



Northern Lehigh Food Bank: A Legacy of Service Since 1987

The Northern Lehigh Food Bank has been a vital source of hope and nutrition for local families since its founding in 1987. Established as the “Wish Circle” of St. John’s Lutheran Church, the food bank began with the compassion and determination of 13 families who recognized the growing need within their community. What started as a small, faith-driven initiative has grown into one of the region’s most reliable lifelines for families facing food insecurity.

Founders and Leadership

The food bank’s early direction was guided by three dedicated first directors:

- Ruthann Mantz, Donald Sheirer and Dale Breyfogle

Their leadership laid a strong foundation for the operations, partnerships, and mission that continue today. The food bank is currently led by Barbara Scheirer, who carries forward the vision and commitment of the founders while guiding the organization into the future.

Serving a Growing Community

The Northern Lehigh Food Bank continues to see consistent need among local households.

- Average households served in 2024: 183
- Average households served in 2025: 174
- New families added in October 2025: 23

Total unique families served in 2025: 191
a 10% increase from the previous year.

Each month, the food bank supports an average of:

- 171 children
- 259 adults
- 102 seniors

This totals approximately 502 individuals per month, reflecting the broad reach and essential role the organization plays across all age groups.

Food Donations and Retail Partnerships

The food bank receives generous and consistent contributions from major regional retailers. Each month, donations include:

- 6,000–7,000 lbs from Wegmans
- 4,000–5,000 lbs from Giant
- 2,500–4,000 lbs from Target
- 750–1,000 lbs from Weis
- 450–500 lbs from Sheetz
- 50 lbs of bagels from Back Home Bagel

Additionally, Dunkin’ Donuts provides a mix of donuts, muffins, and bagels four times per month, and the food bank also receives support from Egypt Star Bakery. These partnerships ensure a diverse supply of food for families, from staples to fresh bread and baked goods.

Powered by Volunteers

At the heart of the food bank’s mission is a team of devoted volunteers who contribute approximately:

3,000–4,000 hours of service annually

From stocking shelves to sorting donations, assisting families, and coordinating distribution, volunteers ensure the organization operates smoothly and efficiently year-round.

Supporting the Region Beyond Northern Lehigh

The Northern Lehigh Food Bank also extends its support to other community organizations, ensuring that surplus food benefits as many people as possible. Partner organizations include:

- Lehigh Cold Weather Station
- Allentown and surrounding-area food banks
- Parkland Cares
- Rescue Mission

By sharing resources, the food bank helps strengthen the regional support system and reduce food waste while reaching additional individuals in need.

