

NTFB VOICE Advocacy Update

ADVOCATING FOR A HUNGER-FREE, HEALTHY NORTH TEXAS



October Advocacy Newsletter 2024

Local NTFB News

In partnership with Crossroads Community Services, NTFB held a briefing for elected officials and community members on the work of its network in Southern Dallas on September 26. Within Dallas County, 20% of the county's more than 406,000 people facing hunger live in just 10 Southern Dallas zip codes. The NTFB, and its South Dallas distribution hub partner Crossroads Community Services, and its partner pantries are making strides in addressing the need in this area.

Between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2024, the NTFB and its partners have provided access to 30.4 million physical meals in 10 Southern Dallas zip codes as well as 23 million meals that were accessed through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which NTFB staff help neighbors apply for.

Those physical meals were distributed through partners like Crossroads, which is the largest provider of food assistance in Southern Dallas County, as well as Catholic Charities, Empowering the Masses, Brother Bill's Helping Hand, The Mint Foundation, Miles of Freedom, and many others. Additionally, NTFB works with multiple campuses to host school pantries and Food 4 Kids distributions, which provide chronically hungry students with bags of kid-friendly groceries to take home over the weekend.

During that same time period, NTFB also awarded \$3.1 million in grants to 19 unique partner agencies in Southern Dallas. That money funded things like refrigeration so pantries could store produce, the purchase of trucks for food transportation and the establishment of wraparound services, such as financial literacy or job skills classes that target the underlying barriers to food security.



Benaye Wadkins Chambers, CEO of Crossroads, agreed partnerships are a key component of the work in Southern Dallas as they strive to create nutrition-stable communities. At Crossroads, they do this through their market, which provides consistent access to nutritious food for neighbors, as well as through their work as a hub, which means they distribute NTFB food to partner pantries in their vicinity.

The idea of food as medicine is also something that Crossroads, NTFB, Brother Bill's and other organizations are prioritizing. Benaye said Crossroads is launching a nutrition pharmacy concept at RedBird Mall to ensure referred patients from Parkland and UT Southwestern health centers have access to nutritious food. Along with access to food, diabetic and other patients referred to the market also receive guidance on how to prepare items nutritiously to support their condition.

NTFB recently launched a FoodRx program that allows partner clinics to provide food-insecure patients with a box of food as well as a referral to a partner pantry where they can access produce and other nutritious food to support their health. These types of programs, take a lot of work and funding, which is something they'll be looking to state leaders for during the upcoming Legislative session.



In attendance were staff from state and federal representative's offices, the Dallas City Council and the City of Dallas, and a number of community representatives. After the presentation, there was a productive discussion, and we will continue to work together to address food insecurity in Southern Dallas. A copy of the report can be found [HERE](#).

Federal News

The Farm Bill

Also known as the Farm, Food and National Security Act of 2024, H.R 8467.

Congress left Washington for recess without passing the Farm Bill. Pressure is growing to take up the Farm Bill after the November election if an agreement is reached. If that happens, watch for an e-mail from us for a call to action!

State News

The 89th Texas Legislative Session convenes at noon on Tuesday, January 14, 2025. Our Feeding Texas Roundtable, which is made up of all the food banks in Texas and other food-insecure related organizations around the state, has been working on our legislative priorities. They will be released in November after the bills have been filed, so look for them in the next newsletter. Wednesday, April 2, 2025, has been designated as our state advocacy day in Austin. Information to come about this but mark your calendars if you're interested in attending.

Call to Action!



Early voting has begun and ends on November 1st! Election Day is November 5th. Find out if you're registered and where you can vote [here](#).