestment Group (Launched August)

Pickens - Feed & Seed (Launched September)

Fairfield - Fairfield Forward (Launched November)



Rural

Urban

Rural/Urban Designation Source:
https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/DataFiles/53180/25595_SC.pdf?v=0 , Page 4





NeighborShare connects people who lack transportation with community resources and programs to improve their access to healthy food and overall support. NeighborShare serves vulnerable and/or low-income clients and community residents with a special emphasis on seniors. Since FoodShare was developed within a health system setting and designed to address a critical gap in chronic disease prevention, we are particularly interested in helping community members who suffer from chronic diseases related to poor nutrition including diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and cardiovascular disease.

Transportation is the lens through which we address food insecurity in the NeighborShare program. A dedicated group of volunteers deliver Fresh Food Boxes to homebound seniors who lack transportation.

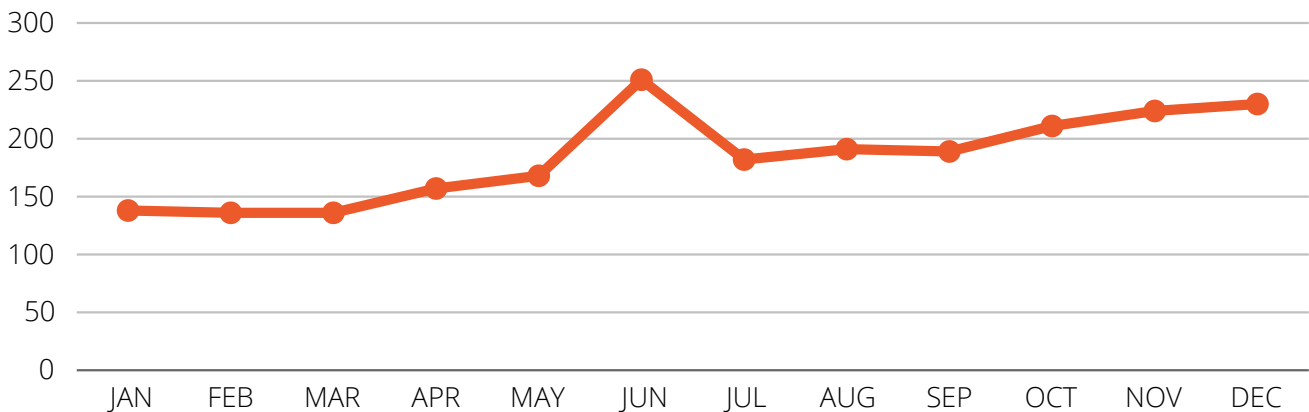
NEIGHBORSHARE BOX DISTRIBUTION IN 2021

2,213 boxes

91% via SNAP/EBT

45 volunteers

6 cities





Brenda is a long-time NeighborShare participant, and she is one of the program's biggest proponents. She learned about our program from her doctor, and she gets a box delivered to her every distribution cycle. She believes in the FoodShare model so much that she also encouraged her sister to get Fresh Food Boxes as well. "I want to tell everyone about this program, because it has helped me so much," she remarked. Even though she has tried other senior food delivery options, she did not like them because they were not fresh and she still likes to do her own cooking as often as she can.



Dee has been a volunteer with the NeighborShare program since the beginning, delivering boxes to several homebound seniors. Dee says, "I enjoy doing NeighborShare. It allows me to meet others in the neighborhood and to help those in need. I've made new friends and sometimes am able to help in other ways."



VeggieRx is a **fruit and vegetable prescription program** designed to increase the intake of fresh produce for patients with diet related diseases to improve health outcomes (reducing A1C, blood pressure and weight). Participating physicians ‘prescribe’ patients fresh fruits and vegetables that they receive from FoodShare’s Fresh Food Box Program. The long term goals are to **reduce food insecurity and decrease healthcare costs**. In the first cohort of VeggieRx patients there was a positive change in patients A1C levels and other indicators!

The VeggieRx program has pilot partnerships with the **Community Medical Clinic of Kershaw County, Good Shepherd Free Clinic of Laurens County** and **Family Health Center-Orangeburg**. A full program launch is anticipated to include Georgetown, Rock Hill and Walhalla.

“*When I came in I was broken, but when I left, I was feeling alright.*”



Rhonda is a participant in our VeggieRx program through a partnership with the Community Medical Clinic of Kershaw County



Culinary Medicine is the emerging field of **connecting evidence-based nutrition science to the food we prepare** in order to address an individual's health conditions. Our Culinary Medicine program teaches nutrition science and culinary skills to medical learners and professionals at the University of South Carolina Columbia School of Medicine using a nationally accredited curriculum. We offer a special lecture to introduce food security and social determinants of health to first-year students and a fourth-year intensive elective in culinary medicine. Our fourth-year elective focuses on **chronic disease prevention** and the **application of dietary recommendations** for the most critical diseases facing South Carolina, namely diabetes and heart disease.

Our Nutrition Education program does not stop with medical learners, our Fresh Food Box program always includes a recipe card for participants. Using ingredients from that week's box, we highlight healthy, easy recipes to encourage participants to eat healthfully from their box, whether it's a new recipe for an unfamiliar vegetable or a tip for keeping produce fresh longer.

In 2021, our new Director of Culinary Medicine brought a depth of nutrition knowledge to our program and adaptability to multiple teaching and outreach opportunities.

The program delivered tailored classes using a mobile teaching kitchen cart to 35 students in the Physicians Assistants Program at the School of Medicine, recorded informational videos for the South Carolina Hospital Association health promotion program and appeared on SCETV to showcase how to use produce from the Fresh Food Box in a Diabetes Friendly preparation. As we build our new Teaching Kitchen, plans are underway for the recommencement of community cooking classes, research partnerships and enhanced nutrition programming across the state.



Just as the kitchen is the heart of a home, our teaching kitchen aims to also be the heart of our Columbia community, serving as many individuals and groups as possible.

COVID-19 Response

In March 2020, our lives changed forever. The Covid-19 pandemic had a huge effect on communities across our state and indeed around the world. We saw record-level job loss, difficulties accessing healthcare, supply chain issues and the increasing cost of food.

At FoodShare South Carolina, we saw the impact of this, with an **increase in demand for our Fresh Food Boxes in both 2020 and 2021**. The impacts of the pandemic have only exacerbated challenges for families that were already struggling with food insecurity, especially Black and Brown families and low-income families.

At the height of the pandemic, food insecurity rates across the country doubled, and tripled in families with children. **Food insecurity is not an isolated challenge**, it works together with issues such as job loss, poor healthcare access and lack of affordable housing.



In an average week in South Carolina since the pandemic began...

Across households with kids, **14%** experience food insecurity



Across households with kids who are behind in rent, **34%** experience food insecurity



Source: <https://www.instituteforchildsuccess.org/housing-hunger-awareness-sc-faces-covid19-challenges/>

In response to the pandemic, adaptations were made at FoodShare that ensured the continued operation and expansion of the program to help address the increased food insecurity experienced around the state. A SNAP-Ed implementer provided consultation and technical assistance on how to make these adaptations.

These strategies included:

- A drive-thru option for customers to pick up their boxes
- Increasing the number of produce box pick up days in a month
- Limiting the number of volunteers at box packing and distribution
- Requiring masks and gloves were worn by staff and volunteers
- Expanding the space for sorting bulk produce and packing boxes

Source: https://2mjt5a2emh374130j5vkw9g-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/SERO-REPORT_FINAL.pdf



Advocacy



In 2021, FoodShare South Carolina decided that it was time that we use the leverage we have across the state to **engage in dialogues and advocacy** with our elected officials, and tighten our coalition building efforts with like-minded organizations. In 2021 we:

- Supported our Hub partners across the state in advocating for **American Rescue Plan (ARP)** dollars allocated to county and city councils to be used towards helping families with food access issues
- Advocated for State-allocated ARP money to be used to assist families with food access, and set up a **grant fund for non-profit work** across the state
- Organized the **“Columbia Candidate Forum on Food Justice”** hosted by Judi Gatson of WIS. All the candidates running for the 2021 City of Columbia election participated in this opportunity for community members to discuss food justice issues
- **Hosted four Hub launches** (Laurens, Williamsburg, Marlboro, Georgetown), **and two hub one-year anniversaries** (Chesterfield, Lancaster) where community members and elected officials could celebrate their community
- **Deepened engagement with coalitions across the state and county:** South Carolina Hunger Benefit Advocacy Coalition, State Nutrition Action Coalition, Columbia Food Policy Committee, South Carolina Food Policy Council, West Columbia Food Policy Committee, SC Roadmap to Food Security Learning Collaborative, Voices for Healthy Kids SNAP Incentive Affinity Group, Nutrition Incentive Hub State Funding Community of Practice



Media Engagement



As our program has grown and expanded, we have been fortunate to leverage coverage from various media outlets to spread information about FoodShare across the state.

Our website contains links to the press coverage and is continually updated.

<https://foodsharesc.org/news-and-events/>

Duke Energy Foundation donates \$50K to FoodShare South Carolina as part of November initiative to fight hunger

Jeannie Putnam | November 5, 2021



Fresh Food For All

How one organization is prioritizing the health of all South Carolinians

Taylor Jennings-Brown | June 15, 2020 | 3:15pm



by Cole Stovall / Cornet & Black



EQUIPMENT

Reefer truck to triple capacity for food-sharing organization

Aug. 4, 2021

Food-sharing organization Ruth's Gleanings recently unveiled a new refrigerated box truck that it plans to deploy in Spartanburg County, South Carolina.

Columbia neighborhood gets local alternative to chain dollar stores offering fresh food

BY MIKE FITTS MFITTS@POSTANDCOURIER.COM
OCT 20, 2021



Customers shop at the fruit and vegetable stand at The Dollar Store in the Booker Washington Heights neighborhood of Columbia. Mike Fitts/Staff

BY MIKE FITTS MFITTS@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

BUY NOW

Financial Impact

Even though FoodShare South Carolina is a non-profit organization, **our programs make a big impact on our local economy**, from supporting our local farmers, to the packaging and transportation industry, to grocery stores and local community organizations.

In 2021, FoodShare spent:

- Produce: \$923,909.78
- Cardboard Boxes: \$91,976.25
- Transportation/Delivery, Printing, Office Expenses: \$193,503.97

That's a huge boost to our local economy!

At FoodShare South Carolina, **45% of our Fresh Food Boxes are purchased using SNAP**. These sales take advantage of **Healthy Bucks**, a South Carolina SNAP incentive program and anti-poverty initiative that doubles the purchasing power of SNAP dollars when used to purchase fresh fruit and vegetables.

SNAP's primary goal is to reduce food insecurity, but the program also acts as an automatic stabilizer during economic downturns such as the COVID-19 pandemic. As incomes fall, SNAP spending tends to increase as more individuals become eligible and enroll in the program. In addition, **as SNAP enrollees spend their benefits, income is generated for all involved in the production, distribution, marketing, and sales of the final goods and products sold**, creating a multiplier effect throughout the economy that may extend well beyond the initial money distributed for the SNAP benefit.

The multiplier effect of SNAP is 1.8, which means for every \$1 spent using SNAP, an additional \$1.80 is circulated within the economy, such as farm income, jobs, and non-food purchases.

Even more encouraging is the multiplier effect of Healthy Bucks in the local economy. A 2021 study of SNAP incentives across the country, like Healthy Bucks, found that the national average multiplier is 2.3, that means for every \$1 of Healthy Bucks spent, \$2.30 circulates in the local economy.

Source: https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/93529/err265_summary.pdf

We are so thankful!

2021 was a challenge but filled with rewards! We could not have impacted the number of lives we did without the help and support of our partners. Thank you for believing in our mission.





FOODSHARE

feeding a need in our community.



@foodsharesc

A Program of



**School of Medicine
Columbia**

201 Columbia Mall Blvd., Suite 113
Columbia, SC 290223
803-851-4461
www.foodsharesc.org
info@foodsharesc.org
