

FY24 Hunger Action Month Campaign Results and Analysis

Every year, the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank plans a communications campaign during the month of September for Hunger Action Month – an annual nationwide month of action to spread awareness and inspire everyone to join the movement to end hunger.

This year, our goals were to **1) raise awareness about hunger** and **2) inspire community members to get involved**. The actions to support these goals help us reach our Q1 DEV Dashboard targets and grow and engage with our audience ahead of our busy holiday season. View the Campaign Plan [here](#).

The metrics we measured for each goal were:

1. Goal: Raise awareness about hunger in our community
 - a. Unique web visitors
 - b. Followers on Facebook and Instagram
 - c. Grassroots advocacy actions
 - d. Sign-ups to our e-newsletters
2. Inspire community members to get involved
 - a. Traffic to our Get Involved page
 - b. Facebook and Instagram reach
 - c. Facebook and Instagram engagement

This campaign was very successful, and we met or exceeded our goals! Here's an overview of the performance and activity on each channel:

Facebook (9/1-9/30)

	Followers (As of 9/30)	Reach	Content Interactions	3-second video views	1-minute video views
2023 Results	7,547	10,300	562	1,000	39
2024 Goal	8,016	10,800	590	N/A	N/A
2024 Results	8,015	11,500	872	452	24

On **Facebook**, we were just *one* follow shy of our goal of 8,016 followers. We reached that goal within the first couple of days in October. We beat our reach goal by 7% and saw a YOY increase of accounts reached by 12%. Our content interactions (post engagement) were 50% higher than our goal. We didn't set goals for video, but I thought it would be helpful to

compare video views YOY. Last year, our video engagement did better, but we also shared more videos in 2023—something to keep in mind as we’re planning for our 2025 campaign.

Instagram (9/1-9/30)

	Followers (As of 9/30)	Reach	Content Interactions
2023 Results	1,883	1,200	313
2024 Goal	2,050	1,300	329
2024 Results	2,079	1,900	400

On **Instagram**, we exceeded all our goals and saw considerable growth YOY. Our reach on Instagram was 46% above our goal, which contributed to a higher engagement rate (+22% over our goal). When we compare these results to last year, we see a 10% increase in followers, a 58% increase in reach, and a 28% increase in content interactions.

For the first time, we also shared **boosted, geo-targeted posts** asking our supporters to sign up to **volunteer at our partner pantries**. This was an effort to help support pantries with specific needs like driving and unloading trucks, packing boxes, volunteer intake, etc. PEMs put out a request in their regions for pantries that need support, and we were able to tag each pantry in the post. While there’s no way to track whether the pantries saw increased volunteer support, we can see the reach and engagement on each ad:

- [Eastern Region Ad](#):
 - Reach: 1,374
 - Interactions: 84
- [Southern Region Ad](#):
 - Reach: 828
 - Interactions: 50
- [Northern Region Ad](#):
 - Reach: 1,269
 - Interactions: 76
- Western Region Ad: We are posting this ad in October because we are still waiting to hear back about specific needs from WR pantries.

Website (Q1)

	Unique website visitors (Q1)	Pageviews (Q1)	Event Count (Q1)	Visits to Get Involved Page (9/1-9/30 only)

2023 Results	15,620	45,000	152,000	260
2024 Goal	15,000	N/A	N/A	273
2024 Results	20,355	56,000	194,000	326

We launched a beautiful new **website** on Hunger Action Day (9/10), which certainly helped us boost our web traffic in September and helped us reach our Q1 goals. We've seen somewhat stagnant web traffic over the last 2-3 years, so it's exciting to see a little bit of growth over our goal (+36%) and YOY (+30%). With higher traffic comes an increase in pageviews (+24%) and events (+28%) and we saw higher pageviews and event counts compared to last year. Our efforts to point more people to our Get Involved page via social media, traditional media, and emails paid off! We beat our goal by 19% and increased our YOY results by 25%.

E-Newsletters (9/1 – 9/30)

	2024 Subscription Goal	2024 Subscription Results
Digital Harvest	20	15
Advocacy Alerts	10	11
Generous Helpings	N/A	11
Total	30	37

Our new website has an easy-to-use signup feature which helped push more people to subscribe to our newsletters. Our goal was to recruit 30 new subscribers to *Digital Harvest* and *Advocacy Alerts*. We ended up with 37 new subscribers total, including *Generous Helpings* (+23% over goal).

We had some new and notable email activity this year. Our August *Generous Helpings* included a plug for Hunger Action Month and the volunteer managers sent a VH message reminding our volunteers about opportunities to get involved in early September. *Generous Helpings* got a 36.4% open rate and a 2.5% click rate—which is on par with our average campaign performance.

We sent an *Advocacy Alert* in time for Hunger Action Day, urging our audience to ask Congress to pass a strong farm bill. It got a 41.5% open rate and a 6.2% click rate—which is higher than our average campaign performance.

Media (9/1 - 9/30)

Media Mentions: 437

The Food Bank was heavily mentioned in the media (29 clips tracked) during Hunger Action Month to a TV audience of 127,531 and an online news audience of 2,000.

We shared a radio (81 clips tracked) and TV (untrackable) PSA, and a press release, which helped us get campaign coverage and spread the word about hunger in the Blue Ridge. The HAM radio PSA was played for a total audience of 447,716. This coverage included the Hunger Action Month coverage, a Perdue protein donation, and the WCVL Food & Fund Drive.

Advocacy (Q1)

Grassroots Advocacy Actions: 34

We sent advocacy letters to seven federal elected officials, encouraging them to support a strong farm bill. Michael met with Ben Cline (he was presented a plaque of Michael's recognition on the U.S. House floor) and talked with him about the bill and how it can help people living in his district. We also shared several advocacy posts on social media, including a video featuring our pantry partners on Hunger Action Day.

Community Engagement (9/1 – 9/30)

The Food Bank was the beneficiary of several events hosted during Hunger Action Month, including the Green Been Bike Challenge, which brought in a record number of riders despite a change in venue due to Hurricane Helene's catastrophic flooding. We also saw food and funds come in through Charlottesville Radio Group, Castle Hill's 231 Fest, Devil's Backbone Brewing's food drive, and Perdue's protein donation. Plus, we hosted the highest attended CEO Forum on our shifting "food is medicine" perspective toward the end of the month!

Our generous community stepped up in a big way this September. They answered our call by volunteering, organizing food and fund drives, listening to Speakers Bureau events, and more! While we haven't started officially tracking YOY yet, the volunteer numbers were up compared to 2023.

- Volunteer hours contributed: 2,096
- Volunteer event registrations: 322
- New volunteer accounts created: 178
- Volunteer groups (includes duplicates): 36
- Individuals who volunteered: 312
- Number of food drives (includes duplicates): 20
- Total pounds of food donated through drives: 4,736 pounds

We can also see how many people chose to contribute financially in September:

- Number of donations: 3,410
- Number of new donors: 84
- Number of new monthly donors: 31
- Total revenue in September: \$612,298.94

While we certainly can't attribute all these outcomes directly to the Hunger Action Month campaign (we sent a mailed appeal and an email appeal during September) we're excited to be able to report on what's happening in our communities and hopefully inspire more action!

Reflections & Recommendations

This is an important and helpful public outreach campaign that helps us achieve our Q1 goals and engage with our audiences ahead of our busiest fundraising season.

Next year, I'd like to replicate many of these strategies, including the geo-targeted pantry volunteer posts. I'd also like to work on increasing the number of videos we share. This year, we had the website launch, which occupied a lot of my time leading up to and in early September. Next year I'll have more space to go out and capture video ahead of time (and throughout the year).

I'd also like to share more guest stories. In previous years I had shared more, but this year, we had so many partner and volunteer stewardship posts that I didn't have a lot of extra room for them in the calendar! They tend to have a high reach – especially from partners who share them with their networks.

I was happy to see that our website traffic increased! I would like to continue to point folks to our website pages through posts, emails, and other media.

Les always does such a great job with advocacy and media. We're fortunate to have such great relationships with our local news stations that support us through food/fund drives as well as news coverage.

This year we also captured some of the actions taken by our generous community members. Shoutout to the CE pod for managing such a busy month and flawlessly recruiting and stewarding supporters of our mission. Between volunteering, donating, and organizing food/fund drives, people in our community contributed a lot during Hunger Action Month. We're so grateful to be able to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of our supporters.