

Triangle Charities See Increased Need And Lower Donations

By Steve Sbraccia 1 week, 6 days ago

The tight economy is affecting the Triangle's charitable organizations.

Agencies are trying to figure out how to do more with less as need skyrockets.

One of those agencies dealing with increased demand and lower donations is the Food Bank Of Central and Eastern North Carolina.

Summer is always a tough time for charities, because donations tend to drop off as people go on vacation and such.

To try and deal with the lower donations, the Food Bank is holding its second annual summertime food drive.

As he walks through the agency's Raleigh warehouse at the end of the day, Food Bank Vice President Allen Reep points to a nearly empty set of shelves.

"These are the bread racks, and as you can see we don't have much left at the end of the day," he said.

But the economy has led to an increase in demand at the Food Bank.

"We hope demand levels out, but it's hard to predict the future," Christy Simmons with the agency said.

As fast as the food comes into the Food Bank's huge warehouse, it's being sent out again to agencies which distribute these goods.

"The food pantries, the rescue missions, the soup kitchens, the group homes; they're seeing anywhere from a 30- to 60-percent increase over last year," Simmons said.

The food bank says its given away 5-million more pounds of food this year than it did last year at this same time.

"The need is increasing exponentially," Reep said.

The Food Bank isn't the only agency seeing more people asking for help.

The Triangle United Way says there's been a big influx in those requesting help from its partner agencies.

"The increase in demand is about 30 percent, yet revenues are down about 11 percent," explained Craig Chancellor, the CEO of the Triangle United Way.

And Chancellor says many of those requesting help from its partner agencies are new to the system.

"There are people who have never needed anything before who are out of work," he said. "We see increase in need pretty much across the board and where it's heaviest is in basic needs."

For its part, the United Way says its going to have to work harder to find new sources of revenue in the coming year so its partner agencies can meet the growing demands and make sure that those in need don't slip through the cracks.