

**Second Harvest Food Bank of Southeast North Carolina Receives \$25,000 Grant from the Walmart Foundation to Fund Infrastructure and Equipment Needed for Handling Fresh Food**

**FAYETTEVILLE, NC– August 31, 2018–** Second Harvest Food Bank of Southeast North Carolina (SHFB), a proud member of Feeding America, today announced a \$40,000 grant from the Walmart Foundation to fund the infrastructure that will ultimately help the food bank’s partner agencies secure and distribute more nutritious food to families in need. The grant will support investments in the equipment necessary to handle perishable products, such as refrigerated vehicles; coolers and freezers for transporting, storing and distributing food; thermometers and temperature calibration devices; among other items.

“One in five people struggle with hunger in Cumberland and the surrounding counties including more than 51,000 children,” said Ron Pringle, Program Director for Second Harvest Food Bank of Southeast North Carolina. “We are thankful to the Walmart Foundation for helping to ensure that people who struggle with hunger have access to nutrient-rich food. This grant will go a long way in helping Second Harvest Food Bank of Southeast North Carolina and our partner agencies serve the following counties: Bladen, Cumberland, Duplin, Harnett, Hoke, Robeson and Sampson. “

An Action Pathways program, SHFB fights to end hunger by securing fresh, perishable food from retailers across its service area. SHFB leverages partner agencies in predominantly rural areas to secure product from their local grocery retailer, allowing it to salvage more product and more quickly get it into the hands of clients. In 2017, the organization distributed over 8 million meals, but seeks to grow that number in order to close the national “meal gap” in southeast North Carolina – where the food insecurity rate is significantly higher than the state average. With this award, SHFB will be able to help build its partner agency’s capacity to safely transport, store and distribute fresh and perishable foods requiring temperature control. Items such as refrigerators, freezers, portable coolers and thermal blankets have been identified by our partners as items needed to increase their efforts.

The Walmart Foundation has been instrumental in helping food banks rescue and distribute more perishable food from retailers across the United States in a sustainable, cost-effective way. This grant is a part of Walmart and the Walmart Foundation’s ongoing commitment to helping families who struggle with hunger by providing four billion meals to people in need in the U.S. by 2020.

With food insecurity remaining high throughout the country, the ability to distribute more food is critical for food banks. According to the USDA, more than 42 million people nationwide are food insecure, which means that they may not know where they will find their next meal. In our seven-county service area, more than 151,000 residents struggle with hunger. To learn more about what Second Harvest Food Bank of Southeast North Carolina is doing to fight hunger, visit: [hungercantwait.org](http://hungercantwait.org).

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**ABOUT SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK OF SOUTHEAST NORTH CAROLINA:** A proud member of Feeding America, Second Harvest Food Bank of Southeast North Carolina serves seven counties: Bladen, Cumberland, Duplin, Harnett, Hoke, Robeson, and Sampson. With a large rural service area, the organization relies on strong partnerships with over 260 churches, food pantries, and other nonprofits to distribute food to those in need. In southeast North Carolina, 19.1% of people are at risk of hunger. Led by the principles of “Feed – Advocate – Empower,” SHFB is committed to improving access to healthy foods; advocating for those in need; and empowering the community with emergency assistance and education.