



Foodlink
NOURISHING LIVES



2022 Impact Report

ON THE COVER

Tasheka Smith and her daughter, Ti'Ajhanay, sit outside at Warfield Square, one of Foodlink's Curbside Market stops. Tasheka is a Curbside Market Ambassador at her apartment complex, which became one of 10 market sites that offered WIC-eligible grocery items. In 2021, the Curbside Market celebrated becoming the first mobile vendor of WIC-eligible foods in the nation. Tasheka and our Ambassadors helped lead the program's expansion in 2022.

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This Impact Report reflects Foodlink's most recent fiscal year from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.



LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO

At Foodlink, we are accustomed to looking for the good — the “bright spots” that remind us of the *why* behind our work. Stories of a parent losing employment and getting needed support from a local food pantry, or a recent retiree finding renewed purpose by volunteering to sort food, or a Curbside Market shopper who has transformed their diet and health. These stories matter. But rarely do “bright spots” show up in the form of lasting, systemic change. That’s why we were so struck by a recent report that demonstrated child poverty decreased by 59 percent from 1993 to 2019. The report, by nonpartisan research group Child Trends, details how an investment in critical safety net programs at the federal level—including SNAP and child tax credits—are responsible for keeping roughly 12 million children out of poverty. The report demonstrates that ending childhood poverty is a policy choice that is within reach.

In this Impact Report, you’ll read about some innovative initiatives Foodlink is leading to reduce childhood food insecurity and to support parents — especially pregnant individuals and young mothers. We know that poor nutrition has a catastrophic impact

on a child’s life and is linked to delayed development and diet-related illnesses, which is why I could not be prouder of Foodlink’s work to become the first mobile WIC vendor in the nation and to pilot home delivery of nutritious food boxes to pregnant and post-partum individuals. Both of these accomplishments are detailed in the coming pages.

These initiatives complement the 17.3 million meals that Foodlink distributed this past year, through our food bank and community kitchen. We’re proud of this work, while also recognizing that much of it is a bandaid for the symptoms of a broken system. That’s why, in addition to ensuring that the emergency food network in our region has the quantity and quality of food they need, we have also deepened our engagement in advocacy and public policy at the local, state and federal levels. Our mission calls us to advocate for policies—like federal nutrition programs—that have the proven ability to reduce childhood poverty nationwide.

None of this would be possible without you—the countless donors, volunteers and community partners who support our critical work. Thank you, as always, for your generosity and commitment to Foodlink’s mission.



Julia Fedesco



Foodlink adopted a new strategic framework in July 2021 — a two-year plan designed to be adaptive and responsive while we continued to navigate the uncertainties of the pandemic. We're pleased to share a few of our key accomplishments from our first year.

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A new strategic framework



OUR CORE WORK

Provide food assistance.

We developed a new model for our mobile distributions and pantries, with a focus on rural communities. Foodlink and our partners hosted **285 Pop-up Pantries** at more than 30 locations across our service area.

Build healthier communities.

The Foodlink Community Kitchen took a major leap forward with new partnerships that expanded our meal production to levels never seen before. In total, **848,504 lunches** were produced and served by 162 partners — the most amount of meals served in a single year in Foodlink's history.

Drive change. The Foodlink Career Fellowship continues to grow and fuel Rochester's next generation of culinary professionals. For the first time ever, Foodlink hosted **two Fellowship classes concurrently**, all while providing excellent training opportunities and service to the community at the Foodlink Community Café!

OUR KEY PRIORITIES

Investing in organizational agility. This past year saw the launch of the **Foodlink Continuous Learning Program**, which offers accessible training and learning opportunities to all staff; The organization also committed a record-high investment in professional development and IT infrastructure.

Centering the people who use our services. We adapted the Curbside Market based on stakeholder feedback, and continued to recruit dedicated **Curbside Market Ambassadors** while increasing their annual stipend. Foodlink also held focus groups with partner agencies and core volunteers as a tool for guiding the strategic direction of our operations.

Prioritizing the work to become a more equitable and anti-racist organization. The Human Resources and Leadership teams developed and implemented the **Foodlink Compensation Project** in collaboration with Keating Advisors—a black, woman-owned consulting firm. A new compensation philosophy, administrative guidelines, and salary ranges were instituted to continue to ensure compensation is competitive, transparent and equitable at all levels.





A WIC EXPANSION

The Women, Infants & Children (WIC) federal nutrition program provides food assistance, nutrition education and other critical resources for young, low-income families as they navigate pregnancy, post-partum and their child's first five years of life.

The program is proven to improve maternal and child health, reduce food hardship and mitigate racial and ethnic disparities related to infant mortality rates. Barriers to participation (such as enrollment difficulties, stigma and a lack of nearby vendors), however, have long been a roadblock to its success.

Last year, the Curbside Market celebrated a major milestone, becoming the *first mobile market in the nation to accept WIC benefits.*

"From the moment we received our first significant grant for this initiative in 2018, to the moment we stopped at our first WIC site in 2021, this has been a massive undertaking and truly a team effort," said Camille Verbosky, Foodlink's Director of Community Health Programs. "We're honored to be able to serve so many young families in Rochester by making it easier to access healthy, affordable foods."

A healthy start for children



The Curbside Market expanded from 2 to 10 WIC sites in the summer of 2022. Foodlink's Community Health team also leveraged the early successes of its Curbside Market Ambassador program to recruit WIC-specific Ambassadors at many of the newer sites.

Curbside Market Ambassador Tasheka Smith successfully advocated for the market to return to her apartment complex in 2022, and she quickly went door to door to recruit customers. Tasheka shared that transportation and a lack of vendors have been two primary barriers to using WIC among many participants.

"In Rochester, it depends on where you are," she said. "The major stores, like Tops, Wegmans, Price Rite all have WIC (products), but the little stores? No ... you're not going to find much ... My son is in love with your blueberries. I have to give him his own pack, every time. My daughters love the strawberries and cantaloupe."

Tasheka used to make the mile-long walk to the Public Market, but having the Curbside Market as a weekly resource about 50 feet from her door has been a huge help.

Foodlink's Senior Manager of Community Engagement, Flo Clemmons, has seen the Curbside Market grow since its inception.

Clemmons and her colleague, Ebony Eli, now work closely with Ambassadors to equip them with what they need to help the market succeed.

"This has been a very exciting next step for the market," Clemmons said. "We've always done well with reaching a senior population and redeeming SNAP benefits, but it's gratifying to now see us venture into new territory with WIC, and support young parents and their children."

A MATERNAL HEALTH INNOVATION

While the Curbside Market's WIC initiative was getting on the road this past year, a second initiative to support pregnant individuals was also underway.

Through a partnership with Excellus BlueCross BlueShield and the Finger Lakes Performing Provider System (FLPPS), more than 150 expectant mothers were enrolled in a "Fresh Picks" program in which the Curbside Market delivered a box of fresh produce, recipes and other groceries to them on a biweekly basis.

The program welcomed participants in the second trimester, and deliveries continue for an entire year.

"Supporting women with healthy food during this critical juncture in their lives fully aligns with our mission," said Julia Tedesco, President & CEO of Foodlink. "Excellus has been a wonderful partner in this 'Food is medicine' health intervention, and we hope to see it continue for years to come."



Food banks have played a vital role in our nation's response to both the immediate and long-term economic impacts of the pandemic — particularly our role within the food system. Our historically high distribution numbers, however, only tell part of the story. The pandemic also gave food banks the opportunity to *change* our food system.

RAISING OUR VOICE

A perfect example occurred on January 19, 2022, when President & CEO Julia Tedesco testified virtually with Members of Congress, the Director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness, the federal government's Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, and a physician and the CEO of one of the nation's oldest and largest community trusts. Julia presented on using budget principles to prepare for the next pandemic or natural disaster. We sat at the table for this discussion because food banks — and Foodlink, in particular — had earned that seat.

Tedesco spoke of Foodlink's pandemic response, and advocated for stronger investment in the nonprofit sector.

"Nonprofits are not merely a group of small charities trying to do good," Tedesco said. "We are oftentimes the engine that generates innovative solutions to complex problems in our society."

While not virtually on Capitol Hill in Washington addressing federal issues, Foodlink also spent a significant amount of time advocating for change at the state and local level.



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An advocate for change



ENGAGING WITH SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Foodlink continues to deepen its relationships with schools with an intentional push to alleviate childhood food insecurity in meaningful, more impactful ways.

The Backpack Program has been a mainstay at Foodlink — and across the nation — for decades. While it adequately provides a stopgap solution to short-term food insecurity for kids on weekends and holiday breaks, it does not provide the additional services or care that many children need and deserve.

Thus, Foodlink spent much of the last year forming partnerships with

schools across the region, and has helped set up **31 unique school pantries, a 70% increase** from where we stood two years ago. Twelve of those pantries launched in the past year.

Many of these partnerships have been within the Rochester City School District, but we also forged ahead with new partnerships in surrounding counties.

Jay Roscup, Director of Community Schools of Wayne County, reported increased food security amongst students since partnering with Foodlink. The addition of regular

In early 2022, New York State food banks advocated for the first significant **increase to the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP)** in more than five years. The state’s Department of Health budget included a \$22 million increase — a 64% boost in funding.

At the local level, Foodlink collaborated with the City of Rochester, Common Ground Health and other community leaders to help launch the city’s first Food

Policy Council. This resident-led coalition is tasked with creating a healthier and more equitable food system — a goal of the “Rochester 2034” Comprehensive Plan.

Food banking is how we feed people. Advocacy is how we drive change. At Foodlink, we can and will do both — in hopes that, eventually, one eradicates the other.



Pop-up Pantries at local schools contributed to the improvement.

“We do not have to accept hunger as a reality here,” Roscup said. “Our comprehensive bi-annual surveys show that 2021 for both middle school and high school students, food security was the highest it has been in five years. Our students benefit from a carefully shaped and robustly equipped approach.”

Similarly, the Foodlink Community Kitchen sought to focus more on the experience of its customers this past year so that local children could benefit from the higher quality meals on which Foodlink prides itself.

Through increased visits to meal sites, driver ride-alongs and more, Foodlink staff sought feedback on its service and collected data to inform future best practices across its customer base. Josh Wilcox, Foodlink’s Childhood Nutrition Programs Specialist, implemented “tray waste evaluations” at two sites to help inform our menu choices going forward.

“After spending more than a month with each partner, we came away with some very useful ways to improve our meals,” Wilcox said.

“One simple improvement is what we’re calling ‘flavor stations,’ which gives students the autonomy to choose what condiments they can add to their meals. The goal is increased consumption and positive attitude toward our meals, and we’re seeing great results so far!”



1

Foodlink, URMC announce innovative new partnership.

In December of 2021, Foodlink helped establish the region's first hospital-based food pantry through an exciting partnership with URMC. Upon discharge, patients who are screened for potential food insecurity issues are connected with an on-site pantry and receive up to three days worth of groceries. Staff social workers also follow up with patients to connect them with additional resources and services.

2

The Foodlink Community Café turned one!

Foodlink and the Career Empowerment Initiatives team celebrated a major milestone in May of 2022 when the Foodlink Community Café marked its one-year anniversary! Since launch, the café has provided learning opportunities for three different classes of apprentices enrolled in the Foodlink Career Fellowship — a unique culinary training program. The feedback from library staff and downtown customers has been top-notch!

3 & 4

In June of 2022 we celebrated the return of our spring event, **The Get Together**. Foodlink honored two deserving award winners. Long-time Wegmans leader, Mary Ellen Burris, received the Thomas C. Ferraro Legacy Award. Foodlink also honored WDKX with the Community Impact Award. Save the date for our next event on June 8!

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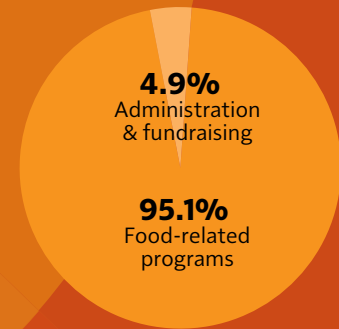
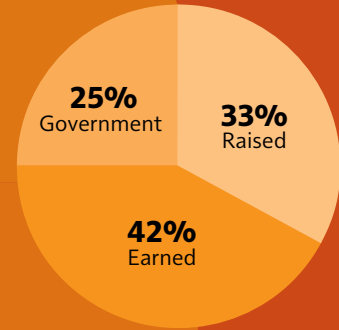


A reason to celebrate



FINANCIALS

	2022	2021
Public support & revenue	\$50,624,279*	\$55,416,004
Expenses	\$48,054,394	\$50,304,254
Change in net assets	\$2,569,885	\$5,111,750
	2022	2021
Assets	\$12,495,538	\$14,478,681
Liabilities	\$1,631,102	\$3,729,629
Net assets	2022	2021
Without donor restrictions	\$10,329,945	\$10,347,609
With donor restrictions	\$534,491	\$401,443
Total net assets	\$10,864,436	\$10,749,052



*Total value of donated product was \$25,184,178; Foodlink’s revenue, not including the value of donated product, was 25,440,101.

This Impact Report reflects Foodlink’s most recent fiscal year from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

Independent Auditor’s Report, audited financial statements and IRS Form 990 available online or at the Foodlink, Inc. business office located at 2011 Mt. Read Blvd, Rochester, NY 14615.

Raised. Includes public support and non-government grants

Earned. Includes fee-for-service revenue

Government. Federal and state funding





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Mission

To leverage the power of food to end hunger
and build healthier communities.

Vision

We believe that the fight against hunger and the fight
against poverty are one and the same. We envision a future in which
food is recognized as a human right and every person is able to
feed themselves and their families in dignity. Together, we work
to create a more nourished, prosperous region.



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