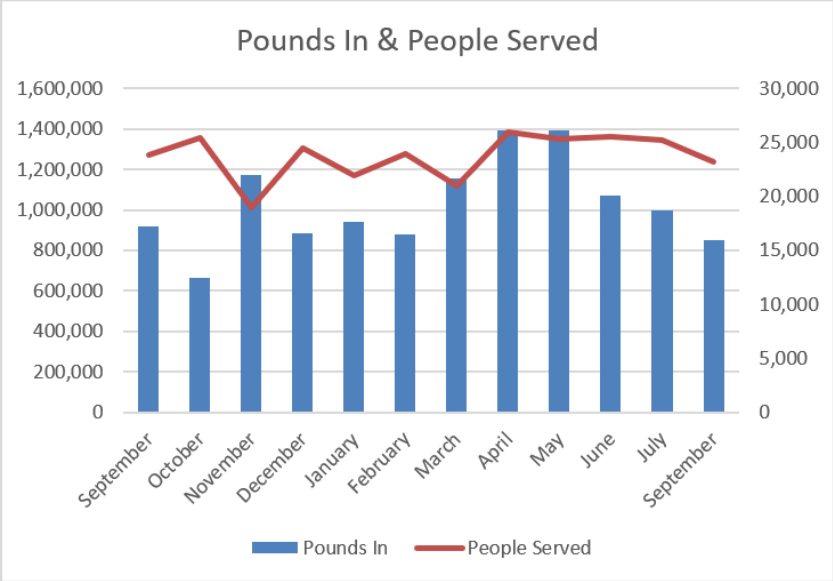
# *The Almost Monthly Epic-Cure® Newsletter*

*October 2026*

## The Report Card

| The Epic-Cure ***Report Card*** as of September 30, 2026 | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Life to Date** *(since May 24, 2019)* | | |
| Pounds In/Out | 50,884,830 | |
| Wholesale Value of Food Distributed | $104,137,056 | |
| Pounds of Food per Family: | 83.88 | *Average pounds per family per visit* |
| Equivalent Meals Served: | 42,404,025 | *Assumes 1.2 pounds per meal* |
| | | |
| **Families Served** | | |
| Number of Families Served this month | 7,994 | *in Month of September 2026* |
| Number of Distributions this month | 70 | *in Month of September 2026* |
| | | |
| **Pounds of Food/Household Goods** | | |
| Total Pounds In / Out: | 848,563 | *in Month of September 2026* |
| Total Pounds In / Out: | 1,153,599 | *Average of 3 prior months* |
| | | |
| **Operating Efficiency** | | |
| Wholesale value of food distributed for each $1.00 spent on Operations since inception: | | ***$49.08*** |
| Wholesale value of food distributed for each $1.00 spent on Operations in September: | | ***$49.24*** |

## Here is our PIPS (Pounds In & People Served) Graph




***Notes on the graph:***

*See note on next page related to pounds.*

*The Labor Day holiday reduced the number of people served by approximately 3,000. In October, we expect to gain a more accurate picture of the growing need for food assistance as we increase the protein flowing to our distributions to ensure supplies last through the end of the line. Currently, when we run out of food, we must stop collecting data, meaning the actual need may be even greater than our numbers reflect.*

**Note on Graph Continued:**

Sometimes, the weight of what we receive puts things into perspective.

In September, our warehouses were overflowing with chips. In just two consecutive weeks, we received more than 70 pallets one week and over 60 pallets the next. That is a lot of chips! But when each pallet weighs approximately 150 pounds, those 130 pallets amounted to about 19,500 pounds of food.

We tried to share some of that inventory "up the chain" with other food banks, but they were getting bombarded with them too and could not take more.

So we shared chips with food pantries and soup kitchens throughout our network and even gave them away by the case to keep the food moving and make room for the next loads.

**50 Million Pounds Rescued. 3,800 New Families. One Mission.**

At Epic-Cure, every pound of food represents food rescued from waste, resources put to good use, and an opportunity to help a neighbor.

We have now rescued more than 50 million pounds of food since our tracking began. Yet this year alone, 3,800 new families have turned to us for help for the first time.

The need is growing. So are the ways we are responding: through community partnerships, new food-rescue solutions, and volunteers who never stop finding ways to make a difference. Here is what we have been working on, and what we are building together.

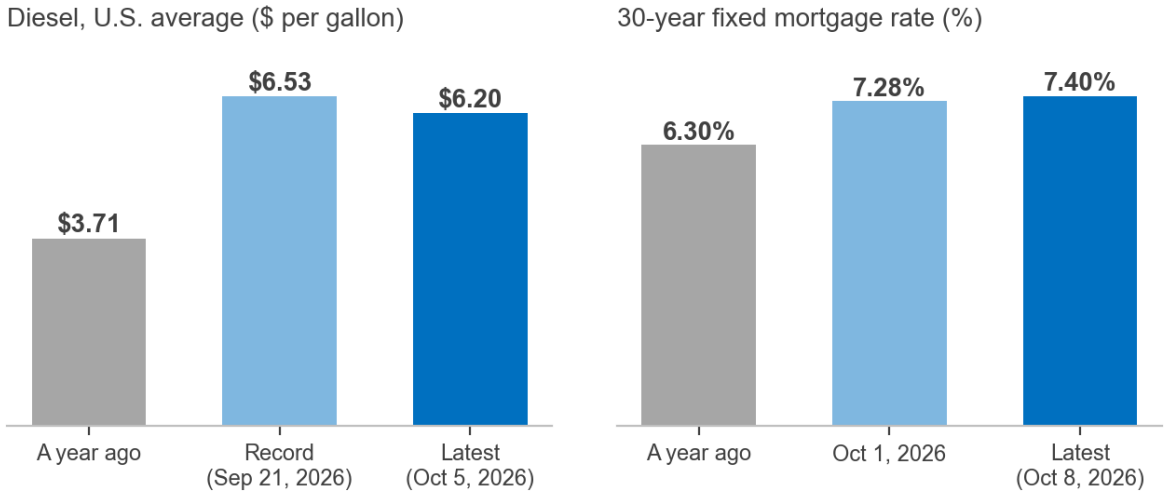
The Need Keeps Growing: This year, 3,800 new families have turned to Epic-Cure for assistance for the first time: neighbors, working parents, seniors, and children whose households are struggling to keep up with the rising cost of everyday essentials. Even families who have never needed help before are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet as groceries, housing, utilities, and transportation put pressure on household budgets.

These are not just numbers. They are families in our own communities who need a little help getting through a difficult time. Every pound rescued represents an opportunity to stretch resources further, prevent waste, and help another family put food on the table.

## The Unlucky 7s: Diesel, Mortgage Rates, and the Dinner Table

Sometimes inspiration comes from unexpected places. Ours came from a bond fund. In September, the investment firm DoubleLine Capital published a short note called "An Uncomfortable Pair of Sevens." They noticed that two numbers that normally have nothing to say to each other were both hovering around seven: the price of a gallon of diesel (a record of about $6.50, close enough to make anyone wince at the pump) and the 30-year mortgage rate (closing in on 7%).

In craps, rolling a seven at the wrong moment ends your turn and takes your chips. Bond managers see a pair of sevens and think about yields. We see a pair of sevens and think about the families in our distribution line, because these two are rolling at a very wrong moment for a lot of people.




*Diesel has backed off its record but is still far above last year. Mortgage rates have kept climbing.*

**First, the fine print (yes, there is some good news)**

In fairness, the dice are still rolling. Diesel has eased from its record to about $6.20 a gallon, and the forecasters expect it to keep drifting lower into next year. If you read the official statistics, grocery prices rose only about 2% over the past year, which sounds downright polite. And interest rates will not stay high forever.

So why are we worried? Because averages do not stand in line for food. People do. And the people standing in our lines are telling a very different story.

**Seven number one: the roof over your head**

Housing is not optional. You can skip the movies, cancel the streaming service, and switch to the store-brand cereal, but you cannot skip the rent. When housing costs rise, every other bill gets in line behind it, and groceries are usually the first to get squeezed, because the grocery bill is the only one with any give in it.

Mortgage rates are now about 7.40%, up from 6.30% a year ago. Here in Northeast Florida, the median single-family home sold for $399,000 in September. On a $300,000 mortgage, the higher rate means roughly $220 more every month, or more than $2,600 a year, just for the privilege of borrowing. Renters do not escape it, either. Landlords borrow at these rates too, and they pass the cost along when the lease comes up for renewal.

Here is the frustrating part. Economists will tell you that higher rates are the brakes on the housing market, and eventually they are. Fewer people can afford to buy, and over time home

prices cool. But “over time” is doing a lot of work in that sentence. Those brakes take years to bring the car to a stop, while the higher payments and higher rents show up right away. Low- and moderate-income families feel the jolt first and wait the longest for relief.

**Seven number two: diesel, the fuel that feeds everything**

Most of us never buy diesel, so it is easy to ignore. Do not be fooled. Diesel may be the most important ingredient in your dinner, and it never appears on the label.

Diesel does not taste good, especially now.

Think about the trip a bag of potatoes takes. Diesel runs the tractor that plants the field and the combine that harvests it. It runs the irrigation pumps, the farm trucks, and the trains and barges that carry crops to the processor. It powers the tractor trailer that hauls the finished product hundreds of miles to a distribution center, and the refrigeration unit on a reefer trailer burns diesel of its own to keep milk, meat, and produce cold the whole way. Then another truck makes the delivery to your grocery store. From the field to the shelf, diesel touches your food at nearly every step.

The math adds up fast. A loaded tractor trailer gets roughly 6 or 7 miles per gallon. At today’s price, a 1,000-mile haul burns about $950 of diesel, compared with about $570 a year ago. Somebody pays that difference, and in the end, it is the person at the checkout. In August, rising diesel prices alone accounted for more than a third of the jump in wholesale goods prices. When the fuel that moves everything costs two-thirds more than it did a year ago, everything costs more.

**When the dice come up seven for families**

We believe inflation is driving food insecurity to record levels, and we see it every week. In recent months, about 25% more people have come to our distributions. Many of them are working families who were getting by just fine until the rent went up, the gas tank needed filling, and the grocery bill crept higher every trip.

Epic-Cure® is not a typical food pantry. Beyond the usual food bank resources, we rescue food from a wide network of donors and partners, and our intake is large. Even so, we are running short. When demand jumps by a quarter in a matter of months, even a very full warehouse empties quickly. And the same diesel prices that squeeze families squeeze food rescue, too: every pallet we receive and every load we send out rides on a truck.

Our diesel costs have nearly doubled as we have more miles to drive than ever before at the very moment that these prices have romped around at record levels.

**The bottom line**

Will interest rates come down? Probably, eventually. Will fuel get cheaper? The forecasters think so. We hope they are right, and we will happily write a cheerier column when they are. But families do not eat in the future. They eat tonight.

Right now, there is real pain, and it lands hardest on the neighbors with the least room in their budgets to absorb it. That is where you come in. Every dollar, every volunteer hour, and every pound of food you share helps us keep the food moving until the dice turn in our favor.

*Figures as of October 11, 2026 (EIA, Freddie Mac, BLS, Northeast Florida Association of Realtors). Inspired by DoubleLine Capital, "An Uncomfortable Pair of Sevens" (September 23, 2026).*

## Meeting the Growing Need for Protein

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our Hatch protein fundraiser! Together, we raised approximately **$20,000**, and a grant from Baptist Health covered the remaining cost of our order. Your support is helping us bring more protein to families at a time when food assistance needs continue to grow.

We had to adjust our original order, but Hatch worked with us to make it possible to purchase half-truckload quantities rather than full semi-truckloads. The beef and eggs arrived on 10/6 and 10/9.

Once the beef arrived, we began adding two additional packs of meat to each family's food distribution, continuing until our supply runs out. The eggs all have best by dates into November so every family will get a dozen eggs (or more) at each distribution until they run out.

This effort has also opened the door to something new. Other food pantries have expressed interest in purchasing some of these products, but most do not have the storage capacity to accommodate large shipments. Because Epic-Cure has the refrigerated and freezer storage needed to handle these quantities, we have agreed to make products available to participating pantries at cost.

This is not a change to our usual food rescue model. We have historically relied on donated and rescued food rather than purchasing food for distribution, with only occasional exceptions for specific needs. But the growing demand for assistance means we have to explore every reasonable option to help keep families fed.

We may be able to develop a cooperative purchasing arrangement with other food pantries, allowing us to purchase larger quantities together, store the products, and share them at cost. Beef is one of the most requested items we distribute, but it is also the most expensive protein available through Hatch. We typically rescue significantly more chicken than beef, but chicken may offer a more affordable option for future purchases.

Hatch provides weekly updates on available products and pricing, and inventory varies from week to week. We do not yet know whether this purchasing approach will be sustainable for us or how often we will be able to offer it. But we are exploring the possibilities.

Our mission has always been to rescue good food that would otherwise go to waste and get it to people who need it. As demand grows, we are looking at additional ways to supplement

those donations when necessary. Our goal remains the same: to make sure families have access to nutritious food, with dignity and choice, for as long as they need us.

Thank you for helping us make this possible.

## Success Story: Turning 26,000 Pounds of Restaurant Ingredients Into Meals for the Community

When Epic-Cure received 26,000 pounds of restaurant-quantity sauces**,** we faced a challenge: these were ingredients donated in bulk, not products most families could easily take home and use. We knew the food had value, but we needed to find the right way to get it to people.

Rather than distribute it in quantities that might be difficult for families to use, we asked our community to help us find a better solution.

Our original plan was to work primarily with restaurants to turn bulk rescued ingredients into meals. When we realized we were not moving enough food through restaurants alone, we expanded the opportunity to churches and community groups willing to prepare and serve free meals.

The community stepped up. Sysco donated 6 pallets of meal containers, and in the first week, we moved 6 or 7 full pallets of bulk food to groups that could put it to use.

Then came the most rewarding part: the meals themselves. On October 4, the first restaurant-prepared meals made from donated ingredients arrived, marking an important milestone in turning surplus food into something families could enjoy together.

What began as 26,000 pounds of restaurant-quantity ingredients became an opportunity to bring restaurants, churches, community groups, volunteers, and food rescue partners together around a shared purpose.

This is food rescue at its best. We do not just rescue food; we find a way to make sure it feeds people. At Epic-Cure, the solution does not always look the way we originally planned. But when we work together, adapt to challenges, and keep finding new partners, food that might otherwise go to waste can become meals on someone's table. Keep the food moving. Keep finding new partners. Keep turning what we have into what people need.

This is 150 pounds of Jamaican Jerk Chicken that Marina Cove Restaurant cooked up with rice and sweet potatoes to make 100 family meals.









The 207 Diner in Palatka made 50 Chicken Alfredo family meals and some fried chicken wings for us.







These are pictures of the restaurant meals and the purchased protein being handed out at a distribution.





And this is a community event providing free hot meals to the community.




## It is the little things that make a BIG difference

The old cardboard baler poker was bent, had a dull end, and was difficult to grip. When you are trying to push through thick cardboard to create a path for the baling wire, it was a real struggle!

Then there is Don. He is the gentleman who stops by every day and simply asks, “What do you need fixed?”

Don took that old, awkward tool and made us a beautiful new one with a straight rod, a sharp point, and a padded handle that is so much easier to grip and use.

To most people, these two metal rods might not look like much. But to the volunteers who use that cardboard baler, WOW, what a difference!

This is what makes Epic-Cure so special. People like Don see a problem, take the time to fix it, and make life a little easier for everyone.

Thank you, Don, for caring enough to make the little things better. We appreciate you more than you know!



## Food Rescue Just Made History

We are excited to share a milestone that has been three and a half years in the making.

Our partners at Brightly have received approval from Verra to issue more than **721,000 carbon credits generated through food rescue**, the first Verra-verified carbon credits generated from rescued food.

Epic-Cure is proud to have been part of this groundbreaking project. We shared our data, answered countless questions, and worked alongside the Brightly team through a rigorous verification process to help demonstrate something we have believed from the beginning:

Rescuing food does not just feed people. It prevents waste and creates measurable environmental impact. Every pound of food we rescue is food that does not have to become waste. It also represents the water, energy, land, transportation, and other resources that went into producing that food in the first place.

This milestone is exciting because it creates a new way to recognize and potentially fund the environmental value of food rescue. And for organizations like Epic-Cure, where volunteers rescue millions of pounds of food every year, that could mean new resources to expand the work and keep even more good food out of the waste stream.

We are incredibly proud to be part of this first-of-its-kind effort and excited to see where it leads. Food rescue feeds people. Now, the environmental impact of that work is being recognized, too.



2026.09_FRO Newsletter #6.pdf

## RescueRoute: Turning Rejected Loads into Rescued Food

In our last newsletter, we shared the opportunity to rescue food from rejected freight loads and the challenges that can cause perfectly usable food to go to waste. Now, we are moving toward a solution!

RescueRoute is on track to launch its mobile app on November 1!

Developed to help bridge the gap between the transportation industry and food rescue organizations, RescueRoute aims to make it easier to connect rejected loads with organizations that can put that food to good use. When a truckload is rejected, time is critical. The faster the right people connect, the greater the opportunity to redirect safe, usable food instead of letting it go to waste.

Our initial launch is an important first step in building those connections. In Phase 2, we will add geotracking to further improve coordination and help connect available loads with potential rescue partners based on location.

At Epic-Cure, we have seen firsthand how much food can be saved when the right connections exist. RescueRoute takes that mission beyond our own operations, with the potential to open new pathways for food rescue throughout the supply chain.

We are excited to bring this solution to life and look forward to connecting with transportation professionals, logistics managers, and food rescue organizations who want to be part of the effort.

A rejected load does not have to mean wasted food. We are building a better way to turn logistics challenges into rescued meals.

Learn more at RescueRoute.org.

## THE MISSION REACHES FURTHER

**From Epic-Cure to the Dominican Republic**

A look behind the scenes as our volunteers load a container full of medical equipment, supplies, and essential items destined for the Dominican Republic!

This shipment includes wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, IV poles, shower chairs, bedside equipment, adult diapers, feminine hygiene products, medical exam tables, thousands of pairs of eyeglasses, shoes, and so much more.

Every item represents an opportunity to improve someone's quality of life, restore dignity, and help meet an important need. What might be surplus or unused here can make a tremendous difference to someone somewhere else.

It takes a lot of hands, teamwork, and dedication to get a container like this ready to go. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who donated supplies and to the volunteers who put in the work to make this shipment possible.

DR Container Loading

## Helping kids build skills for life

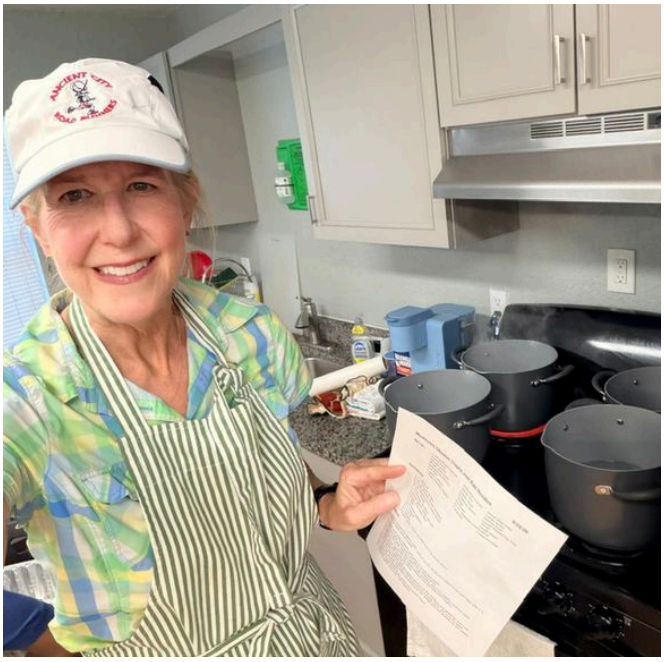
At Epic-Cure, our kids' cooking classes are about so much more than food! We are teaching children practical life skills, building confidence, encouraging healthy eating, and showing them how to prepare meals they can make for themselves and their families. Through hands-on

cooking, teamwork, and a little fun, we are helping the next generation grow into capable, confident, and independent young people, one meal at a time!













## Partner spotlight: ALAN + UPS

From the ALAN (American Logistics Aid Network) newsletter:

This donation was Epic. You may know UPS as one of the world's biggest parcel carriers. But we know it for its big generosity, which includes saying yes to a recent ALAN request to move 31 pallets of Pedialyte from Georgia to Florida free of charge. Our friends at Epic-Cure are using the Pedialyte to help with ongoing poverty and hunger relief efforts.



## What Makes Epic-Cure, Epic-Cure

***Rescuing food. Feeding people. Changing lives.***

**Our Mission***: Epic-Cure® began with heartbreak over usable food thrown away while families faced hunger. Our mission is to bridge that gap: rescuing food and essential supplies, reducing waste, and nourishing people with compassion, dignity, and hope.*

As our community grows and the need keeps climbing, it is worth pausing to ask a simple question: what separates Epic-Cure from other food-security operations?

The answer is just as simple. It is not what we do. It is how we do it.

The ingredients matter, of course. Our Choice Model lets neighbors select their own groceries, like a farmer's market, instead of receiving a pre-packed box. We bring food directly into low- and moderate-income neighborhoods through mobile distributions, meeting demand right where it is highest. And behind all of it runs professional grade logistics: commercial refrigeration, a small fleet of reefer trucks, large distribution facilities, and, most importantly, a steady, more than 400-strong army of volunteers.

But the ingredients are not the magic. The magic, the thing that actually explains our success, is the way we treat people. Every recipient, every volunteer, every partner, and every donor is met with respect, kindness, and warmth. No one is a number, and no one is a case. People leave our distributions standing a little taller and smiling more broadly than when they arrived, and our volunteers leave fuller than when they came.

Our ethos celebrates dignity, self-reliance, and the quiet happiness that comes from treating one another exactly as we would wish to be treated.

So, when people ask what makes us different, we tell them the truth: almost anyone can move food. We move it with grace.

## BE PART OF WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

There are simple, practical ways to help Epic-Cure keep food moving and support neighbors across our communities.

Mark your calendars:

**Rock the Pantries to help feed St. Johns County families in need**




SJC Cultural Events hosts “Rock the Pantries” food drives at The St. Augustine Amphitheatre and the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall on Friday, November 6, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Non-perishable food items will be collected from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. to stock Epic-Cure, Pie in the Sky Community Alliance, Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County, St. Francis House, and a total of 14 local organizations serving families, seniors, and individuals across St. Johns County.

Last year they collected over 31,000 pounds of food. We hope they hit 100,000 pounds this year.

*Register Today for the* **5K That Feeds** *Presented by* **Epic-Cure!**



Lace up your running shoes and join us for the **5th Annual 5K That Feeds** on *Saturday, October 17, 2026,* in beautiful St. Augustine. Whether you are a competitive runner, casual walker, or simply want to support a great cause, this event is a fun way to make a real difference in our community. The scenic 5K course winds through Anastasia State Park and surrounding shaded neighborhoods before finishing at Anastasia Church.

Participants receive a race shirt, finisher medal, goody bag, and a memorable morning spent helping neighbors in need. Virtual participation options are also available for those who want to join from anywhere.

Ready to run, walk, or support the cause? Register today:

5K That Feeds Registration Page

Watch: Epic-Cure 5K Video

Together with Epic-Cure, we can shine a light on food insecurity, one step at a time.

Become a sponsor of the 5K That Feeds and help fight food insecurity one step at a time. Please text (248) 701-8469 or email jcaudill44@gmail.com to get your logo on the back of the race shirt.

**Awareness:**

An easy, impactful way that you can help us is to please …

Save and Drop Off Your Grocery Store Plastic Bags

You will help reduce waste by allowing us to re-use them. You will save us money by reducing the number we have to purchase.

**Transparency:**

Anyone who wishes to see *Epic-Cure's financial statements* need only ask. Or view them on our website!

Epic-Cure - Transparency

Our CPA-Audited financial statements and tax returns for fiscal years 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 have been released and are available upon request.

- Also available on our website.
- Click here to view: Epic-Cure's Financial Statements

The 2019 through 2025 Tax Returns (Form 990) are also on our website.

Please email your requests to Ken Mulford: ken.mulford@epic-cure.org