



NJ COMMUNITY KITCHENS COALITION

SERVING HOPE ONE MEAL AT A TIME

NJ Community Kitchens Coalition (CKC) started as the NJ Soup Kitchens Group in July 2020 to address issues specific to organizations preparing meals for the food insecure during the Covid 19 pandemic. The Coalition evolved and adopted the use of “community kitchen” to better reflect the work and spirit of the organizations.

A Community Kitchen is a welcoming, inclusive space where anyone can receive a prepared, nutritious meal—no questions asked. It serves as a hub for connection, offering access to additional services and resources that support individuals in thriving, not just surviving. Beyond food, a community kitchen fosters dignity, belonging, and mutual support, ensuring that everyone has a place to nourish both body and spirit.

What makes us different from a food pantry is the provision of a fully prepared nutritious meal ready to eat, with a community dining option. There are many who cannot easily prepare a meal for themselves – seniors, disabled, those living alone, those who are experiencing homelessness or do not have a working kitchen or families with children who don’t have time to prepare a meal due to working multiple jobs. More of us are bringing meals to neighborhoods where neighbors also connect with each other. We are finding ways for food to get to those who are hungry.

NJ COMMUNITY KITCHENS COALITION IMPACT



Over **2 million prepared meals served** in 2024, a 36% increase over 2023



Meals are valued at \$8,425,306 for 2024 resulting in savings for households and all levels of government



107,758 of volunteer hours were provided in 2024, a value of \$3.8 million



The average percent of government funding of **total budget is 3.10%**

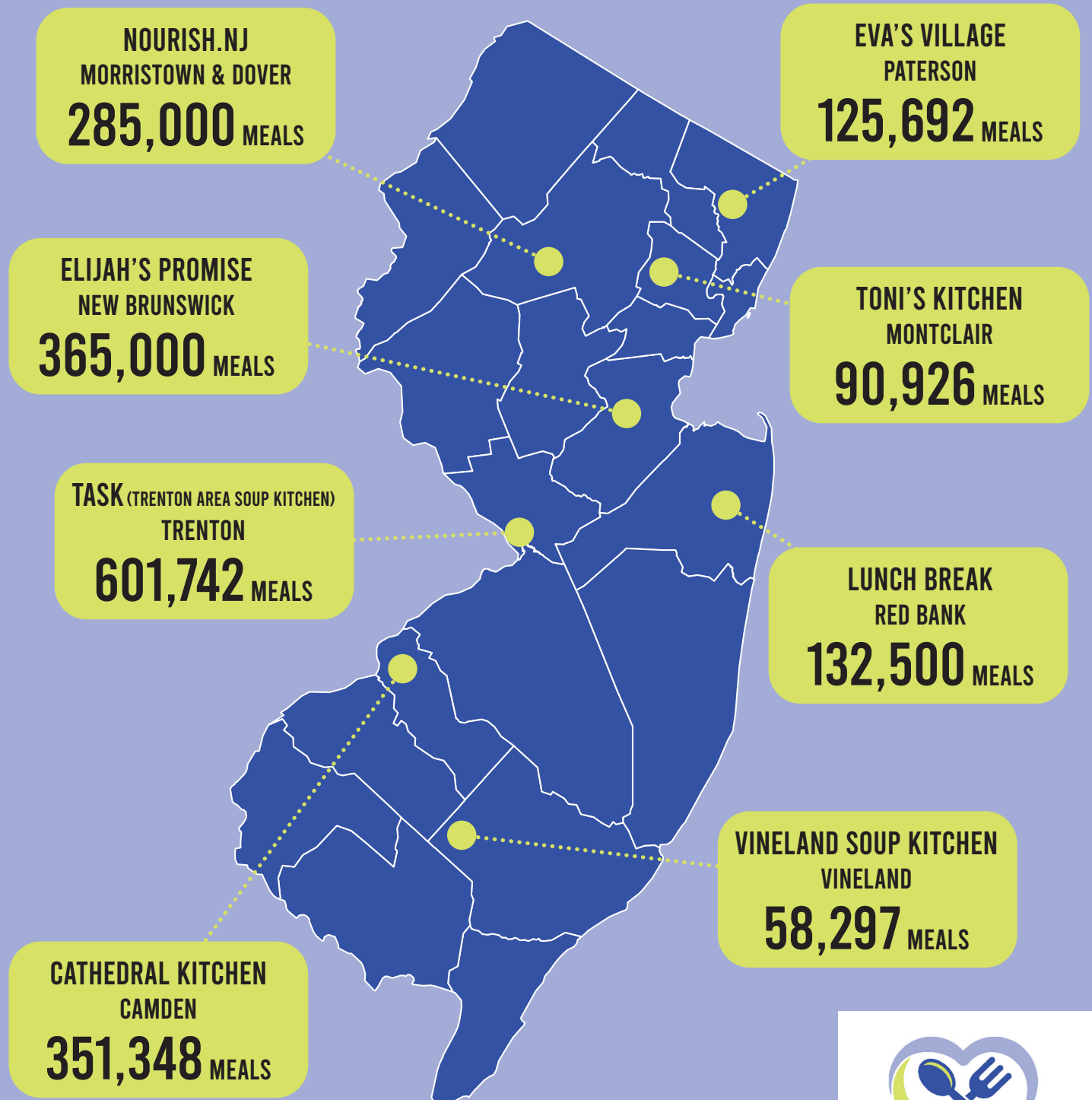


Food expense alone **rose 22%** in the last year

All eight kitchens provide more, such as help getting ID and finding housing, employment services, culinary training, case management and health screenings. These services enable those we serve to thrive not just survive, and thriving neighbors are good for economic development.

It all starts with a meal, with food. That meal, that touchpoint provides hope and connection to other services that will really make a difference. A meal can change a life. Without having adequate food, we can't expect those we serve to survive, let alone thrive.

Prepared Meals Provided by NJ Community Kitchen Coalition Locations in 2024



The numbers here represent only prepared meals. Coalition members, in addition, provide significant amounts of food through food pantries, choice food pantries, bagged groceries, delivered groceries and fresh food marketplaces.



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