

Your Investments in Action

Summer 2022
Impact Report




FEEDING
AMERICA

A LETTER FROM THE CEO

When neighbors need help, they know they can turn to us—and, as households battle soaring costs for food, gas, and housing amid the nation's highest inflation rate in 40 years, more are looking to the Feeding America network.

In fact, 45% of food banks reported an increase in the number of people served in

April versus March. Among the many challenges to keep pace, members are paying 40% more to buy food to offset a significant decrease in donated food and ongoing supply chain issues—all while aid from key federal relief programs are expiring or have already expired. Sadly, these increased costs are disproportionately impacting some neighbors already inordinately affected by the pandemic, especially rural communities, and communities of color.

Knowing we can't meet the need alone, we have asked Congress to provide additional funds to help members stock their shelves and we are advocating for increased investments in federal nutrition programs. And, of course, we continue our work on the ground. **Progress this year includes continuing to provide billions of meals to tens of millions of people and launching the second round of equitable food access grants** (targeting people experiencing the highest rates of food insecurity) and the first round of **Food Security Equity Impact Fund** grants (investing in community-based solutions with the guidance of people most impacted by them).

We both feel good about our progress and our path, and we know there is more to be done. This network is uniquely positioned to be at the community table, shoulder to shoulder learning with neighbors. With your help, we will.

Thank you for being an invaluable part of our progress as we continue to innovate and strengthen our collective reach so all neighbors, regardless their background or ZIP code, have equitable food access.

Your partner in fighting hunger,



Claire Babineaux-Fontenot
Chief Executive Officer
Feeding America



Claire Babineaux-Fontenot visits Food Lifeline's Hunger Solution Center in Seattle.

TOGETHER, WE HELP MILLIONS OF CHILDREN, LIKE ELIJAH



Nearly 22 million children in the U.S., like Elijah, depend on school-provided meals, which means summer break can lead to summer hunger.

“If I’m full, I’m ready for whatever happens.”

At age 11, Elijah already knows what he wants to be: a robotic engineer.

“I want to build robots that help around the house,” he said. “Helping people makes me feel proud.”

Elijah is a member of robotics club, where he’s learning to build and code robots to perform simple tasks. His team placed second at a recent competition.

During the school year, Elijah eats free breakfast and lunch at school. He’s one of 22 million kids in the U.S. who count on school meal programs—and who run the risk of facing **summer hunger**. Summer vacation can last 90 days—a long stretch when millions of children may worry when they’ll receive their next meal.

When school is out during the summer, Elijah’s family picks up free meals when needed from a food pantry served by the **San Antonio Food Bank**.

“When I’m hungry, I get tired or I’ll get distracted,” Elijah said. “But when I’m not, I’m on task and I can focus.”

Consistent meals, whether in the classroom or at home, give him the nourishment and energy he needs.

“If I’m full, I’m ready for whatever happens,” he said.

LEVERAGING RESEARCH TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR NEIGHBORS

In June, we released research that examined **charitable food assistance participation in 2021**. The analysis found that **53 million people (1 in 6) received charitable food assistance in 2021**—a year when the Feeding America network provided 5.5 billion meals to neighbors facing hunger. The charitable food assistance estimate is lower than it was for 2020, when more than 60 million people were served by the charitable food system, but still reflects a 33% increase over the 40 million individuals who received food in 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Strengthening our role as a leader in hunger research, Feeding America's **Map the Meal Gap**, an annual research study to improve our understanding of food insecurity and food costs at the local level throughout the United States, will be released on July 20. Among the key findings, the study—for the first time ever—will include local food insecurity estimates for Black, Latino and white individuals. We have produced this study for the last 12 consecutive years. This year's release will feature data for 2020, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.



THE IMPACT OF YOUR GENEROSITY

Every year, the Feeding America network helps provide meals to millions of neighbors in the U.S. As neighbors are faced with the rising cost of groceries, gas and housing, network members are working to meet the need amid the pain of inflation, which is worsening hunger across the country.

ENHANCING OUR WORK THROUGH RESEARCH

More than 5 million seniors—1 in 15 seniors—faced hunger in 2020, according to *The State of Senior Hunger in America in 2020*, an annual report released by Feeding America in May. Given the expected growth of the senior population, that number could grow to more than 7 million by 2050 if the current rate of senior food insecurity does not improve. The 2022 release sheds light on the extent of food insecurity among seniors (ages 60 and older) and older adults (ages 50-59) during 2020—the first calendar year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

STRENGTHENING PATHWAYS TO ECONOMIC MOBILITY FOR NEIGHBORS

People facing hunger face formidable obstacles as they embark on a career path and how well-equipped they are to surmount these challenges can determine their success in securing firm economic footing. In May, 27 network leaders from 20 food banks spanning 12 states attended our Job Training Cohort—the first in-person convening since the onset of the pandemic. The two-day training in Tampa, Florida included panels, breakout sessions and one-on-one networking. Participants presented bold ideas about successful economic opportunities that are improving the lives of people facing hunger and shared what economic mobility levers can be used to make a difference at the local level.



DID YOU KNOW?

This year, families are facing a 10% increase in the cost to buy groceries and food banks are paying 40% more for food purchases to keep up with the demand for food assistance, all amid declining food donations.

Lawmakers can help. In order for the Feeding America network to continue supporting families, and to ensure families don't have the rug pulled from underneath them as federal food programs end, we need support from Congress and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Feeding America is urging Congress and the Administration to increase investments in federal nutrition programs, as the rising cost of food and food bank operations continues to skyrocket. In addition, Feeding America and anti-hunger advocates will continue to advocate for the people we serve and present policies to end hunger at the recently announced **White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health**, which will be held in September in Washington, D.C.

SIMPLIFYING NEIGHBORS' ACCESS TO FOOD

Innovation is key to providing meals to neighbors experiencing food insecurity. **OrderAhead** offers neighbors privacy, convenience and fewer social and physical barriers to accessing charitable food. People facing hunger can order free groceries online and pick them up at a location they choose; in some markets, the food is delivered to their home. In July 2022, a new **OrderAhead** feature will enable multiple partner agencies in a food bank's service area to operate independent OrderAhead programs—significantly increasing the number of OrderAhead distribution points nationwide and providing more people access to receive the food they need. In fiscal year 2023, our goals include 50 new agencies adopting OrderAhead and 100 new or enhanced neighbor distribution points.

ADDRESSING THE INTERSECTION OF FOOD INSECURITY AND HEALTH

Food bank-health care partnerships continue to be a promising approach to address food insecurity. This spring, through the **Food is Medicine** initiative, 14 network food banks strengthened partnerships with local health care organizations to serve more patients through food insecurity screenings, enroll in benefits programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, improve data collection and offer a wider variety of nutritious foods that improve health. For the next three years, up to 30 food banks will have the opportunity to build on this work to make meaningful progress toward ending hunger and continue pursuing the goals to improve patients' food security, diet quality and health outcomes.

Special thanks to Elevance Health Foundation for supporting this work.

RAJ AND ARADHANA (ANNA) ASAVA: WHY WE GIVE TO FEEDING AMERICA

It was 2015 when the Asavas—married since 1982 and proud grandparents of four—first learned of the nation's hunger crisis. Immigrants from India, they had been in the U.S. for over 40 years, their sons were grown, and the couple left their corporate jobs to focus on family, travel and philanthropy. It was philanthropy that led the Asavas to become actively engaged with **North Texas Food Bank** (NTFB), and it was their curiosity that drove them to learn about the rampant hunger issue across the U.S. and the impact of the food bank network.

"Hunger is so different in America ... it is mostly hidden. We were unaware of the magnitude of food insecurity and the far-reaching impact that the Feeding America network enabled in response," said Anna, adding the couple realized other immigrant communities may also be unaware.

Driven to make sure no one in the land they had made their home goes hungry, the couple co-founded **HungerMitao** ("wipe out hunger" in Hindi), with the rally cry of "give where you live." **Since launching in 2017, this volunteer-driven, grassroots movement has enabled more than 40 million meals for people served by the Feeding America network (see sidebar).**

Of the several reasons the Asavas support Feeding America, the primary one is the nationwide network's strength and sustainability which provide "the most efficient manner to ensure that everybody across the country, in every ZIP code, has access to nutritious meals," Raj said.



▼ The Asavas built HungerMitao's community-affinity model such that it can be replicated by other communities to help end hunger. HungerMitao currently is active at seven network food banks:

Atlanta Community Food Bank (East Point, GA)

Food Bank for New York City (New York, NY)

Food Lifeline (Seattle, WA)

Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan (Detroit, MI)

Houston Food Bank (Houston, TX)

North Texas Food Bank (Plano, TX); *original location*

Tarrant Area Food Bank (Fort Worth, TX)

If you would like to support HungerMitao and join the movement, please visit:

www.feedingamerica.org/hungermitao

*Listen to our **Elevating Voices, Ending Hunger** podcast to learn more about the Asavas.*

ADDRESSING THE PROTEIN GAP TO NOURISH FAMILIES FACING HUNGER

Due to cost and availability, **protein is one of the most difficult food groups for network food banks to obtain**, yet it's an important part of a nutritious diet and a highly sought item by neighbors facing hunger. With the support of donors and partners, Feeding America works to address the protein gap and remove barriers to this much-needed product, including investments in United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-inspected protein pack rooms—purpose-built clean rooms that expand the capacity of food banks to break apart bulk donations of items into family-friendly sizes that can be distributed locally and regionally. That means millions of pounds of protein, that would otherwise go to waste can now be distributed to people in need. **Protein pack rooms are an innovative supply chain solution that provide food banks with a sustainable, transformational process.**

In June, **Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana** (Indianapolis, IN) became the latest Feeding America member to complete a fully functional protein clean room—bringing the number to nine across the nationwide network (see sidebar). Gleaners anticipates moving a significantly larger amount of refrigerated protein to benefit countless neighbors facing hunger. In its first year, Gleaners projects it will distribute approximately 700,000 pounds of protein sourced from within its service area and through other network food banks. An estimated 200,000 pounds will be distributed to the communities Gleaners serves and the remainder will go to regional network members.

Having a dedicated space to pack and repack protein items like meat and poultry enables the network to provide food items that may have previously been turned down as donations. Some locations are excelling at protein repack work and are planning, with support through grants, to grow their operations to enable more capacity to flow through their facility. For example, **Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma** (Oklahoma City, OK) has had to turn down donations due to limited capacity but estimates they can grow from 1 million to 8 million pounds annually and share rescued, repacked protein beyond their service area into surrounding states.



Protein pack room at Gleaner's Food Bank of Indiana

Feeding America's nine protein clean rooms—strategically located and managed and operated by each food bank—have rescued approximately 4.7 million pounds of protein since 2020.

Arkansas Foodbank (Little Rock, AR)

Food Bank for the Heartland (Omaha, NE)

Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana (Indianapolis, IN)

Harvesters — The Community Food Network (Kansas City, MO)

Houston Food Bank (Houston, TX)

Mid-Ohio Food Collective (Grove City, OH)

Northern Illinois Food Bank (Geneva, IL)

Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma (Oklahoma City, OK)

Second Harvest Heartland (Brooklyn Park, MN)

AT OUR CORE

FREIGHT SUBSIDY PROVIDES SUPPORT AMID INCREASED DEMAND

In a time when freight costs are skyrocketing, the national freight subsidy—through MealConnect, our enhanced free food donation app—has been a significant benefit to the network in access and cost saving as they work to meet the increased demand for food.

In April and May of 2022, Feeding America coordinated 1,469* full truckloads—57 million pounds—of fresh produce to be distributed to people facing hunger. **That marked an 18-million-pound increase of fresh produce for families served by the Feeding America network versus the same time frame a year prior.**

Through this work, we focused on under-resourced network food banks that support rural and/or communities of color. The 39 food bank awardees could use the grant funding to help offset any remaining transportation costs through MealConnect or use the

funds to arrange their own carriers. Without donor support, the food banks would otherwise have been limited in their ability to pay for transportation. The grant enabled the food banks to order more than 12.5 million pounds of fresh product in April and May 2022.

In addition, a transportation grant provided targeted support to help network members serving neighbors beyond the contiguous United States. Through donor generosity, a grant was awarded to **Banco de Alimentos de Puerto Rico** (Carolina, Puerto Rico), **Food Bank of Alaska** (Anchorage, Alaska) and **Hawaii Foodbank** (Honolulu, Hawaii) to give access to stateside product that would otherwise be difficult to acquire. The grant will cover transportation costs from the grower to a seaport, over-the-ocean shipping, offloading and transit to the food bank. In the case of Alaska, these funds will offset costs including local boats and bush planes to their remote agency locations.

**Of those, 1,361 were subsidized.*



CENTERING NEIGHBORS' VOICES TO CO-CREATE HUNGER SOLUTIONS

In May 2022—in preparation for the [White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health](#)—Feeding America launched [Elevating Voices to End Hunger Together](#), an effort to collect insights from people facing hunger. Through the initiative, the network will engage in a variety of activities to directly connect with individuals and families who are living with, or have lived experience of, food insecurity to listen and learn. The goal is to co-create solutions that preserve neighbors' dignity and agency and share the solutions with the White House to help inform policies and programs, as it aims to end hunger by 2030.

WAYS TO ENGAGE

▼ **September is [Hunger Action Month](#)**—Feeding America's nationwide awareness campaign that aims to inspire the public to take action on the issue of hunger. Whether donating, volunteering or raising awareness on social media, every action helps advance our mission to end hunger.

▼ **In the latest episode of Feeding America's ["Elevating Voices, Ending Hunger" podcast](#)**, Bianca D.M. Wilson, Ph.D. of the Williams Institute talks about food insecurity in the LGBTQ community with podcast host and Feeding America Chief Equity Officer Ami McReynolds.

▼ **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 or 312.641.5593.



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Feeding America is a nationwide network of food banks that helps provide meals to 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.**

