



ANNUAL REPORT - 2024/2025



HUNGER IS HERE. SO ARE WE.

919-542-5020

CORAFOODPANTRY.ORG

INFO@CORAFOODPANTRY.ORG

A MESSAGE FROM CORA'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Melissa Driver Beard
Executive Director

Setting a new record, CORA fulfilled more than 109,000 requests for food assistance through our programs this past year, reaching more individuals than ever before.

Each of those visits to our pantry and programs represents a valued member of our community and their story of struggle and resilience.

In response to the increasing need, we've acted boldly: expanding our hours, increasing food purchases, and opening a second pantry to meet people where they are. We're not just growing, we're evolving.

We're proud to share that CORA Siler City, our new choice pantry, is now open. This expansion brings healthy food closer to thousands of neighbors in western Chatham County. But growth isn't just about numbers—it's about people. We're deepening our roots, listening more closely, and strengthening our connection with those we serve. Every meal shared is a chance to build trust, dignity, and hope.

Thank you for standing with us. Together, we're building a stronger, thriving community without hunger.

CLOSER TO HOME, CLOSER TO HOPE

With the opening of its Siler City pantry, CORA is expanding access to nutritious food for hundreds of families who have long faced barriers to support.

When Amy and her husband heard CORA was opening a pantry in Siler City, they both got emotional.

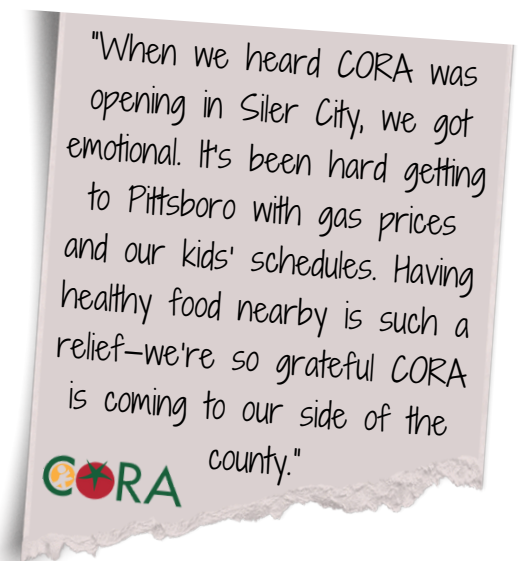
"For a long time, it's been hard getting to Pittsboro," Amy shared.

"With gas prices and our kids' schedules, it wasn't always possible. But we still needed help putting food on the table."

Like many families in western Chatham County, Amy's household was working hard but stretched thin. The distance to CORA's Pittsboro pantry often meant choosing between fuel, food, and school responsibilities. When the new CORA-Siler City pantry opened its doors in July, Amy was among the first to visit.

"Having healthy food nearby is such a relief," she said. "It means we can care for our kids without the extra stress. We're so grateful CORA is here on our side of the county."

Amy's story is just one of many that demonstrate how access, compassion, and community are interconnected.

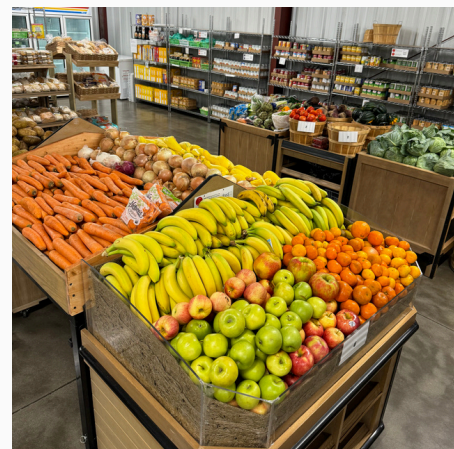


PROGRAMS THAT MEET THE MOMENT

CORA's programs are designed to respond with compassion, flexibility, and care, meeting our neighbors where they are and providing nutritious food when it's needed most.

Choice Pantry

As CORA's flagship program, the Choice Pantry is more than a place to pick up groceries, it's a welcoming space where families can choose the foods that best fit their needs. Like a neighborhood grocery store, it allows parents to select their child's favorite snacks or ingredients for a comforting meal. This simple act of choice fosters a sense of respect and care during times of uncertainty. Over the past year, more than 3,100 families visited the pantry, some for the first time, others returning to a place where they know they'll be welcomed, not judged. With the opening of our new Siler City location, this program will now reach even more community members across Chatham County.



SNACK! (Summer Nutritional Assistance for Chatham Kids)

Summer can be a time of hunger for children who depend on school meals. SNACK! bridges that gap by distributing healthy, kid-friendly groceries to families at partner sites across the county. In Summer 2024, the program served 1,323 children, helping to ensure that no child goes hungry just because school is out. One parent shared how their child looked forward to picking out their favorite fruits each week, turning what could have been a stressful season into one filled with relief and joy.



CORApacks

Too many children arrive at school hungry, making it difficult to focus, learn, or thrive. CORApacks helps change that by providing nourishing weekend meals to students who need them most. In 2024, the program expanded to nine schools and delivered over 50,000 meals. Because of CORApacks, a child can walk into the classroom with a full belly and a clear mind, ready to learn, laugh with friends, and dream about the future instead of worrying about their next meal.

Mobile Markets

In neighborhoods where grocery stores are scarce and transportation is a barrier, CORA's Mobile Markets arrive with fresh, healthy food and a sense of relief. By bringing food directly into communities with limited access, the program helps families avoid the tough choices between groceries and other basic needs. Last year, Mobile Markets provided more than 220,000 meals to nearly 10,000 individuals through pop-up distributions in high-need areas, making it easier for thousands of neighbors to put food on the table.



OUR IMPACT: BY THE NUMBERS

In a year marked by rising needs, our community came together to ensure that thousands of neighbors had access to nutritious food and compassionate support. These numbers represent far more than data; they represent lives changed, stress relieved, and hope restored.



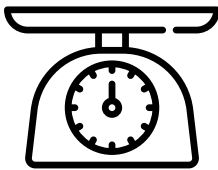
1.9 million
meals
provided



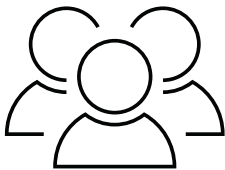
109,000
requests
for
assistance



384,044
pounds of
fresh
produce
shared



1,045,838
pounds of
food
donated



12,640
individuals
served

MEASURED IN LIVES, NOT JUST MEALS

CORA’s impact is about more than food; it’s about stability, dignity, and the small but powerful ways access to healthy groceries transforms daily life. These numbers reflect the voices and experiences of our neighbors.

1,300

1,300 families turned to CORA for the first time this year.

A growing number of households faced food insecurity for the first time, proof that hunger touches every corner of our community.

90%

90% of neighbors said CORA helped reduce their stress.

Access to food relieves more than hunger. It brings peace of mind to families juggling impossible choices.

6

The average family visits CORA 6 times a year.

Families rely on CORA as a consistent and dependable resource to help them navigate difficult months.

91%

91% of neighbors reported having more money for other household expenses.

When groceries are no longer out of reach, families can redirect resources to other necessities.

50%

More than 50% of the households we served include children, seniors, or both.

Hunger affects our most vulnerable—ensuring they have enough to eat is at the heart of our mission.

THE PEOPLE BEHIND CORA

If you've ever stepped into CORA's pantry on a busy morning, you've seen it firsthand: a volunteer helping a mother choose fresh produce for her kids, a donor dropping off bags of groceries with a warm smile, a staff member listening closely to someone facing a tough week. This is what a true community effort looks like. None of it would be possible without the compassion and commitment of the volunteers and donors who show up, day after day, to ensure that no one in our community goes without the food they need.



CORA is Powered by People Who Care

From packing produce to sharing a kind word at the pantry door, volunteers are the heartbeat of CORA.



371 volunteers gave their time



17,721 volunteer hours donated—equal to 8 full-time staff



Volunteers helped distribute more than 2.3 million pounds of food

"Volunteering at CORA isn't just about handing out food—it's about standing shoulder to shoulder with our neighbors during their hardest times. Every meal we pack, every cart we fill, and every smile we share reminds me that together, we're building a community where no one has to face hunger alone."

— Matt M., Volunteer

PAM SOMERS HONORED

We're incredibly proud to celebrate Pam Somers, a dedicated CORA volunteer and a recipient of the prestigious 2025 Governor's Volunteer Service Award! Pam has been making a profound difference at CORA since 2011, contributing over 100 hours just last year.

Whether she's helping neighbors shop for groceries in our pantry, packing food for children through our CORAPacks, and SNACK! programs, or welcoming guests at Empty Bowls, Pam brings kindness, energy, and heart to everything she does.

Pam's deep commitment to CORA and her community is truly inspiring. We're fortunate to have her as part of CORA, and we're thrilled to see her incredible service recognized. Thank you, Pam, for all that you do!



A PLACE TO TURN WHEN TIMES GET TOUGH



When Margaret and Thomas, both in their seventies, moved to Chatham County to be closer to their daughter, they never imagined they'd need help putting food on the table. After Thomas's unexpected medical expenses drained their savings, their fixed income no longer stretched far enough to cover groceries, medications, and rising utility bills.

Each month, the couple visits CORA's pantry, leaving with fresh produce, shelf-stable staples, and most importantly, peace of mind.

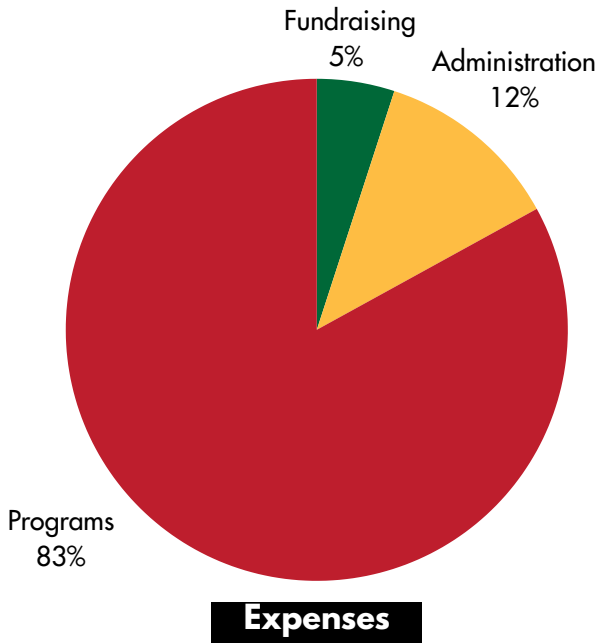
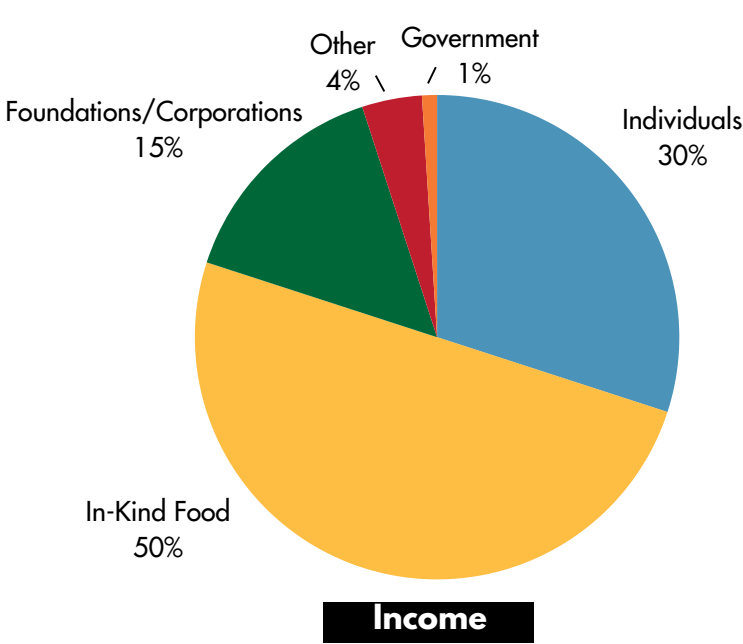
"Far too many seniors in our community are silently struggling," said CORA Executive Director Melissa Driver Beard. "No one should have to choose between food and medicine. At CORA, we're working every day to ensure our older neighbors have the support and the dignity they deserve."

FINANCIALS: TRANSPARENT. ACCOUNTABLE. IMPACTFUL.

CORA is committed to being a careful steward of the resources we've been entrusted with, always working to meet our community's most urgent needs.

Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our community, CORA ended FY2025 in a strong financial position, well-equipped to meet the growing need for food assistance in Chatham County.

This past year, we secured \$4.1 million in support, allowing us to respond with flexibility, expand our reach, and invest in the future. These resources enabled us to open a second pantry, purchase more fresh food, and sustain critical programs throughout the county.



WHAT'S NEXT?

With rising demand, CORA is meeting the challenge with bold, purposeful action, fueled by compassion, shaped by community, and anchored in our unwavering mission to end hunger in Chatham County.

CORA Siler City

Our new pantry is now open, bringing fresh, nutritious food closer to neighbors in western Chatham County. As we settle into this new space, we're focused on learning from the community, strengthening services, and expanding hours to meet demand.

New and Deeper Partnerships

We're partnering with schools, healthcare providers, and local organizations to expand access to nutritious food and build stronger community connections. From school-based grocery distributions to clinic referrals, these efforts help us reach more neighbors in meaningful, lasting ways.

Continuing to Evolve

Every day, we hear from neighbors sharing their challenges and hopes. In response, we're not just evaluating our programs, we're reimagining them to meet people exactly where they are in their journey. As CORA grows, we listen closely, allowing the voices of our community to guide the next steps in building a stronger future together without hunger.



JOIN US!



Thank you for taking a moment to reflect with us on the amazing things we've accomplished together this year. However, the fight against hunger isn't over. In fact, we have a lot of work to do! Join us as we continue to show up for every meal, every neighbor, every day.



DONATE

For questions about donations or to learn more about how your gift makes a difference, please contact Rebecca Hankins at rebecca@corafoodpantry.org.

Donate Today!

STAY CONNECTED



Sign Up for Our Newsletter!

CORA's mission is to provide nutritious food to community members facing food insecurity. We envision a healthy, strong, and connected community where all people have equitable access to abundant, safe, nutritious, and culturally relevant food. Through our work, we will help build a healthy Chatham County, a place where families thrive, children do well in school, and seniors do not face the stress of choosing between food and other necessities.

919-542-5020

CORAFOODPANTRY.ORG

INFO@CORAFOODPANTRY.ORG