



## Chief Executive Officer Search

Position Guide • February 2026

# Search for Chief Executive Officer Mississippi Food Network

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## OVERVIEW

<b>Position</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>Reports to</b>	Board of Directors
<b>Location</b>	Jackson, Mississippi



### MISSION

Mississippi Food Network changes lives by fighting hunger today and feeding hope for a healthier tomorrow.

### VISION

A Hunger-Free Mississippi.

### VALUES

- **Stewardship** – we will be accountable to all through the efficient and responsible use of resources.
- **Teamwork** – We will foster cooperation and a sense of empowerment amongst our diverse staff, volunteers, and community partners.
- **Innovation** – We will continually seek to provide excellent service through the development of new and improved methods to reduce hunger.
- **Empathy, Passion, Empowerment** – We encourage and support the best in ourselves and those we serve and provide opportunities for everyone to participate in fulfilling our mission.

# Mississippi Food Network (MFN) has been feeding Mississippians since 1984.

In 1983, a group of concerned and compassionate people recognized the need for a food bank — a distribution center that would accumulate, store, and distribute food and household items for charities that would make the final distribution to needy people in the community.

A distribution center was needed because the charities did not have enough space to store large quantities. When the food bank opened its doors in April 1984 — with 4,000 square feet in a converted church and abandoned fire station — it had 37 donors, eight member agencies, and 2,300 pounds of food. In all, 139,000 pounds of food were distributed in 1984.

Today, MFN has grown to over 80,000 square feet in space, including a 62,000-square-foot main distribution center and office building, purchased in 1996. In 2003, a 20,000-square-foot building became available across the street from the main distribution center.

More than 21.2 million pounds of food are distributed annually. Each month, the team works with donors and over 430 nonprofit partners and programs to distribute food to more than 150,000 people, a total of 1.8 million people per year. MFN, a partner food bank of the Feeding America Network, is one of the largest nonprofit organizations in Mississippi.



MFN offers several programs to provide support to those in need in the 56 counties that the food bank serves. Those programs include:

### **FAMILY AND INDIVIDUAL FEEDING PROGRAMS**

- *The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)*: This is a Federal Initiative that provides low-income individuals and families with emergency food assistance at no cost. TEFAP aims to supplement the diets of low-income Americans. The majority of MFN's food pantry and soup kitchen partners participate in the TEFAP program.
- *Mobile Pantry Program*: The mobile pantry is a food distribution program in which perishable and non-perishable food items are delivered by a MFN truck. The intent is for immediate distribution to those in need in a designated area. The mobile pantry also provides direct client distribution in an organized format managed by MFN or a sponsoring organization.
- *Molly's Mobile Market*: This initiative brings fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables directly to neighborhoods in rural areas that lack access to grocery stores or food pantries.
- *Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA)*: The purpose of this program is to maintain and improve food and agricultural supply chain resiliency. Through the program, MFN can procure and distribute local and regional foods that are healthy, nutritious, and unique to their geographic areas that meet the needs of the population. In addition to increasing local food consumption, the funds will help build and expand economic opportunities for local producers.



- **Retail Rescue:** The Retail Rescue Program is an initiative dedicated to minimizing food waste and combating hunger. Through strategic partnerships with various food retailers, manufacturers, and farmers, the program rescues surplus, safe-to-eat food that would otherwise go to waste and redirects it to the local partner agencies. This innovative approach not only helps provide nutritious meals to individuals in need but also significantly reduces the environmental impact of food waste.
- **Nutrition Education:** The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) includes a monthly newsletter, recipes, and food demonstrations at CSFP or Child Feeding Sites.

### CHILD FEEDING PROGRAMS

- **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP):** The mission of the SFSP is to alleviate child hunger in Mississippi by serving nutritious meals to children in safe, accessible sites during the summer months. MFN partners with nonprofit sites to prepare and serve hot meals to students during the summer.
- **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP):** The mission of the Kids Café Program is to help solve child hunger in Mississippi by serving nutritious meals to children in safe, accessible sites known as afterschool enrichment sites. MFN works with partners to prepare and serve hot meals to students in the afterschool environment.
- **School Pantry Program:** The mission of the School Pantry Program is to help alleviate child hunger through the provision of food to children and their families at school. School based pantries located on the grounds of a school building are intended to provide a more readily accessible source of food assistance to low-income students and their families. Sites are consistently in the same location as the school's campus, have set distribution schedules, and offer ongoing food assistance services. A site coordinator is identified at each program location to assist program implementation, distribution, and reporting.



- **BackPack Program™:** The BackPack Program™ is designed to lessen the consequence of chronic childhood hunger by providing a meal kit of kid-friendly foods to low-income elementary school children on weekends when they do not have access to the federal free and reduced-price meal program. There is no cost for children, their families, or schools to participate in the BackPack Program™. The heart of the BackPack Program™ is the weekly distribution of meal kits to participating children. MFN partners with local school districts and sponsoring organizations to implement the program. A site coordinator (i.e. school staff) is identified at each program location to assist with participant identification, program implementation, meal kit distribution, and reporting. Plastic sacks filled with kid-friendly food are distributed to program participants every Friday afternoon or the last day of school for the week. All backpack meal kits are distributed at the school or afterschool site.

### SENIOR FEEDING PROGRAMS

- **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP):** CSFP works to improve the health of low-income senior adults aged 60 years and over by supplementing their diets with nutritious USDA foods. Statewide, there is a caseload of 12,776. MFN distributed 5.5 million pounds of CSFP foods in calendar year 2024.
- **Senior Grocery Program:** The Senior Grocery Program is designed to lessen the consequences of senior hunger by providing a pre-packed food box of nutritious foods that seniors can prepare and consume at home. There is no cost for seniors to participate in the Senior Grocery Program. The heart of the Senior Grocery Program is the monthly distribution of food boxes to participating seniors, 60 years and older. MFN partners with partner agencies and sponsoring organizations to implement the program. A site coordinator is identified at each program location to assist with participant identification, program implementation, food box distribution, and reporting. Boxes filled with senior-friendly foods are distributed to program participants every month during the food pantry's normal distribution times or during set senior box distribution times.

For more information about Mississippi Food Network, please visit <https://www.msfoodnet.org/>.

The Mississippi Food Network has historically been an operationally strong organization providing the much-needed support to its neighbors who experience food insecurity in the state.

The organization is currently navigating a dynamic administrative environment, creating a timely opportunity for this next leader to strengthen fundraising efforts, broaden revenue diversification, and expand food sourcing strategies. The CEO will play a key part in advancing innovative development initiatives that enhance the organization's long-term sustainability and deepen its impact across the communities they serve.

With strong operational and logistical foundations already in place, the next CEO will help further cultivate a culture of accountability, collaboration, and continuous improvement. By championing staff development, expanding cross training opportunities, and fostering mission focused growth, the new leader will equip the team to navigate an evolving nonprofit landscape and support sustained, mission driven success.



Despite these challenges, there are opportunities for growth and improvement. In 2020, the organization received a \$9 million gift from Mackenzie Scott to help end hunger in the state. Some of the funds have been leveraged to expand working space to better fulfill the mission of MFN though there is deep opportunity to work in collaboration with the Board and staff to craft the strategy for the food bank over the next years and to fully leverage the gift. Advocacy efforts, including the engagement of a lobbyist, will further the organization's mission at the state level. The current national crisis around food availability and federal cuts have raised awareness of food insecurity, presenting a chance to capitalize on public interest. Board development and strategic planning offer opportunities to strengthen governance and align the organization for future success.

The organization has a current five-year strategic plan (2023-2027) the CEO will have the chance to operationalize. There are three strategic imperatives to the plan:

- 1. Pursue organizational sustainability and growth*
- 2. Prioritize investments in infrastructure while pursuing strategic expansion*
- 3. Enhance the organization's reach to the most vulnerable*

With proper leadership, a re-evaluated organizational structure, and a focus on staff development, the organization can navigate uncertainty, adapt to shifting needs, and position itself for sustainable growth. The new CEO will need to address these challenges while leveraging opportunities to build a stronger, more resilient organization.

MFN has an annual budget of \$7.5 million, a staff of approximately 40 (4 of which are direct reports to the CEO), and 23-member Board of Directors.



# Mississippi Food Network seeks a visionary, mission-driven leader to serve as Chief Executive Officer.

This is a rare opportunity to lead a high-impact organization in the fight against hunger across Mississippi. The CEO will guide MFN's strategic direction, champion community-based solutions to food insecurity, and ensure long-term financial sustainability through exceptional leadership in fundraising, partnerships, and operations. The role is best for a dynamic individual with deep nonprofit management experience, the ability to foster strong community relationships, and a strong desire to create meaningful engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders. Key responsibilities include:

### LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGY

- Provide visionary leadership and develop strategies that align with MFN's mission to alleviate hunger through advocacy, partnerships, programs, and food distribution.
- Collaborate with the Board of Directors to develop and implement short- and long-term organizational goals and respond to opportunities and challenges.
- Champion a culture of innovation, inclusion, and excellence within the organization of 40+ staff and across the network of partners.

### FUNDRAISING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Engage and expand a strong donor base in collaboration with a dedicated fundraising team.
- Lead a comprehensive fundraising strategy to grow and diversify revenue, including individual donor cultivation, corporate partnerships, foundation support, corporate and government grants, special events, and major gifts.
- Serve as the primary relationship-builder with philanthropic partners, articulating a compelling case for investment in MFN's mission.
- Drive fundraising campaigns, ensuring they are successful and in line with organizational goals.
- Ensure the successful planning, promotion, and execution of fundraising events and initiatives.
- Develop and manage the food bank's annual budget and fundraising goals, tracking progress and adjusting strategies as needed to meet targets.

### OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

- Learn, seek to understand, and be a spokesperson to external audiences about the complexities of the operations involved in a food-based supply chain from growers/producers to final recipients.
- Oversee a team of professionals executing the daily operations and ensuring both effective food distribution and efficient resource management to maximize community impact.
- Lead and mentor a team of diverse staff and volunteers, fostering a collaborative and results-oriented culture.
- Review MFN's programs and services, including local, state, and federal contracts, for effectiveness, continuous improvement, and alignment with strategic goals.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

- Serve as MFN's lead spokesperson, representing the organization in public forums, with the media, and among elected officials.
- Build strategic relationships with community leaders, peer nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and public agencies to advance food security initiatives.
- Advocate for policies, research, and initiatives that promote access to food and long-term hunger solutions.

### FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Ensure sound fiscal management, transparency, and accountability in all financial matters.
- Oversee the development and monitoring of MFN's budget and financial reporting.
- Steer the organization toward long-term sustainability through strategic planning and revenue diversification.
- Ensure compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and best practices in nonprofit management.



This candidate should embody a balance of professional expertise, emotional intelligence, and a passion for the mission, ensuring they can lead effectively while fostering collaboration and growth within the organization.



We seek a proven visionary leader with a growth mindset and changemaker/transformational leadership qualities accompanied by a passion for addressing complex social issues. The ideal candidate will have significant experience in leading strategic and high-level decision-making, particularly in times of organizational growth. The candidate will be adept at using keen interpersonal skills to coalesce multiple external stakeholders around common goals. He/she must embody the highest ethical standards and demonstrate a balance of business savvy with a commitment to responsible, people-focused program delivery. A demonstrated ability to develop and maintain highly professional relationships with business, civic, and nonprofit leaders is required.

The candidate must have the ability to establish and maintain strong and growing relationships with benefactors, potential donors, and other key sources of financial support in business, government, and civic sectors. Experience with significant fundraising activities is highly desired, as is experience working closely with local and state government officials and policymakers. The next CEO must have the ability to skillfully serve as the primary external representative of the organization and shall possess strong communication and networking skills for the purpose of helping to grow the organization's fundraising program. The successful candidate will have demonstrated skills in cultivating and soliciting major gifts and corporate and foundation grants, and enhancing a culture of philanthropy.

A track record of entrepreneurial problem-solving skills, creating and implementing best organizational and operational practices, and managing people through partnership and collaboration is required. The use of proven business practices to achieve financial objectives is a highly desirable qualification.

The successful candidate will be collaborative, communicative, and compassionate, with an outgoing, balanced personality, and a problem-solving nature. This individual should have a servant leader mindset and a lifelong learning approach to develop a cohesive team, as well as to mobilize, encourage, and build capacity of the staff. A management style that provides autonomy and empowers staff is highly desired, balanced with accountability and the ability to have difficult conversations when necessary. This person will have experience working closely with a board to further the organization's strategic initiatives.

Other personal qualifications include the ability to both lead and manage within complex organizations, calm under pressure, and confident in challenging situations; a creative, intuitive thinker with high emotional intelligence and a flexible personality, complimented by a sense of humor will serve the organization well.

A bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university is required; a graduate degree is desired. Current or prior experience in the field or experiences that would result in a key understanding of the cause is advantageous. Successful candidates may come from the non-profit or for-profit sectors.

## Mississippi Food Network offers a competitive salary and benefits package.

The salary range for this position is between \$175,000 – \$200,000 and will be commensurate with experience. MFN offers a comprehensive benefits package, including but not limited to nine paid holidays, vacation, medical, dental, disability, and life insurance, as well as a 403(b) retirement plan.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

## How to Apply

Applications and nominations are being received exclusively by Kittleman & Associates, LLC.

To apply, please send a current resume and letter of interest to

[www.kittlemansearch.com/mississippi-food-network-chief-executive-officer](http://www.kittlemansearch.com/mississippi-food-network-chief-executive-officer) (click on the Apply button at the bottom of the page). For best consideration, please submit your materials by April 1, 2026.

