



Grab & Go Success Stories - Lowcountry Food Bank, South Carolina

Lowcountry Food Bank (LCFB) serves thousands of children, families, and individuals across the ten coastal counties of South Carolina. In 2022, they distributed 39.7 million pounds of food and personal products and provided 33,089,900 meals of which 227,986 were freshly prepared in their production kitchen.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, LCFB operated a self-funded, non-congregate (where meals can be consumed off-site) summer meals program. Since 2016, LCFB has operated a grab and go summer meals program in Williamsburg County, South Carolina, called Williamsburg Summer Eats. Williamsburg is a very rural county in eastern South Carolina where 21% of children live in households facing food insecurity. LCFB works with dedicated community members and community leader Joanne Edwards to implement Williamsburg Summer Eats. Kara Moore is the Director of Child Hunger Programs at LCFB and manages all of their child nutrition programs. Moore emphasized the importance of community champions like Edwards. By creating programs in partnership with the community, locals have ownership over the program ensuring children's needs are met equitably year after year.

Check out Williamsburg Summer Eat in action in this [No Kid Hungry video](#)!

Edwards and dedicated site coordinators are key to Williamsburg Summer Eats' success. In the beginning, LCFB delivered frozen meals weekly to Greeleyville Elementary school, which donated their space to this program. Volunteer site coordinators under the leadership of Edwards then packed and transported the meals to 10 sites across the county. Site locations were and continue to be identified and selected by families to ensure convenience and

accessibility. At sites, families pick up breakfast and lunch to go for their children. In recent years, LCFB has transitioned from frozen to shelf-stable meals that can be directly shipped from the vendor to the school, eliminating transportation costs and storage concerns. In addition to donating their facilities for sorting and storing, Greeleyville Elementary School staff help recruit families for the program at their school and in surrounding communities. In addition to meals, children receive BackPack Buddies bags every weekend.

Using Williamsburg Summer Eats as a model, LCFB was ready to respond to the spike in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. They set up additional grab and go sites across their service area using similar models (one day's worth of breakfast and lunch), including a mobile meals program on Johns and Wadmalaw Islands in Charleston County that provided families with weekly produce and pantry boxes in addition to the kids' meals. In addition, some sites offered families the option to pick up five days' worth of meals and/or snacks per child at one time.

With the end of pandemic-era program waivers and flexibilities, LCFB has transitioned all of their sites to congregate meal service with the exception of Williamsburg Summer Eats. If approved to offer non-congregate summer meals in rural areas, LCFB plans to replicate Williamsburg Summer Eats in rural communities across its service area. Moore is excited about the prospect of using grab and go meals to make summer meals programs work better for children and families in coastal South Carolina.

