



# FOOD — FOR — THOUGHT

FALL 2020

## Mobile Pantries: Bringing Food to Communities in Need

The Peoria Area Food Bank (PAFB) has held more than 20 Mobile Pantries in our service area this year. A Mobile Pantry is an event where the Food Bank brings a truckload of food that is distributed to clients in pre-packed boxes or through a farmer's market-style distribution where clients choose to take what they need. Mobile Pantries expand the capacity of the PAFB to make food more accessible in underserved communities where people with limited financial resources may not be able to access food through traditional grocery stores or food pantries. This allows the PAFB to provide food and grocery products — including meat, produce, and baked goods — to people more quickly and flexibly.

In June of 2020, the PAFB partnered with the Tazewell County Health Department and the University of Illinois Extension to host a mobile pantry in Pekin. **“Because food pantries in the Pekin area have closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have determined that there is a food insecurity problem there,”** said Shanita Wallace, a health educator with the Tazewell County Health Department. **In an effort to alleviate that problem, the PAFB and its partners distributed 7,000 pounds of food and 500 gallons of milk.** Wayne W. Cannon, Food Bank Manager, said, “The Pekin area is not considered a food desert, but many people in this community are dealing with food insecurities.” The mission of the PAFB is to supply food and grocery products to a network of food pantries in a three county area: Peoria, Tazewell, and Mason counties. “It is very important that the PAFB meets the needs of people living with food insecurities within our service area.”



**The mission of the Peoria Area Food Bank is to supply food and grocery products to a network of food pantries in a three county area: Peoria, Tazewell, and Mason counties.**

# 2020 Leadership Team

## CHAIRPERSON

Cassandra Powell

## PRESIDENT/CEO

McFarland A. Bragg II  
EDFP, HDFP, CCAP

## CSBG (Community Service Block Grant) Manager

Robin Gathers

## PROGRAM MANAGER

Wayne W. Cannon

## AGENCY RELATIONS SPECIALIST

Jeanette Wennmacher

## WAREHOUSE MANAGER

Cornelius Thomas



## Our Mission

Our mission is to supply food and grocery products to a network of food pantries in a three county area. As He multiplied the Loaves and Fishes, we can feed the hungry in our area.

## Connect With Us

@PIAfoodbank 

## Contact Us

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foodbank@pcceo.org

# Words From Wayne



## An interview with PCCEO's President/CEO McFarland A. Bragg II

### Q What is your role in fighting food insecurities in our community?

A It is my responsibility to ensure that the Peoria Area Food Bank secures resources to help mitigate and address the food insecurity issues confronting economically challenged individuals and families in our three county service area (Peoria, Tazewell, and Mason counties).

### Q How does the Peoria Area Food Bank fit into your vision to help families and individuals achieve self-sufficiency?

A Food pantries in our three county service area can secure food items from the Peoria Area Food Bank, which helps to reduce hunger and food insecurity issues faced by the individuals and families that are members of their pantries. Support from the pantries in most instances are short term solutions to a food insecurity issue. The hope is other community based organizations like PCCEO/Community Action can then connect that individual or family to workforce development opportunities that will lead to employment that pays a living wage!

### Q How important are community partners?

A PCCEO is currently working with a local company to assist us in improving our warehouse operations so that we can efficiently and effectively get food products to pantries timely which will hopefully increase the number of times the pantry can restock monthly.

### Q Do you feel the Food Bank has made an impact on our community? How?

A Since the Peoria Area Food Bank's creation, I believe that our organization has impacted food insecurity in our three county service area. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has shed more light on the number of individuals and families that are facing food insecurity on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis!

### Q How can people help fight food insecurities in our community?

A The Peoria community can assist by donating to pantries in their area. If their church has a pantry, donate to keep that pantry operational; and become a donor to the Peoria Area Food Bank!

# Pilgrim Progress COGIC Food Pantry Making a Difference in Peoria

**The Pilgrim Progress COGIC Food Pantry is committed to helping others, not because we have so much but because we know what it's like to have nothing.**

**Led by Pastor and First lady James and Mildred Rodgers, the Pilgrim Progress COGIC Food Pantry serves 80 to 100 families weekly.** After a pantry client signs-in and completes a brief SNAP questionnaire, they are provided a food box or bag containing enough food to serve three to four people for three to four days. Pantry clients are also in need of other services, and the Pilgrim Progress COGIC Food Pantry provides referrals to those programs. While not required to receive a food box, spiritual counselors are also available to those who ask. "On occasion, we have motivational videos running, designed to inspire our clients to strive to make their situation better," said Pastor Rodgers.

**The Pilgrim Progress COGIC Food Pantry can use the help of additional volunteers to unload trucks and pack food boxes and bags. They are also in need of additional resources to help with some of their physical infrastructure needs. Pastor Rodgers can be contacted at [jwrodgers@me.com](mailto:jwrodgers@me.com).**



The Pantry coordinator selects items to stock our shelves with what we consider to be common food products that are fairly quick and easy to prepare.



Volunteers make sure our food donation packages accomplish two things:

- 1. Contain a variety of products to serve a minimum of 3-4 people for 3-4 days.**
- 2. Provide good, wholesome, and nutritious meals.**



Our Pantry coordinator, along with other volunteers, inspect the product to help ensure it has not been contaminated during its refrigeration, shipping, or warehouse storage cycle.



Our kitchen helpers and others break down bulk product to be given to our clients as well as prepare meals for our staff and volunteer workers.



**The Pastor and First Lady of Pilgrims Progress COGIC.**



**80 or more people are lined up to be served, while another group of 20 or more people are seated in their vehicles** either waiting for the crowd to thin out or because they are handicapped.



## The Peoria Area Food Bank Works to Improve the Emergency Food System

Food plays a substantial role in health and impacts whether or not we are able to lead an active, healthy life. The Peoria Area Food Bank (PAFB) understands the importance of increasing the availability of healthy food to agency partners and our community. In order to mobilize this healthy food access work, the PAFB has played an active role in multiple partnerships including HEAL Food System Partners and the Food Pantry Network-HOI.

**HEAL Food System Partners works to improve healthy food access, community education, and economic development while identifying the root causes of food insecurity. The PAFB has prioritized increasing the availability of healthier items at the PAFB. Additionally, recipes and educational resources are available to food bank partners in an effort to increase the consumption of healthier foods with the help of University of Illinois Extension SNAP-Education.**

With a mission to support, connect, and provide resources to those working within the emergency food system, the PAFB has partnered with the Food Pantry Network- HOI. This network strives to help alleviate hunger and build a healthier community. This partnership has led to systematic change helping pantries connect, share resources, and communicate with one another and both local food banks. The network works to cultivate partnerships by sharing information and further educating those working to combat food access issues in the community. Events have included a refrigerator raffle, fresh produce giveaway, guest speakers, and professional development. This partnership has led the PAFB to partner with Midwest Food Bank and better serve families in need within our community.

**The PAFB is working to further these efforts by partnering with local organizations to expand mobile markets, offer culturally diverse foods, and continue to promote the importance of health as it relates to hunger.**

**Kaitlyn Streitmatter, MPH, CHES**  
Extension Educator, SNAP-Ed

# Thank You, Supporters!

**Though we do our best to serve those in need in our community, it is not done without challenges. We strongly need the support of our donors to help us continue our fight against food insecurity in our community.**

Our volunteers and supporters are an invaluable asset to the success of our Pantry Network distribution system. Without their help, we could not do what we do.

## Thank you to some of our Corporate Sponsors:

- The Woodforest Charitable Foundation
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