

FOOD BANK OF WYOMING™

Wherever
hunger rises,
so can we.





As Tribal Relations Specialist with Food Bank of Wyoming, Jacqueline White heads the Culturally Responsive Food Initiative project on Wind River Indian Reservation. There, she works with Tribal Leaders from the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone tribes to set up mobile pantries, determine which food items are desired by residents, and ensure everyone who needs food on the reservation has access to it. Jacqueline has already seen the impact of the program. “There is always someone stopping and thanking me,” she said. “Food access is a need, not a want, and through this project we’re able to actively meet that need.”

GIVE TODAY AT
wyomingfoodbank.org/give-impact-report



Continuing to Serve with Strength, Tenacity, and Innovation

Following another year of unpredictability and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it feels necessary to pause and reflect on the many highs and lows experienced by Food Bank of Wyoming and the communities we serve.

The sustained high need for food assistance in 2021 can be seen acutely in the numbers in this report, particularly in the food-insecurity rate amongst children, which is even higher than the general population. In fiscal year 2021, we distributed over 13 million pounds of food. That's nearly 1.5 million pounds more than the previous year — a 12% increase. There were several factors contributing to this rise in need, including the high unemployment rate and the increase in price for basic goods like gas, diapers, and groceries.

To meet this need, we are now purchasing more food than ever, including upwards of 220,000 pounds of raw fruits and vegetables in fiscal year 2021 through our new FRESH program. In addition, we are striving to ensure that much of the food we purchase aligns with the mission of our Culturally Responsive Food Initiative, which aims to provide clients with culturally respectful foods. After completing its pilot phase this spring, we expanded this program to include our entire state, bringing culturally responsive foods such as pinto beans, Blue Bird Flour, yams, and tomatoes to the clients we serve.

This year we also increased the reach of our Mobile Pantry program and support to Hunger Relief Partners to serve more communities located in food deserts. Additionally, we joined other hunger-relief organizations in advocating for better access to federal nutrition programs and providing education so that critical food assistance can reach people in need with fewer barriers during this challenging time.

All of these initiatives align with Food Bank of Wyoming's recent rebranding. More than just a new look, our rebranding embodies our mission to ignite the power of community to nourish people facing hunger. We do this through our programs, Hunger Relief Partners, incredible volunteers, dedicated and passionate team, and generous supporters throughout Wyoming. We believe that for a community to thrive, every member must have the resources they need to flourish. We work daily to provide equitable access to proper nourishment for all: no matter where they live, who they are, or what circumstances life has thrown their way.

As the past year-plus has shown us, hardship can strike any of us at any time. And it is through the power of community — all of us, together — that we can help each other thrive.

Sincerely,
The Food Bank of Wyoming Team



This institution is an equal
opportunity provider.

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Our Fiscal Year 2021 Numbers

Illustrate the Sustained High Need for Food and Innovative Support



Individuals in Wyoming currently projected to be food insecure



Service Area Covered

97,093
SQUARE MILES

Pounds of Fresh Vegetables and Fruit Distributed

3,309,749

Volunteer Hours Logged

11,848
HOURS



How We Help

**25+ MOBILE
PANTRY SITES**
bring food and
necessities where
they're needed

Direct Programs

include Totes of
Hope™ for kids,
deliveries for
homebound older
adults, emergency
relief, and more.

Funding

fuels operations through
donations and ongoing
foundational support.

96¢
of every dollar
goes directly to our
food distribution
work

Food

comes from grocery
rescue and donations.
We also buy in bulk to
help funds go further.

\$1
helps us
distribute
enough food
for 4 meals

**Together,
we can.**

160+
Hunger Relief
Partners operate
in communities
throughout
Wyoming

Hunger Relief Partners

like food pantries receive our
food and distribute directly to
people in need.

Staff & Volunteers

work every day
to organize and
distribute food to
our partners and
programs.

4,000+
VOLUNTEERS
help sort and
distribute food and
necessities in a
typical year

Our fiscal year 2021 audited financial reports are available online. To access financial reports from recent years and our FY21 report, please visit wyomingfoodbank.org/about/financials

BRINGING

Culturally Responsive Foods

TO WIND RIVER INDIAN RESERVATION

As the 10th largest and least populated state in the nation, Wyoming is a land of striking landscapes, scattered communities, and high rates of food insecurity. The latter is particularly true for the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone people living on Wind River Indian Reservation.

The reservation stretches across 3,532 square miles of land (nearly twice the size of Delaware). On it, places to shop for food are scarce and separated by many miles. Compounding these already large challenges is the fact that many residents lack access to reliable transportation — or any transportation at all — yet have multigenerational households to support.

To help bridge this divide, Food Bank of Wyoming in tandem with Food Bank of the Rockies launched the Culturally Responsive Food Initiative (CRFI). Food access is “a need, not a want,” said Jacqueline White, Tribal Relations Specialist with Food Bank of Wyoming. “Through this project, we’re able to actively meet that need.”

In order to connect people with food choices that are in line with their culture, outreach consultants for CRFI were deployed to communities served by Food Bank of Wyoming to collect feedback about food preferences from clients. On Wind River Indian Reservation, Jacqueline and other CRFI members conducted surveys among members of the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone tribes to share with Food Bank of Wyoming’s food sourcing department so that culturally responsive food offerings could be included in future distributions. On the Northern Arapaho surveys, Jacqueline saw preferences for dried meat, Indian corn, fresh vegetables, and blueberries, which stand in for chokecherries in sacred ceremonies.



Residents of Wind River Indian Reservation requested food items like blueberries (left) and blue corn (right) through the Culturally Responsive Food Initiative. Community members there can now access these and other culturally respectful foods via monthly mobile pantries.



Once the data was collected, Food Bank of Wyoming worked to source and deliver the selected food items to the corresponding communities that requested them. A critical first step toward doing this on Wind River Indian Reservation involved establishing monthly, drive-through pantries dedicated to the separate tribes. Through these pantries, more than 2,000 people are served every month. “It’s a great blessing, especially the fresh vegetables,” Jacqueline noted.

Response from clients has been enthusiastic. “I loved that Food Bank of Wyoming understands the importance of Blue Bird Flour and blue corn to our people,” said Teresa His Chase. “Also, distributing the food at the school shows how committed everyone is to making it accessible to our community, including our students, families, and elders. The specialty items are appreciated and are a direct connection to our way of life and culture.”


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It’s what we do to nourish our neighbors; food is a major component of cultural identity, and specific foods carry specific cultural meanings that resonate.

The program has helped establish a relationship between Food Bank of Wyoming and Tribal Leaders on Wind River Indian Reservation, including the Northern Arapaho Business Council and the Eastern Shoshone Business Council. With their guidance and help, the initiative is also creating culturally respectful solutions for addressing food insecurity within their communities.

Immediate future goals for the Culturally Responsive Food Initiative on Wind River Indian Reservation include determining permanent partnerships with the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone tribes for hosting storage facilities where food can be distributed to each tribe and their community members on a regular basis. The Northern Arapaho Business Council Tribal Leaders have also been volunteering at the mobile pantries and, Jacqueline said, support the initiative “110 percent.”

“It’s what we do to nourish our neighbors; food is a major component of cultural identity, and specific foods carry specific cultural meanings that resonate,” said Myriam Wolcott, programs manager at Food Bank of Wyoming. “Food Bank of Wyoming is committed to this initiative because we believe that culturally responsive food supports communities in sustaining their cultural integrity while accessing nutrition.”

Jacqueline has already seen the impact on the Wind River community. “There is always someone stopping and thanking me,” she said. “We can work together collaboratively to help our tribal members.” 

Moorcroft Interfaith Community

When Monte Reichenberg first learned that the town of Moorcroft, Wyoming, didn't have a plan in place to access and distribute food should there be an emergency, he felt called to address the issue, just as seven years earlier he'd been called to move to Moorcroft to pastor First Presbyterian Church.

His wife, who is also a pastor, had taken a position with a church in Gillette, and Monte had originally planned to stay in Illinois and continue pastoring his church there. That plan quickly changed.

"I was told by the interim pastor at First Presbyterian that I'd be a good fit," said Monte while helping at Moorcroft's monthly mobile food pantry, which he organizes. "I put in my application and was accepted, and I love it. I love the rural areas. I lived in a rural area in Illinois, but there were still more people per square foot than there were animals. Here, I like it the other way around."

The mobile pantry in Moorcroft helps provide food to people living nearby as well as far away. Some people, like Marcus, pick up food boxes for members of their community who might not have the time or means to get the food themselves.



Located in the northeastern corner of the state, about 30 minutes south of Devil's Tower, Moorcroft is home to 1,122 people, eight churches, one grocery store, and two public schools: one serving grades K-8 and a high school. It is also where upwards of 2,000 families a month come from neighboring counties and as far away as Montana and South Dakota to get food from Moorcroft Interfaith Community's three-times-a-month food pantries.

"We're serving a major part of Crook County, which has a population of around 7,500," said Monte. "We're also drawing from Weston County and Campbell County. We don't turn anyone away. If they want food, we give it to them."

Crook County and Weston County face the highest rates of food insecurity in Wyoming. That Moorcroft, located in Crook County, didn't have a plan to feed its community in the event of an emergency, let alone a plan to alleviate the food insecurity faced daily by so many in the town, upset Monte — so much so that in 2019 he partnered with fellow local faith leaders to start Moorcroft Interfaith Community.



We don't turn anyone away. If they want food, we give it to them.


Since first partnering with Food Bank of Wyoming that same year, Moorcroft Interfaith Community has grown from being a monthly pantry serving 12 families to an official 501(c)(3) that has served 352 families in one day. They are also a TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program), Totes of Hope™, and Mobile Pantry partner with Food Bank of Wyoming, and operate the first three Thursdays of every month in various capacities in order to best serve their immediate and surrounding community.

"We try to make food available wherever we can," said Monte. "During the summer, we have Totes of Hope™ at the West Texas Trail Museum, library, senior center, and police department so kids can go in during the day and tell them they want food and pick it up. We have people who pick up and deliver boxes to their neighbors in Hulett, New Haven, Aladdin, Sundance, Beulah, Alva, Osage — all of the outreaching areas."

Top Right: Monte Reichenberg helped establish Moorcroft's relationship with Food Bank of Wyoming in 2019, and currently volunteers at and organizes the monthly mobile pantry in his community. **Right:** Many mobile pantry volunteers, like William, are also clients. "Everyone can use help sometimes. It's a privilege to get to help others, too," said William.

One such client is Marcus, who drives upwards of two hours round-trip every month to pick up food for his family and several other members of his community.

"I've been making the trip since September 2020, sometimes picking up food for as many as 25 or 30 families," Marcus said. "A lot of the people I pick up for are elderly, don't have a form of transportation, or have to work during the pantry hours. I'll either deliver the food directly to their houses or drop it off at the mercantile for them to come pick up."

Marcus' story is just one example of Moorcroft Interfaith Community and Food Bank of Wyoming's overall mission, said Monte, which is "to try to make food available wherever we can in whatever ways we can to whomever we can." 





Answering Food Insecurity ONE MILE AT A TIME

Tim Smith knew a lot about trucking, but he didn't know anything about Food Bank of Wyoming when he joined the organization as a driver almost eight years ago.

A Wisconsin native who moved to Wyoming in 1984, Tim had sold his trucking business and was considering what to do next when he was invited to come check out the trucking operation at Food Bank of Wyoming. Although he wasn't looking to become a driver, he liked what he saw and joined the team.

"I've personally never been in that place [of food insecurity], and I didn't know anyone in that place. It was all new to me," Tim said. "Now I feel it's a kind of privilege. It's hard to see and realize all the people who struggle with it. I enjoy being able to get out there to help."



Tim has driven to literally every corner of Wyoming, logging hundreds of thousands of miles through some of the nation's most beautiful scenery, but also through the state's notorious wind and snow. A typical day for him can be long, including a round-trip drive to and from the destination as well as time onsite supporting Hunger Relief Partners.

Tim has played an important role in helping Food Bank of Wyoming grow. "When I first started, we weren't doing mobile pantries. Partners were receiving deliveries only once a month, and that food didn't really last long," he recalled.

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I am thankful for the privilege and opportunity to be a driver for Food Bank of Wyoming. The gratefulness of the people is overwhelming.

When the coal mines closed in Gillette in 2016, the need for food in that community became especially dire. Tim assisted with coordinating and implementing the response — Food Bank of Wyoming's first mobile pantry. "We took two truckloads. There were a thousand people in line. We went back the next week with two more truckloads," Tim said.

Over time, Food Bank of Wyoming has added trucks and trailers to its fleet, scaled up capacity in its main Evansville distribution center, and provided additional freezers, refrigerators, and other equipment for Hunger Relief Partners, making it possible to expand the volume and frequency of food deliveries. Although Tim says he's "just the truck driver," he and his fellow drivers are making a huge impact being on the road six days a week. "The need has really increased. We've been putting out tons," Tim said — as in 12 million pounds in fiscal year 2020, increasing to over 13 million pounds in fiscal year 2021.

Yet Tim prefers to give credit to the more than 160 Hunger Relief Partners across the state. "I get so impressed with them. Their generosity is amazing," he said.

Over the years, Tim has developed friendships with many of the partners, and the volunteers show him their gratitude by praying for him, giving him cards and homemade treats, and making sure he has a cup of hot cider — or a bottle of water — waiting for him, depending on what Wyoming's dramatic weather is doing that day.

Meeting lots of people goes hand-in-hand with being a truck driver, and Tim considers this one of the many unique features of the job. "As you drive, you run into all kinds of situations, like shoveling people out of ditches," he said. "Once, there was a health emergency at a mobile pantry, and I had to do CPR. Thankfully, he came out of it okay. A while back, a herd of elk came around the bend in the road [near Yellowstone]; I stopped just in time."

Tim also enjoys helping out new partners when he makes their first delivery by answering all of their questions and reassuring them that everything is going to be okay. "I like doing that — you welcome them," he said.

Until recently, Food Bank of Wyoming was known as the Wyoming Food Bank of the Rockies. Tim likes the rebranded name because it "clearly identifies who I am serving: The people of Wyoming," whose spirit — in the face of real need — he has experienced firsthand while he's been on the road.

"I am thankful for the privilege and opportunity to be a driver for Food Bank of Wyoming," Tim said. "The gratefulness of the people is overwhelming." 🌱





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Mailing Address
City, State Zip



LOOKING AHEAD

Taking Action to End Hunger, Together

Just as the trials of 2021 were many, so were the opportunities to meet those challenges head-on. It is with this determination that we look ahead to 2022 with one mission in mind: To ignite the power of community to nourish people facing hunger.

We will do this not only by expanding our signature programs, but also by becoming an independent, Feeding America-affiliated food bank in the upcoming years.

Operating as an independent food bank would help Food Bank of Wyoming cultivate deeper community ownership by concentrating solely on the needs of our fellow Wyomingites. We have always sought to provide each of our Wyoming neighbors with the nourishment they

need to thrive, and as an independent organization, we believe we will be able to do this even more effectively.

We are still on the journey to Food Bank of Wyoming becoming an independent operation from Food Bank of the Rockies. In the meantime, we will continue working in partnership with them to nourish our neighbors. Just as it has in the past and will in the future, rest assured that **every dollar raised in Wyoming will stay in Wyoming.**

As we enter 2022, your continued support is critical in the fight against hunger. Together, we can take the next step toward ending food insecurity in Wyoming. Together, we can.

Inspired to learn more about how we are answering the challenge of hunger? Look inside for stories of impact, and find our full report online at wyomingfoodbank.org/impact-report