



North Valley
Food Bank

North Valley Food Bank | 2021 Annual Report



Our Mission

Building
food security,
strengthening
communities.

A Letter From Our Board President and Executive Director

Dear Community,

June Munski-Feenan started Whitefish Food Bank 45 years ago in her garage. Now known as North Valley Food Bank (NVFB), we have continued to build on her legacy and the grassroots efforts of our community of volunteers. In 2013, NVFB moved to its current location on Flathead Avenue. Now, almost a decade later, we have completed a major remodel to address the dramatic increase in the need for

food assistance in the northern Flathead and beyond. Food insecurity remains a hidden issue here in Whitefish. The Covid-19 pandemic, inflation, and the rising cost of housing have worsened the situation for many local families already struggling to make ends meet, as well as forced many households to seek assistance for the first time.

Thanks to the tremendous support of generous individuals, foundations, businesses, partner organizations, and volunteers, we increased our food distribution to record levels in 2021 to meet the growing needs of our community. Once again, you showed that standing together in challenging times ensures our neighbors don't go to bed hungry.

In this annual report, you will learn more about NVFB's critical work in 2021. We remain committed to serving all community members who experience food insecurity, because access to healthy quantities of nutritious food is not, and should never be, a privilege. In 2022, we will continue to allocate food equitably, build our capacity to provide resources beyond emergency food assistance, and increase the distribution of fresh, nutrient-dense food. Ultimately, we envision a world with well-nourished, connected communities. Your support of NVFB made the accomplishments of 2021 possible. We hope you will be inspired to continue to support us in 2022. Together, we can build food security and strengthen communities.

With heartfelt gratitude,
Zac Weinberg & Sophie Albert



Zac Weinberg
Board President



Sophie Albert
Executive Director

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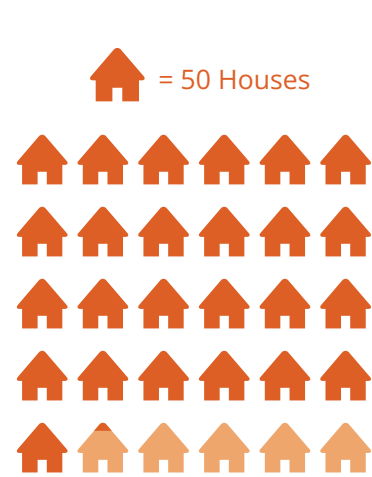


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2021 in Numbers



1,257
Different Households
Served



166
Families Assisted
with Emergency Rental
Assistance



3,196
Different Individuals
Served



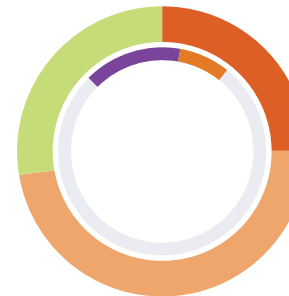
403
Total Pounds of Wild
Game Processed at NVFB

1,094,989
Pounds of Food Moved
Through our Facility



Demographics of our Customers

- Children: 25%
- Adults: 45%
- Seniors: 30%
- Veterans: 8%
- Disability: 16%



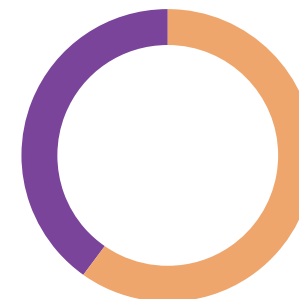
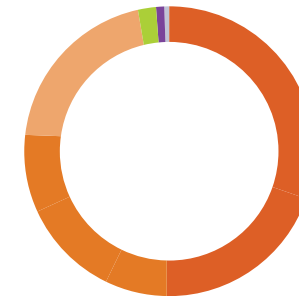
9,477
Total visits of NVFB



- 2,667 (approx. 28%)
Visits at our Mobile Pantries
- 6,810 (approx. 72%)
Visits at our Grocery Store,
Drive-Thru Distribution

Housing Situation

- Rent: 50%
- Own Their Home: 33%
- Staying w/ Friends or Family: 10%
- Car/Tent: 4%
- Shelter/Hotel: 2%
- Traveling Through: <1%



- 700 (approx. 31%)
Weekend Bags
- 1,538 (approx. 69%)
Meals and Snacks

2,238

Summer Meals Provided in
Partnership with Whitefish
School District and
Farm Hands



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Summary of our Remodel

Due to the dramatic increase in the need for food assistance, what appeared to be an adequate food bank facility for Whitefish in 2013, was bursting at the seams in 2020. As a result, NVFB decided to build an 800 square foot addition to increase critically needed refrigeration, freezer, and dry-goods warehouse space, as well as address safety concerns. Further, NVFB changed the building interior to open a free grocery store, add office space and install a community kitchen with commercial-grade equipment.

The increased warehouse, refrigeration and freezer space made it possible to move 1.1 million pounds of food – an all-time record – through our building in 2021. Our new walk-in coolers and freezers can now store more than 27 pallets of food. This allows us to serve both our customers in Whitefish and at our mobile pantry sites, as well as deliver food to our five rural pantry partners.

The remodel also addressed critical safety concerns and ensured that NVFB can offer safe volunteer experiences for a diverse group of community members. The electrical capacity was upgraded to a commercial three-phase system. The new in-floor scale and the pallet-wide freezer and cooler doors provide the ability to move food using an electric pallet jack without unpacking and manually lifting thousands of pounds.

Further, the new kitchen allows NVFB to offer food education classes and to preserve more nutrient-dense food from local growers through methods such as dehydrating and flash freezing for year-round distribution to our customers. Finally, the kitchen facility will allow for job skills training for youth-at-risk, and adults with disabilities to help prepare them for employment at Whitefish's many hospitality businesses.



Our New Free Grocery Store

In November 2021, NVFB switched to a “Choice Model” pantry opening a free grocery store in our remodeled building. Our neighbors can now choose the food they like instead of receiving pre-packaged boxes. This model reduces food waste and more importantly, supports a more dignified approach to food assistance. The grocery store operates on Wednesdays from 12:00–6:00. Drive-thru distribution service is still offered on Thursdays, from 12:00–4:30.

Percentage of customers who struggled to manage their food costs with other bills like heat and electricity.

43%

Percentage of customers who reported that they had run out of money to buy food in the previous two weeks.

28%

At NVFB, everyone is welcome. There are no eligibility requirements to receive food. Additionally, there is no judgment about how much customers need or take when shopping at the grocery store. Our goal is to fill the gaps between where resources end and plates are full.

The change to a choice model has been instituted in response to the growing need for food assistance. Our recent community needs assessment determined that 43% percent of our customers struggled to manage their food costs with other bills like heat and electricity. Furthermore, 28% of customers reported that they had run out of money to buy food in the previous two weeks. NVFB hopes that the flexibility offered by the grocery store model will allow customers to better meet and plan for their needs.





Our Mobile Pantries

Two years ago, NVFB started our Mobile Pantry Program serving Trego, Olney and Essex to ensure families dealing with transportation issues have access to services. The Trego mobile pantry has quickly grown from serving 25 households weekly in early 2020 to 150 households in 2021. It is now our biggest food distribution operation. Through this mobile pantry, NVFB consistently provides services to people living in Stryker, Trego, Olney, Fortine, Eureka, Rexford, and West Kootenai.

Our 2021 community needs assessment showed that prior to expanding our services, 60% of community members in Trego had very little fresh food in their house and nearly half constantly worried about running out of food. Additionally, customers from Trego, Olney, and Fortine experience a higher level of difficulty accessing a grocery store. In 2022, we will move to delivering pallets of food to be packed by Trego Civic Center volunteers instead of delivering boxes prepacked at NVFB. This will ensure a community-based approach and move responsibilities over to the local volunteer force. Further, we are exploring sustainable solutions in collaboration with the Board of Directors of the Trego Civic Center to upgrade their Community Hall to be able to store food on-site. We anticipate in the future, the Trego operation can become a community run satellite pantry.



Our Rural Pantry Delivery Program

Each week throughout 2021, NVFB volunteers delivered food directly to the doorsteps of 35 households located within a 10-mile radius from NVFB. Our delivery customers are generally elders living with medical challenges and/or limited access to transportation.

While NVFB has facilitated our Delivery Program for a number of years, we made an important change to the program this year to better serve our customers. When we opened our grocery store in Fall 2021, we realized that delivery customers didn't have a way to choose their groceries like the customers who shop in person can. We created a Delivery Program shopping list

that delivery customers can use to indicate their preferred grocery items, including any special needs or requests related to medical concerns like allergies, diabetes, or heart conditions.

Although this approach requires more time and attention than our previous practice of sending uniform sets of groceries to everyone, it's clear that the additional work is more than worth the effort to provide our customers with the personalized food items they not only prefer, but often require. We continue to receive positive feedback from customers expressing their gratitude for the beneficial changes we've made to this program.





Volunteer Champions

200+ Hours Christ Lutheran Church, Dusty Hosek, Joan Paulson, Whitefish High School National Honor Society

100+ Hours Donnie Bestwick, Colin Colbert, Avery Elkins, Kristy Elkins, Kim Frederichs, Kendra Hope, Carol Lightbody, Babby McCartney, Lynette Murphy, John Phelps, Melisa Phelps, Tony Veseth, Zac Weinberg, Brenda Wilmore

238
Total Number of
Volunteers

5,529
Total Number of
Volunteer Hours



Thank You 2021 Supporters!

Your gift helps us address food insecurity in our community.

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We are grateful for your gift and strive to recognize every donor. If you see any inaccuracy, please contact us at elizabeth@northvalleyfoodbank.org.

Marshall & Kathy Friedman

What do you get when you cross adventurous spirits with the love of mountain towns? Marshall and Kathy Friedman! The Friedmans were accidental tourists when they fell in love with Whitefish after traveling for an aerobatic flight show 20 years ago. As it turns out, Marshall, one of the country’s top stunt pilots, and Kathy, a pilot in her own right, were looking for a new place to call home – but not just any place. They wanted a down-to-earth mountain town and were immediately smitten with Whitefish’s character, arts scene and local population. Better yet, in Whitefish they found an engaged, close knit community that was dedicated to the well-being of all its members.

Marshall and Kathy are carrying on the tradition of community care by including North Valley Food Bank (NVBF) in their will. “We are impressed that North Valley Food Bank not only distributes food, but they also partner with local farms to provide healthy, nutritious food for our neighbors”, stated Marshall. The Friedmans believe it’s the responsibility of those who are fortunate to have the resources, to give to others in need. “That’s the key ingredient to creating good neighbors and a good community”, added Kathy. And it’s an ingredient they plan to share through their estate gift! If you would like more information about legacy giving, please contact Elizabeth Temple, NVFB’s Director of Development, at 406.862.5863 Ext. 1002. Thank you!





Thank You to Our Community Partners

We would like to thank our community partners in the northern Flathead and beyond.
Together we are building food-secure communities!

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Pantry Evergreen, West Shore Food Bank, Whitefish School District, Yaak Food Cupboard

Local Organizations:

Alternative Energy Resource Organization, Flathead Spay and Neuter Task Force, Flathead Valley Community College, Glacier Skate Academy, KALICO Art Center, Montana Conservation Corps, Save Farmland, Stumptown Arts, Whitefish Community Foundation, Whitefish Library

Food Acquisition:

Montana Food Bank Network

Local Schools and Churches:

All Saints' Episcopal Church, Christ Lutheran Church, Columbia Falls High School Students, First Presbyterian Church, Hope Church, Muldown Elementary, Olney-Bissel School, St. Charles Catholic Church, St. Peter Lutheran, Trailhead Church, Whitefish Alternative High School Students, Whitefish Assembly of God, Whitefish Children's House Montessori, Whitefish Christian Academy, Whitefish High School

(National Honor Society), Whitefish Middle School, Whitefish United Methodist

Local Businesses:

Abruzzo, Amazing Crepes, Bookworks, Buffalo Cafe, Bulldog Salon, Caseys, Corwin Motors, Craggy Range, Delia Pilates Studio, Dirt Rich, First Interstate Bank, Folklore Coffee, Glacier Bank, Great Northern Bar and Grill, Imagination Station, Jalisco Cantina, Jersey Boys Pizza, Kalispell Ford, Latitude 48, Le Marche, Logan Health Whitefish, MacKenzie River Pizza, Mama Blancas, Parkside Credit Union, Piggyback Barbeque, Rebel Real Estate, Sacred Waters Brewery, Spotted Bear Spirits, Sprouts Children's Boutique, Sweet Peaks, The Wave, Tupelo Grill, VFW Whitefish, Weyerhaeuser, Whitefish Credit Union, Whitefish Lake Restaurant, Whitefish Pilot, Yogadana

We are grateful for your partnership and strive to recognize all partners. If you see any inaccuracy, please contact us at elizabeth@northvalleyfoodbank.org.



Challenging Times for Our Customers

Our customer, S., began to come to NVFB last year after she had to quit her job because of Covid-19 and sickness related to her pregnancy. "When I was ready to go back to work", she shared, "no one would hire me because I was pregnant."

For a while, S. visited NVFB one or two times a month to subsidize groceries for her family of six. She and her husband struggled to make ends meet due to skyrocketing rent prices and challenges finding affordable childcare. Last month, after their family truck broke down, they had to spend all their savings on repairs.

Prior to this collision of unexpected events, S. never had trouble keeping gas in her tank, but the last month has been especially tough. She shared that her family now depends fully on the food bank for their weekly groceries.

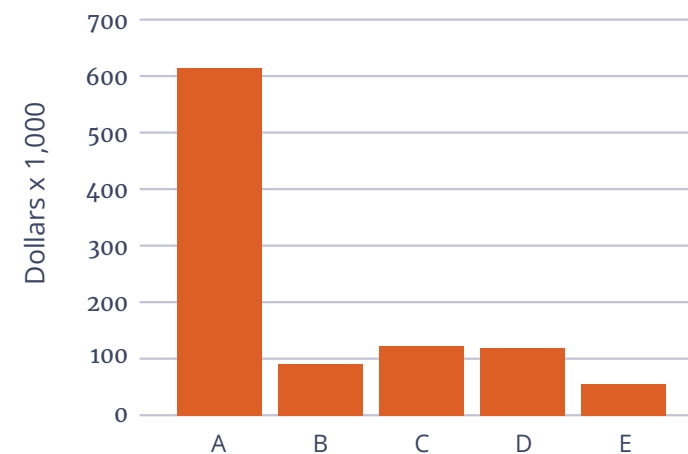
"I felt embarrassed at first but everyone here is so nice. When you really struggle paying for things, this is one less thing to worry about." S. likes the new grocery store model of NVFB, "I love the snack bags for kids. I also like that you can pick and choose the vegetables you need and that there is always meat and other staples available." Thanks to NVFB and our many supporters, S. is able to serve her family delicious meals during this difficult time.





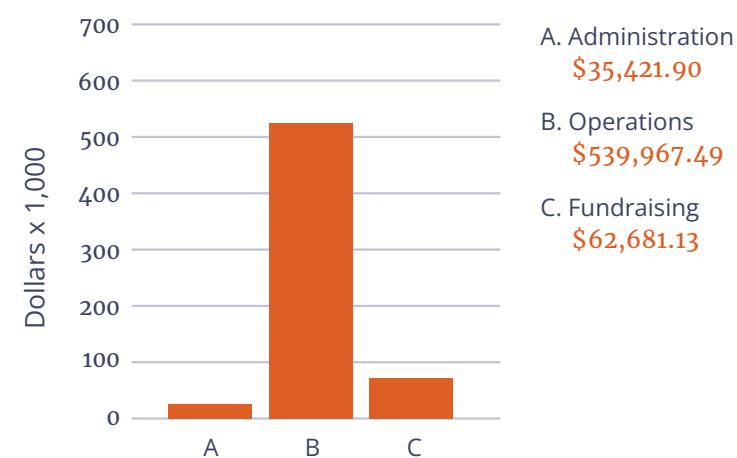
2021 Calendar Year Financials

Revenue \$1,007,298.67



- A. Donations
\$602,280.57
- B. Grants
\$85,192.86
- C. Great Fish Community Challenge
\$130,738.36
- D. Restricted Capital Campaign Income
\$130,981.60
- E. Other Income (Interest and Investments)
\$58,105.28

Expenses \$638,070.52



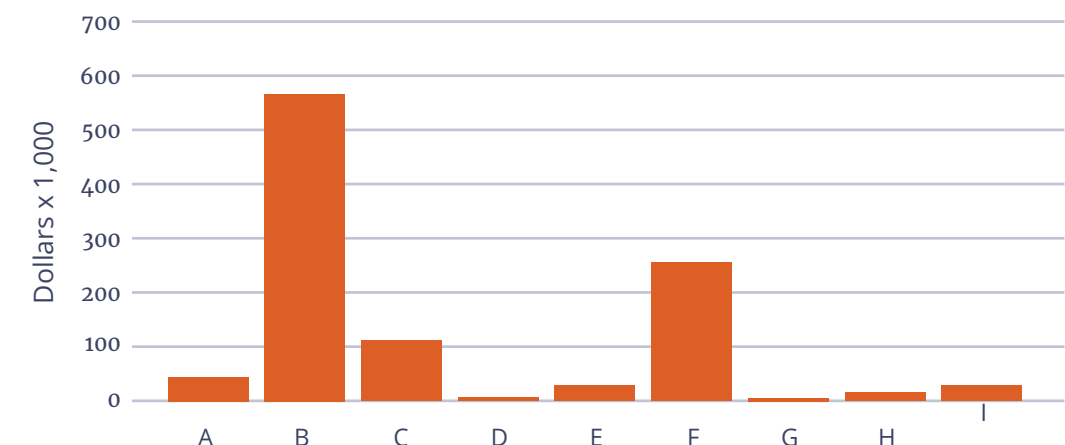
- A. Administration
\$35,421.90
- B. Operations
\$539,967.49
- C. Fundraising
\$62,681.13



Total In-Kind Income:
\$1,005,482.98



Capital Campaign Expense Summary \$1,066,950.00



- A. Architectural and Engineering Fees
\$44,800.00
- B. Construction
\$567,673.00
- C. Walk-In Coolers and Freezer
\$105,263.00
- D. In-floor Scale
\$2,264.00
- E. Grocery Store Equipment
\$36,401.00
- F. Commercial Kitchen Equipment
\$262,721.00
- G. Office Furniture
\$1,654.00
- H. IT
\$9,650.00
- I. Contingency
\$36,524.00

*Please note NVFB recently switched to a new fiscal year July 01 – June 30. This change will be reflected in our upcoming Form 990 and all financial reports moving forward.





Coming in 2022 Stay Tuned!

Harvesting and Gleaning

In July 2022, we will launch the pilot year of our new harvesting and gleaning program. This program ensures that our customers receive more fresh, nutrient dense food while also saving produce that would otherwise be left in the field. During the pilot year, we will work closely with Two Bear Farm and volunteers will harvest and glean throughout the season.

Gleaning programs reduce food loss and decrease the area's environmental impact.

Our program will also connect members of the community to the local food system, making it a great sustainable step towards fighting food insecurity.

We are extremely excited for this program to begin as it gives us the opportunity to continue to advance on our mission of building food security and strengthening communities, all while learning about Montana farming. We hope to see you in the fields with us!

Food Education

Looking ahead to 2022, we're excited to launch our new Food Education program. We've already begun incorporating some aspects of the program into our existing services, particularly in our choice model community grocery store. In 2021, we became members of the statewide Montana Harvest of the Month (HOM) program. This program is a collaborative effort among Montana State University and several other local entities that seeks to raise awareness about Montana-grown foods within Montana communities. Each month, we source a regional food product and distribute it to our customers, along with HOM educational materials

such as recipes, children's activities, and informational handouts.

As we complete the process of outfitting our commercial kitchen in 2022, we're making plans to use our new equipment to produce samples and meal kits of featured dishes. This will provide customers not only with information about the showcased foods, but also an opportunity to taste them while shopping in our store. We will also use the kitchen to host educational events like food preparation demonstrations and cooking classes, which will be open both to existing customers and the community in general.



Food Processing

One of the key activities that will take place in our commercial kitchen is food processing. We routinely receive large quantities of donated food from various sources, including local grocery stores. Oftentimes, these donations include items that cannot be distributed as-is, but can be processed into usable products. For example, we would not distribute a bruised

apple to a customer – but in our kitchen, we're now able to salvage the edible parts of that apple and prepare it into a familiar product like applesauce. This effort will help reduce the amount of food waste we generate while also providing a new source of nutritious, handmade food products to our customers.





Building Food Security, Strengthening Communities



North Valley
Food Bank

2021 Annual Report
251 Flathead Ave, Whitefish, MT 59937 | (406) 862-5863