

## Regional food banks benefit the community – and your business

Eleven regional food banks across New York State purchase and collect millions of tons of food and serve as the main food source for thousands of service agencies responsible for feeding the hungry.

Serving Western New York, the Southern Tier, Central New York, the Capital District, Westchester, New York City, and Long Island, they are affiliated with America's Second Harvest, the nation's food bank network.

Some NYACS member retailers and suppliers are already benefiting their community – and their own businesses – by supporting their regional food bank. If you're not, it's well worth considering.

### What is a food bank?

A food bank is a warehousing facility that acquires, sorts, stores, and distributes food to various community hunger prevention organizations, such as food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, after-school nutrition programs, and other emergency food relief organizations dedicated to providing nutritious meals to the hungry. In 2005, New York's food banks provided 122 million pounds of food to 5,000 agencies throughout the state's 62 counties.

Food banks get food through donations, salvaged product, and purchases from private businesses, individuals, and government resources. Donors are large and small – from individuals conducting small food drives to large private companies offering thousands of pounds of product. Often food banks are given salvage food items that are only superficially damaged, meaning it's perfectly edible but the packages or cans may have cosmetic damage. Food banks receive surplus commodities from the federal government and also purchase millions of pounds of nutritious food, dairy products, and fresh vegetables. To further aid those in need, food banks also distribute some basic household cleaning products, paper goods, kitchen supplies, and toiletries.

While food banks have increased in both the number of agencies and people served, as well as the overall level of pounds delivered, their public funding has decreased in recent years.

### How can C-stores help?

By donating food to food banks, stores find that food items close to their expiration date, cosmetically damaged goods, or surplus items need not go to waste. Donating them cuts down on the waste of perfectly good, though unsaleable, food; reduces the amount of product that must be landfilled; and affords civic-minded companies a tax deduction. And most importantly, these charitable donations help alleviate hunger in your community.

Contributing is easy. It only takes a phone call to one of the following regional food banks:

Buffalo Area	Food Bank of Western New York	716-852-1305
Rochester Area	Foodlink	585-328-3380
Central New York	Food Bank of Central New York	315-437-1899
Southern Tier	Food Bank of the Southern Tier	607-796-6061
Capital District	Regional Food Bank of NENY	518-786-3691
Hudson Valley	Food Bank of the Hudson Valley	845-534-5344
Westchester County	Food-PATCH	914-534-5344
New York City	Food Bank for New York City	212-566-7855
New York City	City Harvest	917-351-8700
Long Island	Island Harvest	516-294-8528
Long Island	Long Island Cares/Harry Chapin FB	631-582-3663