



March 12, 2025

Ohio House Children & Human Services Committee

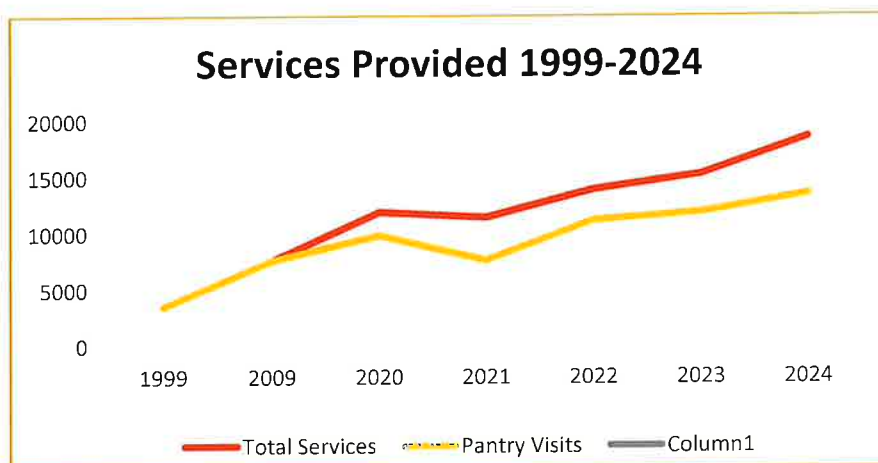
Written Testimony on H.B. 96

YOUR NAME, YOUR TITLE, YOUR ORGANIZATION

Chairwoman White, Vice Chairwoman Salvo, Ranking Member Lett, and distinguished members of the Children & Human Services committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on HB96. I am Kathy Kelly Long, Director of the Broad Street Food Pantry, 760 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio. As you begin your work on H.B. 96, I would like to provide additional context and information on The Broad Street Presbyterian Church Food Pantry, and the work we do addressing food insecurity in Franklin County.

First, I want to thank you for the strong support you have provided Ohio's food banks and emergency hunger relief programs. Your investment in these programs has provided critical assistance to families and individuals. Your support is more critical now than ever as need remains at historic level.

The Mission of the Broad Street Food Pantry is, *"To honor our neighbors by serving as a reliable source for ingredients to create healthy meals."* Currently we provide food to more than 1500 households each month - a 22% increase from 2023. With the proposed changes to the federal budget, we anticipate the need to increase again in 2025.



Who visits the Broad Street Presbyterian Church Food Pantry for food assistance?

- 4,582 families received food one or more times in 2024.
- All families meet the income eligibility guidelines set by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, <https://mofc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/JFS-04221-ENG-Rev.-7.2024-002.pdf>.
- On average a family came to the Broad Street Food Pantry only four times in all of 2024 – once every three months - when they could have come every week. So far in 2025, the average family has come once a month.
- 52% of the families the Broad Street Food Pantry serves have one or more children under 18 in the household; 33% have seniors in the household.
- Many families who previously were able to stretch their budget far enough to get by can no longer do so – 20% of the families we served in 2024 had never been to our Pantry before. Thus far in 2025, 23% of the families served have never been to our Pantry before.
- Families whose income cannot cover all their expenses rely on emergency hunger relief programs because they have nowhere else to reduce their expenses. Thanks to the Ohio Association of Foodbanks for these statistics collated from a survey of food pantry visitors in the spring of 2024.

AT SOME POINT IN THE PAST YEAR:



65.2%
CHOSE
BETWEEN
AFFORDING
FOOD **OR**
AFFORDING
UTILITIES



49.5%
CHOSE
BETWEEN
AFFORDING
FOOD **OR**
AFFORDING
RENT **OR**
MORTGAGE



72.5%
CHOSE BETWEEN
AFFORDING FOOD
OR AFFORDING
TRANSPORTATION
OR GAS FOR THEIR
CAR



23.3%
CHOSE
BETWEEN
AFFORDING
FOOD **OR**
AFFORDING
EDUCATIONAL
EXPENSES



14.9%
CHOSE
BETWEEN
AFFORDING
FOOD **OR**
AFFORDING
CHILD CARE

How does the Broad Street Food Pantry help those in need of food assistance?

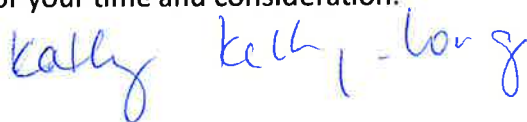
Every week we distribute more than 5000 pounds of food including meat, milk, eggs, fresh produce and shelf stable foods to about 356 households to help them prepare meals. We purchase about 80% of that food. Approximately 60% of the food we distribute comes from our food bank partner, Mid-Ohio Food Collective. While there is a cost for some of the food acquired from Mid-Ohio Food Collective, those costs are mitigated because of the support from the Ohio Food and Agricultural Clearance programs.

As food costs and demand increase while our budget does not, we have had to limit the amount of food available to each family. Donations are helpful but cannot be relied upon. We are committed to providing food to our neighbors in need but our ability to meet the current need will be reduced if the Ohio Food and Agricultural Clearance programs funds decrease.

With more people than ever in need of food, state support is more critical than ever. On behalf of the 59,179 individuals who relied on the Broad Street Food Pantry for food in in 2024, I respectfully ask this committee to support an additional \$12.43 million per year above the funding levels currently proposed in HB 96 for the Ohio Food Program and Agricultural Clearance Program. This funding would increase the amount of food available from the Mid-Ohio Food Collective and help us feed our neighbors as this high level of need continues.

Chairwoman White, Vice Chairwoman Salvo, Ranking Member Lett, and committee members, I urge you to support this critical funding request. With the challenges of rising costs and the uncertainty about SNAP, WIC, Medicaid and other federal programs, Ohio families are counting on you. This moderate increase in funding for Ohio's food banks will help us serve our neighbors in need.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Kathy Kelly-Long, Director
Broad Street Presbyterian Church Food Pantry
kklong@bspc.org
614-203-2544