



SAFE

Our History

SAFE was founded in 2013 as Southern Alamance Family Empowerment in response to the growing needs of individuals and families facing poverty in southern Alamance County, North Carolina. We met a small group of families through food-assistance and connected them with the resources to get them past the barriers that brought them to us in need, but our original mission of empowering our community through food quickly shifted when the largest food pantry in the area closed without notice. What began as a small, community-led effort to address the root causes of poverty through empowerment, connection, and dignity-centered support quickly evolved into emergency food relief.

We have served the needs of our food insecure neighbors well for over a decade, growing from 16 families in 2013 to over 3,500 families in 2024. In 2022, we decided it was time to move back into our original mission of empowerment as it was obvious that a top-down approach does not address the root causes of food insecurity. So, in 2022, we began to expand our services based on what clients were telling us, barriers such as poor health, lack of access to transportation, and educational gaps were keeping families stuck in cycles of hardship, we did this while continuing to offer food-assistance at the same level. SAFE has steadily grown into a comprehensive family empowerment center.

SAFE founded
2013

Served over
3,500
families in
2024

Started with
16
families in
2013





SAFE launched second food pantry in 2023

Over the past few years, SAFE has expanded to two full-service food pantry locations, added nursing clinics, partnered with local schools and colleges, and developed a network of support that includes trauma-informed care, community health services, and educational outreach. In 2023, SAFE launched a second pantry to meet growing demand, resulting in a 243% increase in household reach. SAFE also introduced SNAP-matching farmers markets and new outreach tools through UNC's School of Social Work and NCCares360 to connect clients with additional resources.

SAFE remains committed to dignity, community engagement, and long-term solutions to poverty. Our mission, providing compassionate food assistance while connecting individuals to broader supports continues to drive all programming.



Mission Statement

Our mission is to empower individuals and strengthen families by respectfully and compassionately providing food assistance, developing relationships, identifying needs beyond food, and seeking solutions to those needs.

Summary of Services

SAFE's services begin by meeting families at their point of need, most often through food assistance and then walking alongside them to overcome the deeper barriers that brought them to us. We address hunger with equity and dignity through our two Choice Pantries, which operate as free grocery stores, and through our Farmer's Market, where SNAP benefits are used transparently like a credit card so families can shop with dignity. For children who receive free and reduced lunch in 6 title one schools in Alamance County, we ensure food security through our Weekend Backpack Program during the school year and our Summer Backpack Program when schools are closed.



So far in 2025, we have
provided more than
221
children with food through
backpack program

Distributed over
60,000
pounds of fresh
fruits and vegetables

But food is only the entry point. Once trust is established, SAFE connects families to a broad network of resources that address the social determinants of health. We provide access to in-house nursing clinics in partnership with Cone Health, free physical therapy through Elon University's Hope Clinic, educational services with NC Cooperative Extension, NCSU, Elon University, and Alamance Community College, and job readiness resources through partnerships with skilled community members. As a practicum site for the UNC School of Social Work, we host Master of Social Work candidates who bring fresh expertise and direct support to our clients.

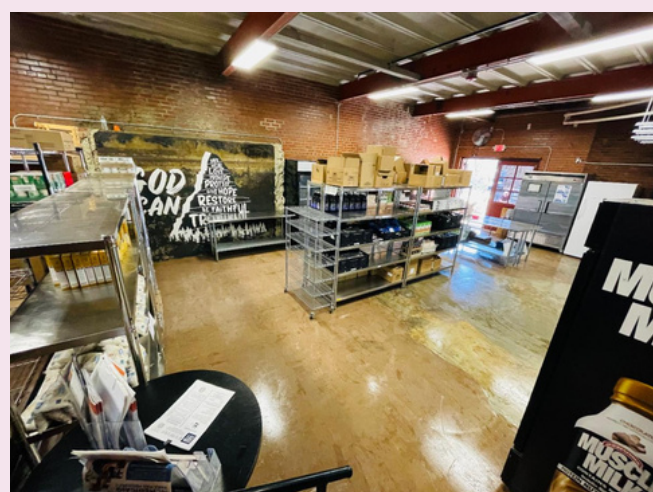
For needs beyond what we offer on site, SAFE uses NCCares 360, a resource connection platform granted to us by UNC-Chapel Hill. Importantly, we don't just hand families a list of phone numbers, we partner with them to ensure they are successfully connected to housing, mental health care, transportation, or financial literacy support and more. In this way, SAFE provides both immediate relief and long-term pathways to stability, helping families move beyond food insecurity to healthier, more sustainable lives.

Goals

SAFE's goals for the next year focus on sustaining the vital services we already provide in light of funding cuts and lower donations. We aim to continue our food programs, including our Choice Pantries, the Farmer's Market, and Children's Weekend and Summer Backpack Programs while maintaining wraparound supports. Our overarching goal is not only to meet immediate needs at the same level we have, but also to help families become more financially stable and self-reliant long term.

Impact Statement

So far this year, SAFE has provided more than 221 children each week with weekend food through our Backpack Programs and distributed over 60,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables through our Choice Pantries and Farmer's Market. Our food assistance programming has put more than 30,000 meals on the tables of our neighbors in Alamance and surrounding counties. Our two in-house nursing clinics have delivered over 1,000 touchpoints of care, while our free physical therapy clinic will serve 20+ clients weekly. Additionally, through education and job readiness partnerships, and NCCares 360 resource connections, SAFE helped families not only meet immediate needs but also take meaningful steps toward long-term financial stability and self-reliance.



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SAFE is Lean...

SAFE operates with exceptional financial efficiency, ensuring that donor dollars and grants go directly to meeting community needs. With only 2 full-time employees and 6 part-time staff, we are able to keep two Empowerment Centers fully staffed, thanks to the support of more than 191 dedicated volunteers who power much of our day-to-day work. Nearly all of our programming comes at no cost to SAFE because of strong community partnerships: our nursing clinics, physical therapy, social work support, and resource connection services are all provided free through collaborations with Cone Health, Elon University, UNC, and others. Facility costs are also minimal, as SAFE owns one building outright and operates the other under a zero-cost lease. This lean structure means that the majority of our expenses are dedicated to purchasing food and the labor, allowing SAFE to maximize every dollar in the fight against hunger while connecting families to life-changing resources.

Visit us at
safealamance.org



2
full-time
employees

6
part-time
employees

More than
191
volunteers