



1020 Jericho Drive  
Kingsport, Tennessee 37663

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April 24, 2025

Niswonger Foundation  
Dr. Steve Barnett, CEO  
P.O. Box 1508  
Greeneville, TN 37744  
Email: [sbarnett@niswongerfoundation.org](mailto:sbarnett@niswongerfoundation.org)

Dear Dr. Barnett:

Congratulations on your new role as CEO of the Niswonger Foundation. Second Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Tennessee (SHFBNT) looks forward to continuing our relationship with you and the Foundation. We are thankful for the Niswonger Foundation and the support we have received for the Food for Kids Backpack Program (FFK) in Hancock and Hawkins Counties. The Niswonger Foundation's support of the FFK program this year for \$18,000 is helping us provide 160 children in Hancock County and 136 children in Hawkins County with bags of healthy snacks and meal items twice each month, giving them food to take home and eat after school and on weekends.

We ask the Niswonger Foundation to continue your support of our FFK Program for the 2025/2026 school year and ask if the Foundation can increase its gift to \$20,000. The Food for Kids Program is very cost-effective, yet we are facing rising costs for the food we purchase for the program. Our estimated cost to provide the FFK Backpack Program in Hancock and Hawkins counties in FY26 is \$115.00 per child. A donation of \$20,000 helps the Food Bank meet about half of our projected cost for the program in Hancock and Hawkins Counties. The balance of our need was covered last year with a \$5,000 donation from Hawkins County, a individual monthly donor who gave a total of \$2,5000 to the FFK program in Hancock County and SHFBNT general donations to the FFK program.

Feeding America research shows a link between child food security and long-term wellness, health & academic success. The FFK program helps reduce child food insecurity and provides the food children need to learn and thrive. SHFBNT works with each school system to identify the most food-insecure children who need the program. Volunteers pack the school bags at the Second Harvest warehouse, and food bank staff coordinate delivery with the schools, which distribute the food through a combination of school personnel and volunteers.

In addition to providing the FFK program the Food Bank is also helping feed children in Hancock and Hawkins Counties with food box distributions at schools and through our Summer Feeding Program. This year, SHFBNT provided five food box distributions, serving an average of 15 households at Clinch School, and seven distributions at Volunteer and Cherokee High Schools, serving an average of 70 households per distribution. Also, SHFBNT's Summer Feeding Program provided summer meals and snacks for 58 children in Hancock County and 104 children in Hawkins County last year. We are planning our 2025 summer meal program to include Hancock and Hawkins counties.



April Couch, Family Resource Director for Hawkins County Schools, praised our child hunger programs in a recent conversation, saying the backpack program helps the children and helps the center keep up with the demand for food assistance from their families. She told us that without Second Harvest's Backpack program, school distributions, and Summer Feeding programs, we could not serve every child and family needing food.

Feeding America's 2025 Map the Meal Gap Study of 2023 population statistics (to be released to the public in May) shows 380 children (27.3%) in Hancock County and 2,220 children (19.7%) in Hawkins County are food insecure, meaning they may not always have access to the food they need. As you can see, SHFBNT's child hunger programs are essential in helping reduce child food insecurity in the region and are part of the Food Bank's Strategic Plan to solve hunger.

Again, congratulations on your new role with the Niswonger Foundation. We thank you for supporting our mission and considering our request for funding from the Niswonger Foundation this year. If you need additional information or wish to discuss our funding request, please get in touch with me by email at [rchafin@netfoodbank.org](mailto:rchafin@netfoodbank.org) or by phone at 423-279-0430 ext. 206 or Kristen Reedy, Development Director, at 423-279-0430 ext. 201.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rhonda Chafin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rhonda Chafin  
Executive Director

***Second Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Tennessee's (SHFBNT) mission is to feed the hungry in Northeast Tennessee by securing and distributing food and engaging our community in solving hunger through regional partnerships, programs, and education. SHFBNT distributes food for up to 43,000 food-insecure individuals monthly in Carter, Greene, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, and Unicoi Counties. During FY2024, the Food Bank distributed over 13.8 million pounds of food in the region through our programs and services, the equivalent of 11.5 million meals.***