



COVID-19 RESPONSE

Where We Stand
One Year Later

MARCH 2021



A LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Though last year clearly included hardship and loss, there was light. Anguish was met with activation, and heartache was buoyed with hope. While COVID-19 has proven to be an enduring crisis that is unprecedented in our lifetimes, what has also been demonstrated—with the kind of force and fortitude that changes lives—is the collective empathy and generosity of people in our country to help their neighbors when they need it most.

Before the pandemic, every community in the U.S. was home to people facing food insecurity, and unfortunately that continues to be true. Moreover, since March 2020, millions more people have struggled to put food on the table. We estimate that approximately 42 million people—one in eight individuals in America—could experience food insecurity in 2021 due to the ongoing economic fallout from COVID-19.

Together, with your support, the Feeding America network of food banks distributed more than 6 billion meals to neighbors facing hunger last year.

We have reason to be proud of what we've accomplished together. And, we are well positioned to do more to address the significant need that continues—so we're accelerating our work to address disparities and advance solutions to reach people and communities that have been inordinately impacted by food insecurity, including rural communities and communities of color. We know the hunger crisis poses great challenges but with your continued support, it is solvable. Every gift—each a ray of light—works together to help neighbors in need. The impact of the pandemic will be long-lasting but with your partnership, we can achieve an America where no one is hungry.



Claire Babineaux-Fontenot
Chief Executive Officer
Feeding America



As volunteers loaded food boxes into a car at a Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida (Orlando, FL) drive-thru distribution, a young boy said, **“Dad, are we going to eat today?”** The man began to cry and simply said, “Yes,” telling the volunteers his family had not eaten in three days.





AN ENDURING CRISIS WITHIN A CRISIS

We've all seen the sobering images of the miles-long lines of cars at drive-thru food distributions. At some sites, people slept in their vehicles overnight to ensure they would return home with food for their families. During the first months of the pandemic, approximately 4 in 10 people were seeking charitable food assistance for the first time—including past Feeding America donors and network food bank volunteers.

Millions more individuals are now facing hunger, in addition to the 35 million people who were experiencing food insecurity before the COVID-19 crisis began. The Feeding America network continues to grapple with and seek solutions to the harsh truth that food insecurity will not vanish once the economy rebounds. After the Great Recession, it took about 10 years for food insecurity to return to pre-recession levels.



I'm sure everyone says this, but I never thought it would be me needing help. I used to donate to food pantries ... I hope someday I can pay it forward again.

Matt, a neighbor served by Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona (Tucson, AZ)



This was a nightmare that no one ever imagined we would have to confront in our lifetime. However, there was no time for pity. We had to get to work to helping families.

Montgomery Area Food Bank
(Montgomery, AL)

Photo credit (previous page, top right image): Robin F. Pendergrast

THE IMPACT OF YOUR GENEROSITY

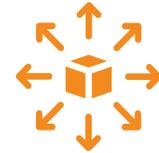
Our mission to end hunger in the U.S. cannot be achieved without your support. Every food bank in the Feeding America network has remarkable stories of gratitude, hope and resilience—made possible because of donors like you. Your gift helped network members urgently respond to the needs of their neighbors by reinventing operating models, including touchless drive-thru distributions, no- or low-contact operations, and scheduled online pick-ups to meet the surge in demand.



Provided
6.1 billion
meals
in 2020



Increased
food distribution
by more than
53%
from April through December 2020
versus the prior year



Distributed
530 million
meals
per month March through
December 2020 compared to
363 million meals per month
the same period the prior year



INVESTING IN COMMUNITIES

Generous contributions to Feeding America's COVID-19 Response Fund have enabled more than \$326 million* in direct support to be awarded** to network members.*** Through thousands of local community partnerships nationwide, including food pantries and meal programs, grantees report:

90% distributed food boxes at drive-thru or walk-up mobile pantries

68% offered expanded food pantry hours and distributions

64% provided home food delivery

*Including cash and food/other.

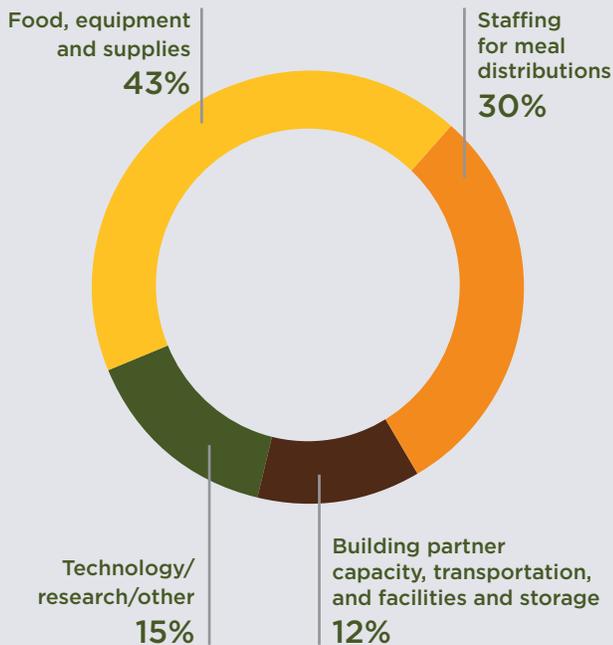
**Through Feb. 23, 2021.

***Including food banks, distribution organizations and state associations.

Photo credit (this page, middle image): Robin F. Pendergrast



HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPED FOOD BANKS RESPOND



THE ROAD AHEAD

As the vaccine rollout continues, the labor market will improve, however, economic recovery will not equate to overnight food security for all. Your continued support is vital to helping the Feeding America network meet the sustained increase in demand for food. Following an assessment to understand the pandemic's impact on the network, Feeding America identified five priorities to advance positive outcomes for the people we serve.

WE ARE FOCUSED ON:

- Sourcing more nutritious food, tapping new supply sources, to ensure food banks have enough food
- Accelerating community impact by advancing equity initiatives that build network capacity to equitably distribute food
- Transforming how we meet our neighbors' needs by increasing their ability to access the food they need and offering pathways to financial stability
- Strengthening federal nutrition programs by enhancing partnership with and the role of federal and state governments in increasing food security
- Maximizing this moment of heightened attention on our nation's hunger crisis to rally even more people to join us in the fight to end hunger



Photo credits: (top image) Caroline Colvin Photography; (bottom image) Lori Cannava





THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HUNGER IN THE U.S.

55%

increase in number of people served by the network during the pandemic

40%

average amount of people receiving charitable food assistance for the first time during early months of the pandemic

60%

network members accepting and in need of volunteers

“

Do you know what it's like to think about food all the time? Now imagine my babies. They shouldn't have to feel that pain in their tummy because their mom doesn't have a job. There is no reason in this cruel world for any child to suffer from hunger. And you—you and your team are helping stop that. If I could hug you I would.

A mother, served at a Redwood Empire Food Bank (Santa Rosa, CA) food distribution school site





Our systems, finances and people have been challenged in ways we had never considered ... What we've learned, or perhaps simply been reminded of, is that we belong to a community of committed individuals and nimble organizations that can move mountains when called upon.

Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin (Madison, WI) partner agency, Badger Prairie Needs Network



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