

## Northampton County Responds to National USDA Budget Cuts with Strategic Funding to Combat Food Insecurity

By Jessica Berger

Northampton County, PA — In response to the recent \$1 billion cut from the USDA budget that directly impacts farmers and children facing food insecurity, Northampton County Executive Lamont G. McClure announces targeted funding to help alleviate the strains on local food systems. This reduction, which eliminates critical programs that support local farmers and essential food banks, has sparked urgent concerns for communities nationwide.

The cut of the \$660 million Local Food for Schools program and the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program, which would have provided approximately \$500 million this year, poses significant challenges for local agencies struggling to meet the burgeoning demand for food assistance. These agencies, which serve areas significantly affected by increases in low to moderate-income populations, are crucial in addressing hunger, particularly in the wake of the updated 2024 US Census data highlighting a rise in child poverty rates.

In light of these changes, Northampton County is committed to doing everything in its power to support our community. We recognize the critical role of local food programs in providing for our most vulnerable residents, and we are taking action by awarding the following 2025 CDBG-CV funds to local organizations:

- **Slate Belt Food Hub - Mission of Love Food Ministry: \$20,000**
- **Bangor Area School District - Slater Family Network - Food Pantry: \$10,000**
- **Pen Argyl Area School District - Families First: \$10,000**
- **Wilson Area High School - LINCS Center: \$10,000**
- **Bethlehem Emergency Shelter: \$5,000**
- **Safe Harbor - Homeless Shelter: \$5,000**
- **Shiloh - Winter Shelter: \$5,000**
- **Nazareth Food Bank: \$10,000**
- **Western Food Hub - Northampton Borough Food Center: \$25,000**



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## Bangor H.S. The Hunchback of Notre Dame School Edition Play

Director's Notes (Butch Di Minico) for The Hunchback of Notre Dame

What truly defines a monster? What makes a man? These questions reverberate throughout the story of Quasimodo, Esmeralda, and the world they inhabit. At its core, this musical asks us to consider the difference between physical appearance and moral character, the external versus the internal.

Quasimodo, the bell ringer of Notre Dame, is often perceived as a monster because of his deformities. Yet, it is his heart that shines as the true measure of his humanity. In contrast, characters like Judge Frollo, who appear outwardly "normal" and "proper," are driven by obsession and cruelty, revealing that a monstrous soul is not defined by appearance but by the actions and choices we make.

Esmeralda, the fiery and independent Romani woman, represents a beacon of hope and strength. She is not only a physical

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