



*Together, we feed our community.*

## Meeting Essential Needs with Dignity (MEND) is a hunger relief network based in Essex County, NJ.

Our mission is to strengthen the health of our community by increasing access to fresh and healthy food. We envision a community in which everyone has access to nutritious food and the ability to achieve their optimal health.



MEND continually seeks feedback from pantry leaders and community partners, prioritizes the needs of patrons, and focuses on sourcing *high quality, culturally relevant, fresh and healthy food*, with the goal of transforming hunger relief from the traditional "emergency food" model to one that is focused on dignity and respect.

## Beyond Food

In 2024, MEND launched the **Food & Health Equity Coalition of Essex County** to address the root causes of hunger through collaboration. The Coalition brings together partners to identify the most pressing barriers to food and health equity, while sharing resources and assets to drive collective impact.



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# MEND's Support for Its Network



## Pantry Partnerships

MEND regularly convenes leaders from **22 food pantries** in *Bloomfield, East Orange, Irvington, Maplewood, Montclair, Newark, Orange, South Orange, and West Orange, NJ*. Working in partnership, we source supplemental fresh and healthy food, connect resources, and raise funds to increase the pantries' capacity.

**In 2024, the MEND Network provided supplemental food to 490,000+ people - 90% of which was fresh!**

## MEND on the Move

Launched in 2022 as a year-round program, **mobile markets** and **home deliveries** are designed collaboratively with **32** community partners, enabling MEND to reduce barriers to accessing nutritious food by bringing food directly and consistently to those who need it most! **Last year, MOTM provided 151,061 servings of fresh food!**



Additionally, MEND's centralized warehouse located in Orange, NJ, known as *The Fresh Food Hub*, and our mobile fleet (*The Sweet Potato box truck and The Sweet Pea van*) **further help to alleviate the logistical burdens** that have historically limited the food pantries' ability to independently source, store, and distribute fresh and healthy food.



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