

# What is a food bank?

A food bank is a non-profit organization that collects and distributes food to hunger-relief charities. Food banks act as food storage and distribution depots for smaller front-line agencies; and usually do not themselves give out food directly to people struggling with hunger.

Food banks in the U.S. are very diverse – from small operations serving people spread out across large rural areas to very large facilities that store and distribute many millions of pounds of food each year, and everything in between. A variety of factors impact how food banks work, from the size of the facility to the number of staff members. But, one thing all food banks have in common is that they rely on donors and volunteers to carry out their day-to-day operations. [Watch this video to see how Feeding America works](#)