



Gleaners Advocacy Information

Thank you for using your voice to support our neighbors facing food insecurity. As one of many dedicated advocates representing Gleaners, your leadership and commitment help strengthen our community.

Tips for speaking to your group

Start by sharing a brief, personal story about why you're passionate about helping our neighbors overcome hunger. What moment or experience in your life inspired you to get involved in providing meals for those in need? Is there a story that continually reminds you of the importance of ensuring everyone has enough to eat? It doesn't have to be a big, dramatic event—people simply want to understand why this cause matters to you

What is Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan?

Gleaners serves five Southeast Michigan counties: Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Livingston and Monroe. Gleaners provides food to nearly 400 partner soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters, schools and other agencies across the region, and supplements the efforts of those partners by offering direct service drive-up grocery distributions. Gleaners further empowers households with food programs and education to help overcome food insecurity. Every dollar donated provides three meals, and 92 percent of Gleaners' expenses directly support our neighbors facing hunger.

Why does Southeast Michigan need Gleaners?

Over 600,000 people in Southeast Michigan experience food insecurity. One in five children are hungry.

Nearly 180,000 children in Southeast Michigan alone experience food insecurity:

- Macomb County: 29,130 children
- Oakland County: 28,350 children
- Wayne County: 113,330 children
- Monroe County: 4,640 children
- Livingston County: 2,930 children

Hungry kids experience greater challenges in school. Studies show that well-nourished children do better in the classroom, with improved grades and memory. They also have fewer absences and are less likely to have behavioral, psychological, or health issues. Making sure our neighbors have enough to eat not only improves their lives but makes our region's future brighter.

What is Gleaners' response to this crisis?

Gleaners distributes more than **50 million pounds of food each year**. This food comes from major food processors, retail chains, volunteer food drives, and purchases made at deep discounts to meet the nutritional needs of those we serve. Gleaners has strong relationships with local farmers, grocers, retailers, and companies in the food industry.

Beyond their network of partner agencies, Gleaners fills hunger gaps with programs like School Food Mobile distributions, snack pantries, the Summer Food Service Program, and food deliveries for seniors. Gleaners also works to make food accessible for people who can't easily reach distribution sites.

As part of the Food Bank Council of Michigan, Gleaners works with elected officials to support common-sense policies that help our hungry neighbors.

How can people get help?

Dial 211: Michigan 2-1-1 is a free service that connects residents to health and human services resources in their communities—quickly and confidentially.

Pantrynet.org: This website provides up-to-date information on food pantries, soup kitchens, mobile distributions, and other food assistance. It also includes distributions from Forgotten Harvest, Gleaners' sister Feeding America Food Bank.

How can businesses, schools, places of worship, and other community groups help?

Fundraisers / Virtual Food Drives: Every \$1 donated to Gleaners can provide three meals thanks to their ability to buy food at deep discounts. A virtual food drive is a great way to give back as a group and visualize the kinds of food your donations help provide.

Traditional Food Drives: Community food donations are important year-round. Nonperishable food donations help keep the shelves at Gleaners' facilities and partner pantries stocked.

Sponsorships: Supporting main annual events like the Women's Power Breakfast, The National Association of Letter Carrier's Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, or the Children's Hospital of Michigan Cereal Drive plays a crucial role in Gleaners' ability to fulfill its mission.

Volunteering: In 2023, more than 17,000 volunteers contributed over 50,000 hours of their time. Volunteers help sort and pack millions of pounds of food, keeping costs low and making the work possible.

Advocacy: Advocacy means raising awareness about food insecurity and the role of organizations like Gleaners. Even a simple social media post can help spread the word. Make sure to tag Gleaners so their team can thank you for your support!

Thank you!

Gleaners could not fulfil their mission of solving hunger in Southeast Michigan without volunteer leaders and advocates like you. Please let a member of their team know if you have any questions. You can reach them at communitygiving@gcfb.org or 313-308-0579.