

# Impact Update

July 2025 - January 2026



The government shutdown in 2025 inspired an outpouring of support for food banks. It was a scary time for hundreds of thousands of Arizonans.

The 43-day crisis illuminated the need that persists year-round, especially as we see fewer people qualifying for SNAP in 2026 and beyond. You can help us shorten food bank lines by getting to know your neighbor, and you can help feed millions of neighbors by supporting food banks.

APRIL BRADHAM AzFBN President & CEO



## FOOD BANKING



On September 30, 2025, the longest government shutdown in American history began. That meant SNAP funds (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, previously referred to as food stamps) were on pause, and nearly 900,000 people would turn to food banks as the first line of defense against an empty pantry. As **food banks have been serving more people than ever before and food insecurity is on the rise**, this influx sent AzFBN into emergency response mode to coordinate resources for the whole statewide network of food banks and pantries.

Governor Katie Hobbs entrusted AzFBN to collect and disburse funds from individuals who wanted to help food banks, while simultaneously deploying \$2.75 million of ARPA funds to help food banks purchase inventory. To support Tribal communities in the far reaches of Arizona, Governor Hobbs designated \$250,000 for AzFBN to coordinate bulk purchases of emergency food.

SNAP funds were disbursed again on November 14, 2025. This 43-day disruption brought food insecurity top-of-mind for everyday Arizonans, inspiring hundreds of food drives, incredible donations, and ripples of community action. Also in that time, **thanks to supporters of this mission, AzFBN distributed nearly 3 million pounds of produce to food banks in Arizona, including 98,120 family-friendly mixed produce boxes** (pictured above, highlighting Arizona Public Service as they committed \$1 million to food banks across Arizona during this time).





## ADVOCACY

The federal budget bill, also known as H.R. 1 (or One Big Beautiful Bill Act), was signed in July 2025. This budget bill cut nearly \$300 billion from SNAP – about 30% of its spend, which is the largest reduction of the program since it was created in 1961. Through this reduction, the cost of SNAP is projected to shift from federal to state budgets, the program will be prevented from adapting to actual (rising) food costs, and harsh work requirements are being imposed on especially vulnerable populations, resulting in fewer people qualifying for SNAP benefits. **All of this means more people will need food banks than ever before.**



In fact, as an average of 720,000 people are visiting Arizona food banks each month, funding becomes a primary issue. **AzFBN's Public Policy team is advocating for an increase in state funding for food banks, from \$1,754,600 to \$3,550,000 in the state Fiscal Year 2027.** If legislators can align to support the logistics of food banking, the Arizona emergency food system will be strong enough to handle the effects of the federal budget bill.



## INNOVATION



Over \$3.81 million was invested in Arizona's **local food and agriculture system** in 2025 through Friends of the Farm!

AzFBN's Friends of the Farm (FoF) program was created in 2020 with an investment of state resources. In the last five years, the program has grown considerably with the addition of federal resources through the Local Food Purchasing Agreement, which maintains and improves food and agricultural supply chain resiliency across the nation. **In 2025, AzFBN worked with 135 producers to get local food (including produce, dairy, eggs, and meat) to four regional food bank partners and 45 partner agencies in 10 counties across Arizona.**

In March 2025, The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that it is discontinuing support for initiatives that focus purchasing on local producers, meaning Friends of the Farm will run only with state funding after March 1, 2026.

To ensure that local producers have all the support that AzFBN can give, **the Farmer Development Series launched in the fall of 2025.** AzFBN held a diverse panel about the how and why of programs like FoF, and a session exploring approaches for income diversity, resilience, and adapting to Arizona's climate. Both were well-attended and fruitful conversations, strengthening the community of growers. The series is ongoing with more attendees every time!

