



HITTING RESET

Turning the Table on
Hunger in America

MARCH 2022



INTRODUCTION

The heightened hunger crisis in America during the past two years amid the COVID-19 pandemic impacted every community across the country. Every food bank in the Feeding America network rallied and responded and your support was—and remains—a key catalyst in our work. As we navigated unprecedented uncertainty, you helped Feeding America remain steadfast and skillful in providing even more meals to more neighbors facing hunger and strengthened our systems to ensure that communities were resilient in responding to this emergency. To meet the increased demand, the Feeding America nationwide network harnessed the expertise that comes with being committed to hunger-relief work for more than 40 years and cemented it around our collective *why*: **People facing hunger are at the center of all we do.**

Together, with your support, Feeding America has provided more than **10.8 billion meals** to neighbors facing hunger since the onset of the pandemic (April 2020–December 2021)—a 38% increase compared to the same reporting period pre-pandemic. We have invested nearly **\$1 billion to fight food insecurity** since the start of the pandemic. To date, Feeding America has raised \$347 million for the COVID-19 Response Fund and distributed 100% of these funds to food banks for COVID-19 response efforts. That type of impact cannot be realized without supporters like you—and your continued partnership is crucial because the reality is that although the pandemic is abating, we know that **38 million people in America, including nearly 12 million children and more than five million seniors, faced hunger** in 2020. Feeding America estimates at least 60 million people—1 in 5—turned to charitable food assistance in 2020 and we recognize that federal interventions and the response

by the public and private sectors were vital to mitigating higher food insecurity levels.

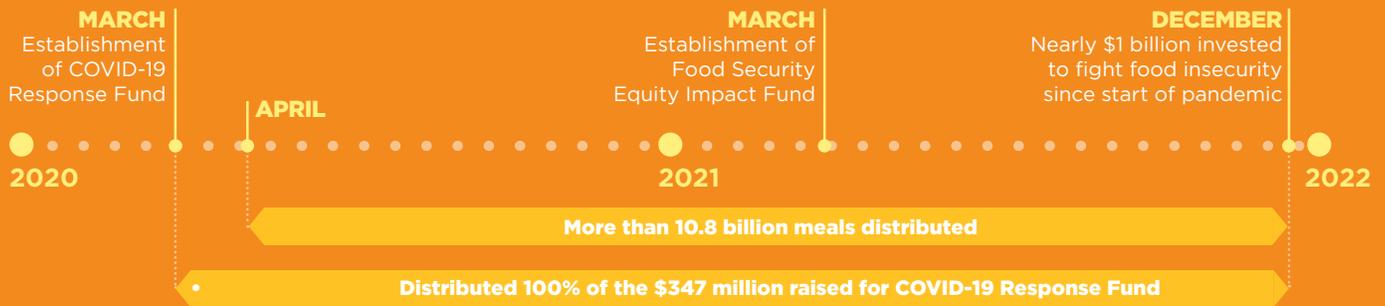
To call the immediate and pervasive nature of the pandemic abrupt would be an understatement. Within a matter of days, the world shut down and daily routines ceased. Soon after, a spotlight shone on the opportunity to do even more collectively to end food insecurity in the U.S., including the urgent need to address inequity—and, for the sake of the people we serve, we can't allow that light to fade. **In December 2021, about 70% of food banks reported either an increase in demand or demand holding steady from the previous month.** In Texas alone, the number of families seeking assistance from food banks has doubled since March 2020, according to the Houston Food Bank.

As the nation looked to us, it prompted us to look within—to assess our aspirations and determine how we could improve the way we work as a network to advance outcomes for food security for all. **We purposefully took time to reevaluate and set new priorities, reimagining hunger relief and deepening our commitment to addressing inequities.** Our work is grounded by the clear understanding that to truly end hunger in our country, systemic change is necessary to address the root causes that can lead to food insecurity.

That's why we have taken the lessons learned from the past two years and transformed our approach with refocused, data-informed national strategies to ensure we are equitably providing neighbors the food they need. We can't end hunger alone—your partnership and generosity remain paramount to achieving our vision of an America where no one is hungry.

Our mission is to advance change in America by ensuring equitable access to nutritious food for all in partnership with food banks, policymakers, supporters, and the communities we serve.

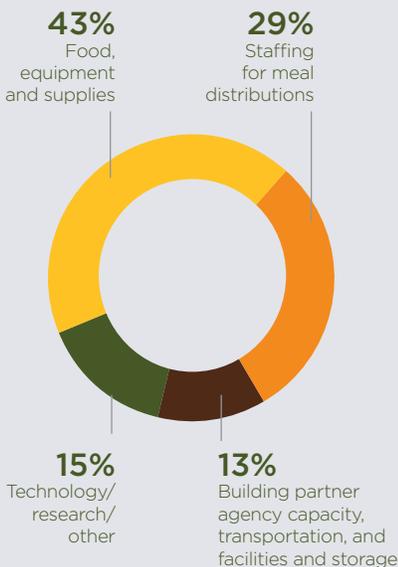
MILESTONES IN HUNGER RELIEF



The need is as great as it was a year and a half ago ... We couldn't do this and keep up with the community if we didn't have help from City Harvest. To this day, I see more faces, I see new faces, I see young faces, and the faces light up when the City Harvest truck pulls in.

City Harvest (New York, NY) partner agency, Hour Children Community Outreach

HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPED FOOD BANKS RESPOND



Through January 31, 2022





ACCELERATING OUR WORK TO ADDRESS DISPARITIES

To combat the social, structural and system inequities which have all been exacerbated by the pandemic, Feeding America's work and investments must evolve beyond meal distribution. To that end, Feeding America:

- Established the **Food Security Equity Impact Fund** in March 2021 to **drive investments to communities of color known to be disproportionately impacted by food insecurity and the pandemic**. The first round of equity grants—totaling \$5 million to at least 10 communities—will be deployed in June 2022. Our equity strategy is designed to identify and act on racial and geographic disparities to ensure that all people, at all times, have access to the fundamental resources they need to reach their full potential.

Through the fund, we aim to provide funding and resources to communities of color to enable the work needed—co-creating solutions that center the neighbors we serve and rooting those decisions in collaborations driven at the local level. We want to **elevate the voices of neighbors, including people with lived experience of hunger**, to help address the racial, health and economic disparities in their communities.

Black people are 3.2 times more likely, **Native Americans** are about 3 times more likely, and **Latinos** are 2.5 times more likely to live in **food insecure households** than white people.



INNOVATING TO MEET INCREASED NEED

Through thousands of local community partnerships nationwide, including food pantries and meal programs, Feeding America's COVID-19 Response Fund grantees report:

92% distributed food boxes at drive-thru or walk-up mobile pantries

66% offered expanded food pantry hours and distributions

65% provided home food delivery

Through January 31, 2022

- Established the **Food Security Strategic Priorities Fund** in June 2021 with \$100 million in seed funding, which will support proven and new strategies to **increase capacity within the network of food banks and partner food pantries/meal programs**, enrollment and outreach programs for federal benefit programs, and enhancements to the neighbor experience within the food bank network.
- Will distribute **increased member grant funding** to target support for rural and/or communities of color in fiscal year 2022. The difficult truth is that some populations, including people of color and rural populations, disproportionately experience food insecurity. As a network, we must act with intention and address racial and geographic disparities in equitable food access.
- Continues to ensure the growth of **equitable access to nutritious food for all**, in partnership with the communities we serve, by investing in and enhancing our Equity Department. This includes the creation and fulfillment of the new role of Native and Tribal Partnerships Director, who will help guide and cultivate relationships and build sustainable programs with Native and tribal communities.



We have reached out to partners in the community that we have not worked with before to ensure we are reaching the populations that need us, particularly neighbors disproportionately impacted, such as our rural counties, immigrant communities and communities of color.

Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina
(Raleigh, N.C.)



We've never had a year as rough as this, and [the food bank] meant we had fresh food. Thank you for everything.

Sylvia, a neighbor who received food from a Mobile Food Pantry provided by Ozarks Food Harvest (Springfield, MO)



ADVANCING OUR MISSION TO YIELD TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

To achieve our vision of an America where no one is hungry, our five priorities will:

Maximize Food Sourcing and Sharing Across the Network

Key projects include sourcing more protein, dairy and produce and expanding our Retail Recovery Program. Retail donations remain the largest stream of food for the network, so we are deepening relationships with retail partners and making investments that will simplify access and distribution for members. Beyond securing more food, we also focus on ensuring that our distribution network is as effective as possible in helping people facing hunger receive the food they need. **For example, Oregon Food Bank (Portland, OR) added 62 new food assistance sites to serve neighbors and Feeding Southwest Virginia (Salem, VA) launched its new Mobile Marketplace, which delivers fresh, convenient, and affordable groceries to more than 20 underserved and rural communities.**

Expand the Network's Capacity

To serve all neighbors facing hunger, it's necessary to grow and implement new strategies and technology that will help ensure equitable access to food and resources. With the support of donors like you, Feeding America is investing both funds and in-kind support to facilitate Boundless Collaborations—joint ventures supporting two or more member food banks pursuing transformative collaborations that transcend service-area boundaries. The initiative will enable food banks to launch innovative, new ventures together to reach

communities facing entrenched barriers to healthy food access. Thus far, 11 projects that engage and involve more than 40 network members have received funding.

One example is Food Bank of the Rockies (Denver, CO) for its work to assess how food banks can serve Native American and tribal communities equitably and in a culturally respectful manner. The project is focusing on six tribes within four collaborating food bank service areas: Crow Agency and Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Montana (Montana Food Bank Network), Standing Rock Reservation that stretches across North and South Dakotas (Great Plains Food Bank), Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota (Feeding South Dakota), and The Northern Arapahoe and Eastern Shoshone tribes located on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming (Food Bank of Wyoming).

Transform the Charitable Food Experience

Helping people in need achieve food security means there must be equitable access. We want to create a charitable food system that meets people where they are and offer foods that are culturally meaningful to them and their families, while ensuring a dignified, stigma-free experience for neighbors. Through collaborations between network members and their communities, solutions can be tailored and local resources can be leveraged to remove barriers to food access. Key projects include expanding proven programs, including child and senior hunger programs,



and mobile pantries, which are particularly effective in providing convenient access to food. We also are supporting OrderAhead (online grocery ordering) and home delivery pilots to make food access easier for neighbors facing hunger. **For example, Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank (Akron, OH) delivered food directly to 12,000 households through innovations like OrderAhead, which removes barriers to food access by connecting people with the resources they need—when they need them.** OrderAhead is a national program that was initially incubated and co-developed by Northern Illinois Food Bank (Geneva, IL) in collaboration with Feeding America.

Elevate the Public Sector Role in Fighting Hunger

Federal programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) are crucial to achieving food security in the U.S. We continue to work to secure more TEFAP food and funding for its storage and distribution. Network learnings have identified effective strategies to boost rural SNAP enrollment, including working with “SNAP champions”—advocates from local nonprofits and organizations who help build trust and accountability at the community level. **COVID-19 relief funds helped God’s Pantry Food Bank, Inc. (Lexington, KY) ensure SNAP enrollment could continue at a time when they were receiving more questions and requests for SNAP assistance than ever before.** The food bank shared: “Our neighbors were scared and knowing we had the support to maintain this program helped us to confidently reassure them, and the many new neighbors asking about SNAP.”

Catalyze a Movement to End Hunger

Now is the time for all of us—individuals, corporations and government—to work together to end hunger. In fiscal year 2022 thus far, we have achieved the largest number of advocacy actions taken by digital supporters, including signing a petition or calling a member of Congress, in Feeding America’s recent history. We want to see that number grow even more and we will continue to share a mix of actions, opportunities and information for people to engage in the fight to end hunger. We will continue to champion TEFAP, child nutrition programs and SNAP, as well as look for opportunities to engage new voices in our work.

Our collaborative approach also includes the creation of an advocacy program that empowers the people we serve and helps shift resources to them to organize their communities and lead on issues that affect their lives. The goal is to center the communities we serve in the organizing, decision making and execution of hunger-relief campaigns.

We also want to inform and lead through research, including real-time hunger data and insights, and broaden the scope of our public awareness efforts so that people across the country understand that hunger persists for tens of millions of people. **For example, Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma (Oklahoma City, OK) worked with the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) to provide the increased number of neighbors filing unemployment claims information about SNAP enrollment and access to partner agencies in central and western Oklahoma.** In addition, the food bank held a two-day drive-thru food distribution on a local college campus less than a mile from the OESC event site.



Photo credit: Alyssa Schukar

YOUR SUPPORT IS MEANINGFUL

For more than four decades, and notably the last two years, the Feeding America network has demonstrated resolve, innovation and unwavering commitment to help provide billions of meals to neighbors facing hunger. Your generosity means so much to every network member across the country as they work to ensure that no one in their community has to worry about how they will get their next meal.

Our mission remains essential, as does your continued support. The pandemic necessitated that we reflect and reassess how we execute our work. It reinforced that when we come together to help people in need, lives are changed.

While the road ahead is long, we know it will be filled with meaningful opportunities to learn, grow and achieve lasting impact. We will continue to innovate to efficiently and effectively provide nourishing food to neighbors. We will continue to improve equitable food access for people in every community. We will continue to **create more space at the table**—transformational change is only possible **with more voices and diversified experience.**

Thank you for being in this work with us, and for your continued support and compassion to help neighbors facing hunger.



On a continual basis we are working to evaluate our agency network to pursue effective partnerships with high-impact organizations in identified underserved areas with heightened levels of food insecurity.

Forgotten Harvest (Oak Park, MI)



They don't know me, they don't know my circumstances, but my goodness, do [the food bank staff and volunteers] care! They've been helping my mom and me get through these tough times by making sure we have the food we need ... We are very thankful for everyone who has donated over the months. We appreciate everything that you have done to help us.

Rosie, a neighbor served by East Texas Food Bank (Tyler, TX)



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