Poverty isn’t just the lack of money. It’s the lack of adequate food, the lack of transportation, the lack of warm clothing, the lack of living wage jobs, the lack of housing and even the lack of choices.

In fact, one of the most difficult results of poverty is the lack of hope.

The very essence of MUST Ministries is to provide hope to the hopeless. While there are various paths to hope, MUST focuses on providing access to food, housing, employment and clothing, all provided because we want to transform lives.

Reaching out to almost 28,500 people in poverty a year is a daunting task, but our donors, volunteers, staff and community make it possible... and successful. About 68 percent of those seeking our help are women and children, a heart-breaking reality.

In this annual report, look down the path and learn the ways MUST extends a way out of poverty. And, as always, we hope you’ll travel with us.

Rev. Dr. Ike Reighard
President and CEO

MUST Ministries is a faith-based 501(c)3 organization serving 28,500 people in poverty each year. MUST provides food, housing, employment services and clothing to men, women and children. MUST Ministries. All rights reserved.
PATHWAY to FOOD

For some of us, it’s difficult to imagine thousands of hungry people living in our communities. In our service area alone, 475,000 people are unable to acquire the food necessary to live healthy lives, but we provide innovative ways to serve food to more of our neighbors.

- 30
  MUST food pantries distributed 604,588 lbs of groceries to 1,412 clients, including 3,056 infants and their families through the MUST Serve It Forward school food pantry program.
- 273,815
  Lunches given to 7,793 children at MUST’s Summit Lunch.
- 74,641
  Meals prepared and served in the Loaves and Fishes Community Kitchen.
- 509
  Thanksgiving boxes distributed to feed 1,622 in Cherokee County.
- 190,556
  Daily breads and sweets distributed.

PATHWAY to HOUSING

Stable housing is a critical step to ending poverty. The journey to housing can be difficult and even confusing. MUST provides a compassionate team and structured programs to smooth the path and offer comprehensive options to help those in need find a place to call home.

- 84,224
  Safe nights of rest throughout the program.
- 844
  Served in Elizabeth Inn Shelter program.
- 296
  Served in diverse housing programs helping those who are permanently disabled, veterans, single mothers and people in need of brief housing support to assist in moving to stability.
- Cold weather shelter housed women and children in frigid weather.
- Warming center for daytime use kept hundreds out of the cold.

PATHWAY to EMPLOYMENT

Reliable work for the unemployed and under-employed is the key to financial stability. MUST helps those struggling to earn a livable wage by providing a comprehensive employment program, including coaching and training. We are transforming lives through jobs.

- 402
  People found employment through MUST, amounting to $6.4 million in earnings returned to the local economy.
- ServSafe certification provided access to careers in the food industry.
- Forklift certification training provided career opportunities to individuals in the warehouse industry.
- Steel food boots, slip-resistant shoes and other work-ready apparel enabled our clients to meet minimum safety standards and be prepared for new jobs.
- Average starting wage for individuals who find employment through MUST Ministries is now 41 percent above minimum wage.

PATHWAY to CLOTHING

This year, MUST made access to clothing more available through our clothing centers, mobile outreach projects and MUST Marketplace—our well-stocked thrift store open to clients and the public. Thousands of hygiene kits and diapers also bring help to those in need.

- 202,831
  Items of clothing were given to 11,126 individuals.
- 4,206
  Children age 0-18 received new underwear, socks, bath, towels, hygiene items, blankets, school supplies and toys at the MUST Toy Shops at Christmas.
- Mobile clothing centers at schools and events helped MUST distribute coats and other items.
- 7,285
  Hygiene kits were distributed.
- 837
  Clients received diapers for their children.