



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOOD BANK ASSESSES NEED, RESPONDS TO TORNADO

RALEIGH – Every day, The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina responds to a crisis in its service area - hunger. The Food Bank serves as a conduit for accepting, sorting, packaging, storing, and distributing food and non-food essentials to more than 500,000 people at risk of hunger daily in its 34-county service area. As a first responder during times of a natural disaster, the Food Bank also reacts immediately to serve victims of tornadoes, hurricanes and floods throughout the southeast without disrupting regular food distribution in North Carolina. Following the tornadoes hitting North Carolina over the weekend, the Food Bank assessed its partner agencies (food pantries, rescue missions, soup kitchens, senior and child nutrition programs) in counties affected by the storm to determine how their distribution capabilities fared.

The Food Bank has been in communication with the American Red Cross and North Carolina Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NCVOAD). The organization has reached out to assist sister food banks in Elizabeth City, which serves Bertie County and in Fayetteville, which serves a portion of the Sandhills along with the Food Bank branch there. **As a result of the initial assessment, Food Bank agencies in Wake, Lee, and Greene counties were hardest hit. The organization is sending additional resources to the agencies affected by the powerful tornadoes on Saturday, April 16; have extended hours for these organizations to shop for additional items and is making special deliveries directly to agencies affected.**

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Disaster Relief_Tornado

“Our thoughts go out to the many families affected by the recent storm. We are grateful that our warehouses in the affected areas are operational and we are making sure that our partner agencies can operate or return to full service as soon as possible to continue providing relief to those who are struggling,” said Peter Werbicki, President/CEO at the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina.

The Food Bank expects to see the need for emergency food to increase over the coming weeks as displaced families seek precious resources. Food donations to the Food Bank will help provide emergency and increased assistance to Food Bank partner agencies. Food donations will be accepted at Food Bank warehouses in Durham, Raleigh, New Bern, Greenville, Southern Pines and Wilmington. Donate by going to www.foodbankcenc.org or text “40meals” to 50555.

Wake County saw unprecedented devastation due to Saturday’s storm and many Wake County agencies served out of the Food Bank’s main warehouse on Tarheel Drive in Raleigh have a high anticipation of increased need and are already supporting large numbers of individuals and families who are without power. Some of the agencies themselves are without power but still operating and still distributing to those who need assistance, even taking to the streets, supporting a trailer park community by distributing flyers to families with information of additional hours of distribution today.

Lee County, one of the hardest hit areas in North Carolina by Saturday’s powerful storm, is served out of the Food Bank’s Sandhills Branch. With one of the agencies serving as a designated day shelter for kids as a result of the storm, additional food donations will help meet the increased demands on their services.

In the Food Bank’s Greenville Branch service area, one **Greene County** agency hit by the tornado also has an increased need for emergency food and non-food items.

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In the event of a natural disaster, most needed items are:

- **High-protein canned meals (pop-top cans)**
- **Other single serving meals that do not require refrigeration or cooking/meals ready to eat**
- **Single serving snacks**
- **Peanut butter**
- **Paper goods and products (paper towels, paper plates/cups/napkins, plastic utensils)**
- **Hygiene products (Hand sanitizer, toothbrushes, soap, etc.)**
- **Cleaning supplies (wipes preferred)**

The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina has a long history of responding to natural disasters. With the devastation of the 2005 hurricane season, the Food Bank sent nine truckloads of relief food and essentials to help the victims of the hurricanes in the Gulf Coast, with the trucks going to: Baker and Alexandria, Louisiana; Tyler, Texas; and Jackson, Mississippi. The Food Bank distributed over 233, 000 pounds of food.

To be a part of hunger and disaster relief in the 34 counties served by the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina, take food donations to any Food Bank warehouse listed below or to read more about how you can be a part of the relief effort in the event of a natural disaster, go to www.foodbankcenc.org.

About the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina

The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina is a nonprofit organization that has provided food for people at risk of hunger in 34 counties in central and eastern North Carolina for 30 years. The Food Bank serves a network of more than 800 partner agencies such as soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters, and programs for children and adults through warehouses in Durham, Greenville, New Bern, Raleigh, the Sandhills (Southern Pines) and Wilmington. In fiscal year 2009-2010, the Food Bank distributed more than 41.5 million pounds of food and non-food essentials through these agencies. Sadly, hunger remains a serious problem in central and eastern North Carolina. In these counties, more than 500,000 struggle each day to provide enough food for their families. www.foodbankcenc.org.

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