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Harry Chapin Food Bank building ‘Hunger Action Center’ to address food insecurity in SWFL

Nonprofit announces \$30 million capital campaign to build new distribution center

FORT MYERS, Fla. (**DATE**, 2025) – Harry Chapin Food Bank has unveiled unprecedented plans to relieve Southwest Florida’s deepening hunger crisis by building a Hunger Action Center, a massive warehouse and distribution facility that will safeguard the community against hunger for generations to come.

More than **{NUMBER}** community leaders, donors, business partners and elected officials gathered Nov. 19 for an announcement and groundbreaking event in which Harry Chapin Food Bank publicly revealed plans to build a 110,175-square-foot, state-of-the-art center in Fort Myers. The event coincided with the nonprofit’s transition from a private to public phase of its \$30 million capital campaign, Feeding the Future, which is funding the initiative. The Food Bank is relying on public support to conclude the capital campaign.

“Construction of our new Hunger Action Center marks a transformational step forward for Harry Chapin Food Bank,” said Richard LeBer, president and CEO. “As our region grows, so does the need. This modern, purpose-built facility will expand our capacity, strengthen our operations, and help us reach more children, families, seniors, and veterans than ever before. It’s an investment in the future of Southwest Florida, and in every neighbor who depends on us.”

Currently, Harry Chapin Food Bank serves approximately 300,000 neighbors annually through a robust Feeding Network of up to 175 agency partners. In 2024, the Food Bank provided 39.5 million pounds of food, but that figure is expected to jump to 50 million pounds by 2030 and 100 million pounds by 2050. LeBer noted the surge in demand is being fueled by what he calls the “new hungry,” individuals who are working and never anticipated needing help to put food on the table.

“They are hospitality and tourism workers, health care professionals, first responders and educators – essentially, the people who keep our community running,” LeBer said. “Hurricanes, the pandemic, inflation, cuts to federal government programs and other setbacks have affected them deeply. Many are just one or two unanticipated bills away from needing help.”

Located at the southwest corner of I-75 and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in Fort Myers, the Hunger Action Center will more than double the size of the nonprofit’s current warehouse in Lee County while doubling the organization’s capacity to feed neighbors experiencing hunger. It will complement the organization’s existing distribution center in Naples. Operationally, the new building will feature expanded storage space for dry, refrigerated and frozen foods, and 10 truck bays to accommodate inbound and outbound deliveries. Its sophisticated inventory tracking system will allow staff to monitor food supplies in real time using a computerized barcode system that categorizes inventory by product type, expiration date, origin, destination, and other factors.

Additionally, the Hunger Action Center will offer a food pantry where neighbors experiencing hunger can shop for fresh produce and groceries, an element of hunger relief not available in tight quarters at the current warehouse. Community meeting rooms will allow Harry Chapin Food Bank and its agency partners to host seminars and classes covering nutrition, health, how to access food, budgeting for groceries and other educational topics, empowering neighbors and agency partners to address the root causes of hunger. The facility also includes air-conditioned spaces for volunteers and staff.

The ambitious project is the largest in Harry Chapin Food Bank’s 42-year history and is being made possible largely through private philanthropy. At the Nov. 19 celebratory event, the Food Bank announced lead gifts through the Feeding the Future capital campaign, including The Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation and Lipman Family Farms.

“Harry Chapin’s humanitarian work was founded on the idea that ‘to know is to care, to care is to act, to act is to make a difference,’” said Ann Prifrel, chief development officer for Harry Chapin Food Bank. “Thank you all for being here, for standing with Harry Chapin Food Bank and for helping us ‘Feed the Future’ one bold act at a time.”

{PLACEHOLDER FOR QUOTE},” added Jaime Weisinger, director of community relations for Lipman Family Farms.

Site clearing for the Hunger Action Center began this summer and construction is expected to run through fall 2026. DeAngelis Diamond is the general contractor leading the project.

The Feeding the Future capital campaign has raised half of its \$30 million goal. To learn more about the Hunger Action Center or to support Feeding the Future, please visit HarryChapinFoodBank.org/FeedingTheFuture.

About Harry Chapin Food Bank

Harry Chapin Food Bank, a Feeding America partner food bank, is the largest hunger-relief organization in Southwest Florida and serves 250,000 neighbors monthly through its Feeding Network of 175 agency partners. In 2024, the nonprofit distributed 39.5 million pounds of food, the equivalent of 32 million meals, at food banks and mobile pantries across Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee counties. Harry Chapin Food Bank is an Agency Partner of United Way and a Blueprint Partner of the Naples Children Foundation, rated as a Four-Star Charity by Charity Navigator and Platinum-rated by Candid's GuideStar. For more information, please visit HarryChapinFoodBank.org or call 239-334-7007.

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