

Helping friends and neighbors!

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While it is hard to put a number on how many Americans go to bed at night hungry, you don't have to look very hard to find that hunger in America is not a new phenomenon. With high unemployment and the recession, with demand for food rising to near crisis proportions, many are going without...many must make difficult choices...food or medicine, food or electricity, food or the mortgage/rent. The statistics are staggering.



Food donated by Rural Development employees.

[USDA Rural Development](#) employees are zealous when it's time to help in need. During a recent state meeting in Fargo, N.D., more than 500 pounds of non-perishables and personal items were donated to [Great Plains Food Bank](#) (GPFB) in Fargo.

“Everyone at Rural Development is proud to partner with Great Plains Food Bank,” said Rural Development State Director Jasper Schneider. “Employees wanted to show their support by donating to agencies that help those in need.”

In addition to the donations of food, USDA Rural Development, through its Cooperative Grant program, presented a grant for \$16,032 to Great Plains Food Bank. The grant will be used to facilitate statewide meetings for food pantries, while providing assistance and guidance to their customers needs and to identify resources and partners to better serve their clients across the state.

The direct impact of this project is USDA Rural Development assisted 59 food banks with technical assistance in applying for Rural Development's programs and other financial programs. The indirect impact allowed the food banks to discuss their best practices, improve their knowledge of health and safety practices, and to increase capacity in working with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) program and fresh food produce.

In support of the [“Feds, Farmers, and Friends Feed Families”](#) (F5) summer food drive, employees at the USDA Rural Development and [Natural Resources and Conservation Service \(NRCS\)](#) State Offices, in Bismarck, North Dakota, have been collecting non-perishable items, paper products and personal items, along with fresh garden produce for the Ruth Meier's House and Soup Kitchen.

“There is no better demonstration of spirit than when people give their time and resources to help those less fortunate,” continued Schneider.

Rural Development employees recognize how fortunate they are to work for an agency that has such a positive impact on rural communities. Each day employees see first-hand the ways in which Rural Development's programs and services improve the quality of life for those who need them the most, such as this partnership with Great Plains Food Bank.



USDA Rural Development State Director Jasper Schneider (right), presents a Community Facility grant for \$16,032 to Great Plains Food Bank.