

# Your Investments in Action

Winter 2021-2022  
Impact Report



  
**FEEDING**  
**AMERICA**

# A LETTER FROM OUR CEO

We accomplished so much together last year with and on behalf of people who live with food insecurity. I'm heartened by the generosity and compassion of donors and partners like you.

Though we don't yet have final numbers in full for last year, we do know that with your incredible support, the Feeding America network provided more than **5.4 billion meals to neighbors facing hunger in 2021**. That support fuels my optimism about what we can achieve together in the future.

The Feeding America network of food banks and partners is committed to our collective mission to end hunger in America, remaining vigilant, caring and efficient on the frontlines so that people facing hunger safely and respectfully receive the food they need.

Our partnership has been essential to our network's disaster response, as well. The compassion, dedication and collaboration of food bank staff, volunteers, partner organizations and caring supporters like you made a truly meaningful impact. Your support catalyzed Feeding America and local member food banks to swiftly respond in the wake of December's tornado outbreaks and mobilized mutual assistance to help neighbors impacted by the Colorado wildfires.

Feeding America's resilience and solidarity is unyielding. We are committed to responding and evolving to address the year-round challenges that millions of people face in securing the consistent nourishment they need. We are continuing to deepen existing partnerships and creating new ones at the community level to help increase equitable food access for populations inordinately impacted by hunger, with a focus on communities of color and rural communities.

Thank you for standing with us and being a part of the answer to ending hunger in America.

Your partner in the fight against hunger,



Claire Babineaux-Fontenot  
Chief Executive Officer  
Feeding America



Babineaux-Fontenot tours Feeding Tampa Bay, a Feeding America network food bank.

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

Tony is 24 years old and works 60 hours each week at a restaurant in Waterloo, Iowa. That means he's working nearly every shift he can—including nights and weekends. And yet, money is tight.

"I'm living paycheck to paycheck right now," said Tony, who is engaged and hoping to also help pay for a wedding. "Without the food bank, we'd probably go hungry for a week between paychecks."

When the holidays came around, Tony wanted to celebrate, but he knew he couldn't afford the food because paying the rent is priority before any other purchases. To help ensure he and his loved ones had food, he visited a holiday food distribution at the [Northeast Iowa Food Bank](#), a member of the Feeding America food bank network. There, he received a ham and traditional holiday side dishes to fill their Thanksgiving plates at home.

Upon receiving the food, Tony said: "We're going to be celebrating this food. It means we get to eat. It's a time to feel all tougher, for everyone to be treated the same."

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"Without the food bank, we'd probably go hungry for a week between paychecks."



Your generous gifts impact the lives of neighbors like Tony. Thank you for supporting Feeding America.

# GLEANNING DEEPER INSIGHTS ABOUT THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

The pandemic exacerbated the need for timely data across all areas of our work, particularly data and insights about the people we serve. In response, **Feeding America is set to launch a new neighbor intake platform** as part of the Service Insights Initiative—a network-wide initiative to glean deeper insights about the people we serve at network food banks and pantries. The new platform will be **available at no cost to all network members** in January 2022. This has been a collaborative effort involving Feeding America’s Research, IT and Innovation teams who worked to compile feedback from neighbors and network members to inform the design of the platform, ensuring a useful tool for all.



# THE IMPACT OF YOUR GENEROSITY

Every year, the Feeding America network helps provide meals to millions of neighbors 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.



## EVOLVING OUR WORK TO INCREASE SERVICE FOR NEIGHBORS FACING HUNGER

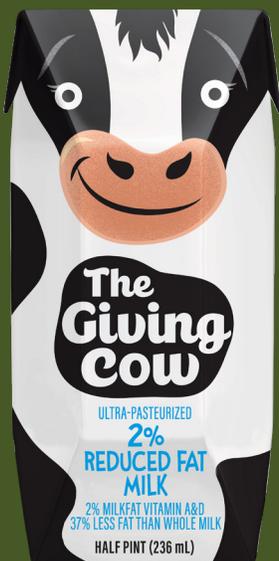
With the support of donors like you, Feeding America is investing both funds and in-kind support to facilitate Boundless Collaborations—**joint ventures supporting member food banks pursuing transformative collaborations that transcend service-area boundaries.** Grants fund project planning and/or implementation. More than 90 food banks—nearly half the Feeding America network—applied for funding in the first two cycles, with 11 projects receiving awards. Minnesota Central Kitchen is the first to transition to implementation with its prepared meals project—on track to distribute 1.4 million meals in Minnesota and North Dakota in fiscal year 2022, with plans to expand through the Upper Midwest and beyond.



## ADVOCATING FOR FOOD-INSECURE MILITARY FAMILIES

The Feeding America network applauds the **passage of the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act, which includes a Military Family Basic Needs Allowance to help military members put food on the table** for their families.

Network food banks and partner agencies have worked tirelessly over the past few months to ensure this monthly allowance was included in the final legislation to help the 14% active-duty enlisted service members who reported difficulty putting food on the table in a recent survey from Blue Star Families.



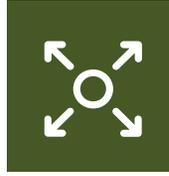
## DID YOU KNOW?

**Milk is one of the most requested, yet least donated, items at food banks.** In December 2021, 17 regional dairy brands owned by Dairy Farmers of America, a Feeding America partner, donated more than 1.3 million units of The Giving Cow to Feeding America network members. The product offers a shelf-stable solution to food pantries faced with a shortage of refrigeration space. While fresh milk typically has a shelf life of approximately 20 days after processing, the 8-ounce “Giving Cow” packs have a shelf life of up to one year. The packs have been specifically designed for food pantries and kids’ backpack programs to fight hunger and will not be sold in stores.



## EVOLVING HEALTH CARE PARTNERSHIPS IN HUNGER RELIEF

Food banks and health care organizations can be effective partners to reach more households at risk, improve nutrition and food security, promote wellness, and advance health equity. The Food Bank-Health Care Partnerships Toolkit, released in December 2021, was redesigned and updated with new content to **help food banks build knowledge and capacity to develop and evolve partnerships with health care organizations.** The toolkit includes assessments, templates, action plans, information, and other resources for planning, operationalizing, evaluating, and sustaining these partnerships.



## PROVIDING CAPACITY-BUILDING RESOURCES TO SUPPORT FOOD BANKS

Last fall, Feeding America published Edition 2 of the Nutrition in Food Banking Toolkit, a resource which aims to support food banks and food pantry programs as we collectively work to address food insecurity and the overlapping challenges posed by structural inequities often preventing the selection and consumption of nutritious foods. The **expanded edition provides capacity-building resources to support food banks' abilities to improve access and selection of nutritious, culturally inclusive foods** with and within the communities they serve.

*Special thanks to AmeriCares and an anonymous donor for supporting this work.*

## SCOTT AND LINDA WOLPERT: WHY WE SUPPORT FEEDING AMERICA

For more than a decade, Scott and Linda Wolpert have been dedicated supporters of Feeding America and our mission to end hunger in the United States. Married in 1985 and parents to four children, the Wolperts support Feeding America because they are concerned with the nation's widespread food insecurity crisis and want to immediately help people in need.

"Food is a basic need for all people and isn't complicated by politics," Linda said.

The couple chose to name Feeding America as a beneficiary in their will and become members of the van Hengel Society to support our vision of an America where no one is hungry. Their decision to support Feeding America was based on several reasons, including our effective use of resources to serve tens of millions of neighbors every year—98.5% of contributions received by Feeding America go directly into programs that serve people facing hunger.

"Legacy gifts are a long-term way to contribute to positive change, long-term impact for good," Scott said. "Our parents taught us to have consideration for fellow community members in need. We are very fortunate to be able to make contributions to support Feeding America."



## FROM THE FRONT LINES

# IMPROVING ACCESS TO INDIGENOUS FOODS AND SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS FOOD PRODUCERS

Health outcomes in native communities are among the poorest in the United States: Diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease are common in tribal communities. Access to healthy, traditional food is key to addressing poor health.

**To help improve food equity for neighbors facing hunger in vulnerable populations, Feeding Wisconsin, a state association of Feeding America member food banks, piloted the Tribal Elder Food Box Program in collaboration with network food banks Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin and Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank.** Together they partnered with the Intertribal Agriculture Council, tribal nations in Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative, among others (see sidebar) with the goal to increase access to culturally meaningful food for Tribal Elders. Thanks to support through a grant from donors like you, the program purchases food—often from Indigenous-operated and regional food producers—that is packed into boxes and delivered to elders at seven tribal partner sites.

In addition to **providing nutritious, locally and tribally sourced foods to Tribal Elders**, the program’s food purchasing “prioritizes putting dollars in the hands of

tribal producers, further strengthening an already resilient food system,” said Feeding Wisconsin’s Executive Director Stephanie Jung Dorfman.

Each food box weighs approximately 20 pounds and is provided at no cost to Tribal Elders who are members of Oneida, Menominee and Red Cliff Nations and has been expanded to an additional four Tribal Nations. Proteins sourced for the boxes include fish from Red Cliff Fish Company every other week and distributions alternate buffalo and beef raised by Oneida Farm.

When the pilot phase ended in December 2021, the Tribal Elder Food Box Program had **distributed 10,800 food boxes**. With the pilot’s success, plans are underway to expand the program and source more Indigenous produce.

“Foods are medicine and our elders deserve the respect of getting those types of foods.”

Gary Besaw, Menominee Nation



### PROGRAM PARTNERS

- Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin
- Oneida Nation
- Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Forest County Potawatomi
- Little Traverse Band of Odawa
- Feeding Wisconsin
- Intertribal Agriculture Council
- Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin
- Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank
- Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
- Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative
- University of Wisconsin-Madison healthTIDE

During the pilot phase, the Tribal Elder Food Box Program provided more than 10,000 food boxes to Tribal Elders facing hunger.

# AT OUR CORE

## Utilizing Neighbor Feedback to Help Inform Food Bank Services

In November 2021, Feeding America member food banks received findings from a neighbor survey: **Feeding America's first large-scale effort to gather neighbor data** using the Feeding America Client Survey, a research toolkit of survey measures and learning resources to support consistent local research and evaluation across the nationwide network in accordance with national best practices.

Thanks to generous support as part of a family and child feeding member grant from an anonymous donor, the project, led by Feeding America's Research team and conducted May through September 2021, collected information on the neighbor experience, behavior and demographic data using a standardized, self-administered survey. New to many of the network's food banks and agency partners, this mode of data collection was implemented due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and the desire to limit any unnecessary health risks to neighbors, volunteers and staff.

More than 50 member food banks and over 165 agency partners deployed the survey via a flyer. Placed inside a food box or bag, the flyer contained a QR code/link that neighbors could access via a smart phone or computer to provide their feedback. Overall, **more than 10,000 neighbors** completed the survey. Additionally, Feeding America successfully tested the delivery of electronic gift cards as neighbor compensation for completing the survey using a new platform called Rybbon. We are continuing to test this gift card delivery option and believe it will be available to all food banks by March 2022.

To protect the anonymity of the neighbors who participated, results were shared at the individual site and food bank level for base sizes of 10 respondents or greater. To learn more about this pilot, please contact [David Duguid](#), Director of Program Evaluation at Feeding America.

### NEIGHBOR INSIGHTS

More than **9 out of 10 neighbors** rated their overall experience at the food bank/partner agency favorably—"very good" (64%) and "good" (32%)

Similarly, a **high percentage of neighbors** said they were treated positively—"very well" (76%) and "well" (20%)



# WITH GRATITUDE

Supply chain disruptions, transportation shortages, lower inventories at retailers and manufacturers (yielding decreased donation streams), and labor shortages result in increased costs for the charitable food sector. For example, the cost of transporting donated food has increased more than 20% versus this time last year. With your support, Feeding America members have been able to purchase more food to help offset food donation shortages and meet the demand. The network purchased 58% more food in fiscal year 2021 from the previous fiscal year to provide meals to tens of millions of neighbors facing hunger.

## WAYS TO ENGAGE

Feeding America's "[Elevating Voices, Ending Hunger](#)" podcast returns for season two in February, focused on grassroots change, food sovereignty and economic mobility. Monthly episodes are hosted by our Chief Equity Officer, Ami McReynolds.

Our [2021 annual report](#) highlights the outstanding partnership and generosity of Feeding America's supporters in fiscal year 2021 as they helped the network provide a record 6.6 billion meals for neighbors facing hunger.

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.



161 North Clark Street  
Suite 700  
Chicago, IL 60601

1627 I Street NW  
Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20006

800.771.2303  
[www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)

*Feeding America is a nationwide network of food banks that feeds tens of millions of 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.**