

# Your Investments in Action

Fall/Winter 2021  
Impact Report

The logo for Feeding America, featuring a stylized orange and green wheat stalk icon above the text "FEEDING AMERICA" in a bold, sans-serif font. "FEEDING" is in orange and "AMERICA" is in green.

**FEEDING**  
**AMERICA**

A LETTER FROM OUR CEO

# CHOOSING AN AMERICA WHERE NO ONE IS HUNGRY

At the onset of the pandemic, Feeding America participated in a massive public/private partnership to help meet the rising food demand. With the release of the *Household Food Security in the United States in 2020* report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, we now know that this collective response to help people facing hunger during the pandemic was successful in mitigating national food insecurity rates.



Babineaux-Fontenot, a Louisiana native, volunteers at Second Harvest Food Bank in New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Ida.

Thanks to the significant actions taken by federal and charitable agencies, and to the generosity of partners like you, we are at a pivotal moment in the anti-hunger movement.

**The pandemic created a hunger crisis that pushed an estimated 60 million people to turn to charitable food assistance in 2020.** We must continue to be relentless in our pursuit to end hunger, especially as we work to provide relief to the many families impacted by Hurricane Ida, the wildfires in California, and other places where natural disasters have left people food insecure.

The Feeding America network continues to innovate and achieve tremendous results toward ending hunger—MealConnect's recent milestone of 3 billion pounds facilitated through the platform is just one example. Much of our collective strength and resiliency is driven by the commitment of supporters like you. Thank you for partnering with us and continuing to care for your neighbors facing hunger.

Your partner in fighting hunger,

Claire Babineaux-Fontenot  
Chief Executive Officer  
Feeding America

# THE FEEDING AMERICA NETWORK HELPS MILLIONS OF PEOPLE, LIKE PAMELA

Pamela Bennett and her husband live on a fixed income; she receives disability benefits, and her husband recently retired.

“It’s hard to pay bills,” Pamela said. “It’s hard to do a lot.”

Pamela remembers what it was like to be hungry when she was growing up, recalling, “Some days, we didn’t have anything to eat.”

Support from donors like you help the Feeding America food bank network provide much needed food to millions of people in the U.S., like Pamela. As staff members from Monacan Indian Nation Food Bank, a network partner of the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, placed bags of groceries in Pamela’s car, she asked them to tell her if there’s ever anything she can do to help them in return.

“God put me here to help somebody,” she said.

She does just that, starting with her family. Pamela shares the food she receives with her daughter, and she cooks for her parents when they need help with meals.

“If God blesses you with something, you’re not supposed to keep it all for yourself,” she said. “You’re supposed to share with somebody else.”

“Having something like this is a blessing.”



Thanks to caring supporters like you, neighbors like Pamela don’t have to worry about finding their next meal.

# RESPONDING TO DEVASTATED COMMUNITIES AFTER DISASTERS

Millions of neighbors who are food insecure become even more vulnerable in the wake of disasters like Hurricane Ida, which left a trail of destruction from the South to the Northeast. Your generosity helped Feeding America move quickly to meet the widespread need for food, water and relief supplies. **Network food banks in Louisiana and Mississippi have distributed over 9.6 million meals to neighbors in need.** At the national level, Feeding America has allocated 246 truckloads—representing more than 4.3 million pounds of supplemental relief supplies—to support member food banks’ local response efforts.



# THE IMPACT OF YOUR GENEROSITY

Every year, the Feeding America network helps provide meals to neighbors facing hunger in the U.S. Along with supporters like you who are committed to helping end hunger, member food banks are able to chart a lasting path to an America where no one is hungry.



## SNAP BENEFITS RISE FOR MILLIONS OF PEOPLE FACING HUNGER

Feeding America is grateful for the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's update to the Thrifty Food Plan](#), which increases benefit levels for the 42 million people participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). **The average monthly benefit increased by \$36 per person; the change took effect Oct. 1, 2021.** Among the one in eight people who receive SNAP benefits, two-thirds are children, seniors and people living with disabilities. The benefit adjustment is welcome news especially as temporary COVID-19 assistance expired, including expanded unemployment insurance benefits and a temporary 15% increase in SNAP benefits that ended Sept. 30, 2021.



## DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING OF FOOD INSECURITY AMONG SENIORS

In August 2021, our research study [The State of Senior Hunger in America in 2019](#) found that **out of 74 million seniors age 60 and older in the U.S., 5.2 million were food insecure in 2019** (the most recent year for which data is available). The 2019 food insecurity rate among seniors—7.1%—remained higher than the pre-Great Recession rate in 2007 of 6.3%. The Feeding America network continues to design innovative programs that factor seniors' health considerations, mobility, transportation needs, and dietary restrictions. This marks the fifth consecutive year that Feeding America produced The State of Senior Hunger report series.



## DID YOU KNOW?

A new Feeding America [analysis](#), released in September 2021, estimates at least 60 million people—1 in 5—turned to food banks, food pantries and other private food assistance programs in 2020 in the midst of the health and economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. That means **the total number of people seeking charitable food assistance increased by 50% from 2019.** The [Charitable Food Assistance Participation estimate](#) is based on findings from the Urban Institute's Well-Being and Basic Needs Survey and the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, which were made possible by a years-long effort by Feeding America to develop and test survey questions about charitable food assistance participation, and advocate for their inclusion on nationally representative surveys.



## INNOVATING TO END HUNGER IN AMERICA

In September, Feeding America's MealConnect, our enhanced free food-donation app, achieved a significant milestone: surpassing **3 billion pounds of rescued food** since its 2014 inception. In addition, the no-cost app expanded to become more mobile friendly and launched MealConnect Produce, a produce-sourcing feature set, allowing us to sunset Produce Matchmaker. This innovative technology provides donors, network food banks, partner agencies and member-led cooperatives a streamlined way to share full truckloads of produce. MealConnect's success means reduced food waste in our country and, most importantly, more meals for neighbors facing hunger.



## GROWING IMPACT THROUGH NETWORK LEARNING

One of the strengths of the Feeding America network is the ability for members to exchange best practices to help **innovate and deepen the impact for neighbors facing hunger**. Thanks to your support, Feeding America broadened access to food bank conferences through the use of virtual convenings, enabling any network team member to participate at no cost. The Feed Nourish Connect conference in July and Unite conference in August collectively brought together more than 2,700 participants to focus on knowledge sharing, building capacity in areas of food sourcing, access, technology, marketing, fundraising, and furthering equity, diversity and inclusion work in core food banking.

## LINDSEY LESTER-BRUTSCHER SERVING HER COUNTRY AND COMMUNITY

Retired Navy Officer Lindsey Lester-Brutscher began supporting hunger relief during her military career. She contributed to the Combined Federal Campaign, and connected with St. Louis Area Foodbank, a Feeding America network member, learning not only about hunger in her community but also the national hunger relief efforts of Feeding America.

Lindsey began regularly donating to Feeding America, and a later move to Spain triggered her legacy gift.

"I needed to update my will," she said. "I wanted to give one final donation to organizations that I had been supporting who fight battles that I think are really important."

With Lindsey's commitment of a planned gift to support hunger relief in the future through Feeding America, she became a member of the van Hengel Society, which honors individuals who make legacy gifts, including bequests and charitable gift annuities, in support of Feeding America.

"I hope that other people like me who are not wealthy people but are financially secure consider leaving a legacy gift," Lindsey said. "I planned my retirement. I encourage people to ask, 'Why not leave some of that to meaningful charities?' Even a few percentage points can benefit a charity so much."



FROM THE FRONT LINES

# BUILDING EQUITY BY SUPPORTING FARMERS OF COLOR

Feeding America is committed to addressing racial and geographic inequities that exacerbate food insecurity in order to better meet the unique needs of diverse populations and communities. To that end, network member Second Harvest Heartland (SHH) in Minnesota has been examining what it means to end hunger in our country and how their impact as a food bank can extend beyond food distribution.

This growing season, SHH launched a three-year partnership with The Good Acre (TGA), a local nonprofit food hub, with the goal of **building equity and opportunity in their community by purchasing from under-resourced farmers and growers of color**. SHH has committed to spending \$1 million over the next three years to specifically source and purchase from more than 25 farmers of color at full market price; product is not donated. SHH then distributes the produce to agency partners at no cost; items include culturally connected food, like African eggplant, sweet potato leaves, collards and mustard greens. By the end of the season, SHH will have purchased 150,000 pounds of produce from TGA. Growers are eager

to supply the program again in 2022, and SHH and TGA hope to expand the number of participating farmers.

This partnership will provide growers a stable income allowing them to strengthen their economic power and grow their businesses and will boost the local community.

“Stability and opportunity are important goals for participating growers,” said Heidi Coe, produce strategy manager at SHH. “By offering a multi-year program, we hope to see farmers able to build new greenhouses, improve their soil, add a new well, or even purchase their own land.”

“Our focus through this partnership is to end hunger through how and where we source food, rather than focus on how we distribute food.”

Heidi Coe of Second Harvest Heartland



Shoua and Nao Xiong deliver a load of sweet potato leaves, a prized commodity for network members providing fresh produce to Asian and East African communities.

# AT OUR CORE

## Continued Public/Private Response to Hunger Crucial to End Hunger

With the September 2021 release of the USDA’s annual report on food security in America, *Household Food Security in the United States in 2020*, we know that **the massive public/private response to hunger during the pandemic was successful in mitigating food insecurity rates in our country.** The report shows overall food insecurity rates did not increase substantially in 2020 from the previous year—however, disparities are widening across racial and ethnic lines among neighbors facing hunger.

Bipartisan support in Congress was critical to help strengthen federal nutrition programs and support food banks, and we remain committed to our advocacy work to ensure all people have equitable access to food. With the help of hunger-relief supporters like you, the Feeding America network provided **more than 6 billion meals to people facing hunger last year.**



## ACCORDING TO THE USDA REPORT

More than 38 million people—or 1 in 8—lived in food-insecure households in 2020, up from 35.2 million in 2019.

Among children, nearly 12 million were living in food-insecure households—or 1 in 6—compared to 10.7 million in 2019.

Food insecurity in 2020 increased for households with children and for people living in the South.

While food insecurity in rural areas in 2020 remains higher than in urban areas, the gap between rural and urban hunger narrowed due to an increase in food insecurity for people living in cities, which tended to be more affected by economic closures in 2020. An estimated 24% of Black individuals experienced food insecurity in 2020, up from 19.2% in 2019.

For Latino individuals, there was an increase from 15.8% in 2019 to 19.3% in 2020.

Compared to white individuals, Black individuals were 3.2 times more likely and Latino individuals were 2.5 times more likely to experience food insecurity.

# WITH GRATITUDE

Due to the health and economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, at least 60 million people—1 in 5—turned to charitable food assistance in 2020, according to Feeding America analysis. We know the unprecedented public/private response to hunger during the pandemic, including the support of hunger-relief partners like you, was successful in mitigating food insecurity in the U.S. Thank you for your generosity and compassion, which helped the Feeding America network provide more than 6 billion meals to people facing hunger last year.

## WAYS TO ENGAGE

**1** Participate in **#GivingTuesday on Nov. 30** to join a global movement that unites people around generosity and kindness.

**2** Consider supporting **Feeding America before Dec. 31** to maximize your tax benefits.

**3** Consider continuing your commitment to hunger relief with a gift to **Feeding America in your estate plan**. For more information, contact Jessica Noe at [plannedgiving@feedingamerica.org](mailto:plannedgiving@feedingamerica.org) or 312.641.5593.



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*Feeding America is a nationwide network of food banks that feeds more than 40 million people through food pantries and meal programs in communities across America and leads the nation in the fight against hunger.*

**Support Feeding America and help solve hunger.  
Donate. Volunteer. Advocate. Educate.**