



# Your Investments in Action

Fall 2022  
Impact Report

## A LETTER FROM THE CEO

Last year 53 million people turned to the charitable food system for the food they needed. That means, once again, the Feeding America Network stood shoulder-to-shoulder with them, providing 5.2 billion\* meals. In our efforts to meet the food needs of every community, we know that we are making an impact. In fact, last year, we saw the lowest rate of food insecurity on record, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [Household Food Security in the United States in 2021](#) report. This number would have been much higher if not for the collective strength of the charitable food sector, government support and the commitment of supporters like you.

Even as we reflect on our progress, we recognize there is work left to be done. There are still tens of millions of people who face hunger. We need continued action to make substantial progress toward ending hunger. And, the progress must be sustainable. We will double down on what we know works while developing and advancing bold, new ideas to ensure our neighbors, coworkers and friends get the food and resources they need to thrive.

I was privy to many bold ideas at last month's [White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health](#), the first of its kind in more than 50 years. The single contribution for which I am most proud was the work that we did to ensure people facing hunger were meaningfully represented before and at the conference and that their aspirations for the future help to inform any subsequent policy conversations. We published the [Elevating Voices to End Hunger Together: Community-Driven Solutions to Address America's Hunger Crisis](#) report, which includes insights and anti-hunger policy recommendations from nearly 36,000 people across all 50 states, Washington D.C and Puerto Rico who self-identified as facing challenges getting the food they need.

People nationwide asked us to prioritize dignity, increase access to healthy food options and expand economic opportunities. We will continue to listen and learn from our neighbors facing hunger, and we commit to strengthening our work with them as well as advocates, policymakers, and people like you to realize our vision for an America with no hunger.

Thank you for your continued partnership.

Your partner in fighting hunger,



**Claire Babineaux-Fontenot**

Chief Executive Officer, Feeding America

*\*Including meals from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*

## TOGETHER, WE HELP MILLIONS OF PEOPLE, LIKE REBEKAH



Photo credit: Alyssa Schukar for Feeding America

A few years ago, Rebekah became very sick, very quickly and couldn't work.

"I went from math camp teacher, tutor, full-time mom, full-time college student," she recalled, "to sleeping 20 hours a day and having trouble holding my head up."

Given her health, and her husband, Zach, working part time and finishing his residency for his medical degree, the family, including their two kids, Gwen and Erik, needed extra help—especially because Rebekah's health requires her diet to have fresh produce, which can be tough to afford. That's when Rebekah, who still lives minutes from her hometown near the coast of Maine, turned to her community for help.

**"I've had to go to the food pantry [which works with Good Shepherd Food Bank] in the town I grew up in and accept food from people that grew up knowing me—and I didn't feel judged by any of them,"** Rebekah said. "That's an amazing feeling."

The family also receives assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the nation's most effective anti-hunger program; for every one meal that Feeding America provides, SNAP provides nine.

"SNAP benefits do help greatly," Rebekah said. "It means I don't have to say no to the kids as often. I don't have to worry about covering all our basic needs."

Rebekah recently started a full-time job, has gained control of her health issues and Zach will be applying to finish his residency this fall.

# GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE CRITICAL FOR OVERALL FOOD INSECURITY DECLINE IN 2021

**Food insecurity rates declined in 2021 from the prior year**—resulting in the lowest rate for both individuals and children since the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) began producing food security statistics in 1998. This is according to the ***Household Food Security in the United States in 2021***, the USDA's annual report on food security in the U.S., which was released Sept. 7.

Despite the declines, nearly **34 million people in the U.S. were living in food-insecure households in 2021**, and that number would have been even higher without the sustained and unprecedented response from the charitable food system and government nutrition programs. That includes the support received from caring donors like you who helped the Feeding America network provide **5.2 billion meals to neighbors facing hunger** in fiscal year 2022 (July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022).

Government assistance played a critical role in providing programs that helped keep many people from experiencing food insecurity in 2021—a year when we estimate 53 million people turned to the charitable food sector. Programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) emergency allotments, program waivers and expanded eligibility, the Child Tax Credit, Pandemic EBT, the update to the Thrifty Food Plan and other assistance to households all were likely especially pivotal in alleviating food-insecurity levels for people, especially households with children.

However, as these government programs sunset and neighbors face emerging challenges that can impact food insecurity—from inflation to supply chain issues—we need to continue and expand bipartisan efforts to strengthen federal programs to help ensure everyone has access to the food and resources they need.

## ACCORDING TO THE USDA REPORT

# 34M

Nearly **34 million** individuals—1 in 10—lived in food-insecure households.

# 9M+

Among children, more than **9 million**—1 in 8—were living in food-insecure households.

# 3X

Black individuals were nearly **3 times** more likely to face hunger than white individuals.

# 2.5X

Latino individuals were **2.5 times** more likely to face hunger than white individuals.

## Improvements

Food insecurity **improved** for households with children, Black households, households with incomes below 185% of the federal poverty threshold, and households in the South.

Food insecurity **increased** for households with no children, especially for women living alone, and for seniors ages 65 and older living alone.



# HISTORIC DAY FOR HUNGER RELIEF AT THE WHITE HOUSE

The Feeding America network was well represented at the [White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health](#)—the first event of its kind in more than 50 years—on Sept. 28 in Washington, D.C. Among the lasting memories for us is that network leaders were joined by nearly 30 individuals with lived experience—anti-hunger advocates who were nominated by network members across the country. We are deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to support these individuals

and help enable their travel and participation in the conference. Sharing in the daylong event were our CEO Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, Chief Government Relations Officer Vince Hall and 12 food bank and partner state association CEOs, among other network staff.

As part of the conference, which President Biden called a “historic” event, the White House [released a national strategy](#) to end hunger in the U.S. by 2030. We are pleased there is significant common ground between the actions outlined in this new strategy and the [policy recommendations Feeding America made to the administration](#) in July 2022.

When the White House first announced the conference in May 2022, the Feeding America network mobilized almost overnight to gather insights and input on anti-hunger solutions from nearly 36,000 of the people we serve. These insights informed not only our policy recommendations but are the heart of [Elevating Voices to End Hunger Together: Community-Driven Solutions to Address America’s Hunger Crisis](#), a first-of-its-kind report that showcases the experiences, concerns and ideas of people across the U.S. who have faced challenges getting the food they need.

The White House conference helped set the stage for what is now an all-in fight to end the nation’s hunger crisis. We will continue listening to and learning from our neighbors facing hunger about what they and their communities need to thrive. We will continue to advocate for strengthened federal nutrition programs that provide the necessary resources so no one feels marginalized due to race or place. Through it all, we will stand in gratitude knowing supporters like you are engaged with us in this bold work to end hunger in America.



Above: Back row, left to right: Feeding America’s Senior Policy Director Robert Campbell, Director of Advocacy-Neighbors Engagement Barbie Izquierdo, CEO Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, Food Bank of Delaware President and CEO Cathy Kanefsky, and Feeding the Valley Food Bank (Georgia) President and CEO Frank Sheppard. Front row, left to right: Hunger-relief advocates Barbara Deleon Sanchez of Jacksonville, FL, and Anita Garrett of Milwaukee, WI.

## EMPOWERING NEIGHBORS IN HUNGER RELIEF

When neighbors facing hunger can select the foods they prefer for their families, we call that “full choice.” Members that offer full choice report less food waste and improved relationships with the people they serve. These are some key findings from the inaugural-year results of a formal evaluation of choice; a second-year evaluation to learn about the impact of choice on people visiting food banks, staff and volunteers is underway. Our Choice Capacity Institute is on its second year of supporting network members, including 30 grantees, to provide more choices to neighbors facing hunger through peer learning and best-practice.

## OVERCOMING FOOD ACCESS BARRIERS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Across the network, member food banks are working to overcome rural food distribution challenges and improve access to nutritious food for families facing food insecurity. Mobile pantries create a more equitable food system, allowing members to transport perishable foods such as produce, meat and dairy directly to neighbors in high-need communities. In August, we launched a Rural Mobile Pantry Guide to help food banks learn how they can begin or expand successful rural partnerships and mobile pantry distribution to address food access barriers experienced by people living in rural communities. The guide summarizes learnings we compiled in 2021 from 13 food banks across 26 rural counties in the South with high food insecurity rates and higher proportions of communities of color.

## ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY PARTNERSHIP MODELS

The Health Equity Community Grants, awarded to 21 food banks in September 2022, are the first of its kind for Feeding America and will strengthen health equity partnership models to increase equitable access to nutritious food for people facing hunger. The grants were made available to food banks who completed Feeding America's Health Equity in Food Banking six-month training series, which has already trained 80 out of 200 network food banks since 2021. Our work to raise awareness of the connection between hunger, health and equity continues through the [Health Equity Action League \(HEAL\)](#), a group that emerged from our COVID-19 response.

## VIKRANT (VIK) AND VIZAN GIRI: WHY WE GIVE TO FEEDING AMERICA

Vik Giri was inspired to partner with Feeding America because the issue of hunger lies close to his heart. Born and raised in Nepal, he personally witnessed the suffering caused by starvation. He recalls having to trek for hours to collect 30 pounds of wheat ration supply from the government after crop wreckage by hailstorms. This memory and others inspire his selfless journey of giving back to make a difference and instilling those values in his business and family, including his daughter, Vizan.

Vizan has heard and reflected on her father's stories about growing up experiencing food insecurity. As their family already was helping farmers in India, the father-daughter duo wanted to do something to achieve positive impact in the U.S.

"Communities thrive when basic needs, such as healthy meals, are met," Vizan said. "But in our own community, there are many who are struggling with hunger. So, we need to help when we can."

Hunger relief is at the heart of the missions of [Terra Thread](#) and [Gallant](#), the sustainable product and bag companies led by Vik and Vizan, and the cause aligns



Above: Vizan and Vik Giri

with their goals of harnessing nature's power to not only provide eco-friendly products but improve people's lives.

In 2019, Vik made a pledge to donate over 100,000 meals. That goal has been surpassed tenfold to date—and Vik and Vizan are not stopping there.

"Partnering with Feeding America allows us to personally impact people receiving meals," Vik said. "I feel blessed to be able to help. It is something I am proud to do."

# FROM THE FRONT LINES

## ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF HUNGER AND FOOD INSECURITY

At Feeding America, we know that to improve food access for all neighbors—particularly communities of color which experience food insecurity at disproportionate rates—we need to support and work in partnership with local organizations whose work yields **community-led change that removes barriers to food security.**

Our journey in this work took a significant step in August, when we announced the initial **Food Security Equity Impact Fund** grants—awarding **25 grants totaling \$9.9 million** to date, representing:

- 22 states and Puerto Rico, including urban, suburban and rural communities
- 9 planning grants and 16 implementation grants
- 60 community-based partners with more than 90% of the organizations led by people of color

Click [here](#) to view a full list of grant recipients. The next round of grants will be awarded in Spring 2023.

Learn more about the **Food Security Equity Impact Fund** on our website.



Above: (Top) Betty and John Chenier's grandson, Seth, provides valuable help on the farm; (Bottom) The food bank will distribute this fresh produce throughout six parishes. Below: (Left) Betty and John Chenier walk the fields of Chenier Farms.

The Food Security Impact Fund uses a trust-based philanthropy model—by trusting community-based solutions, we help advance equity, shift power and build mutually accountable relationships. We are inspired by the initiatives proposed by community partners and food banks. Here are a few examples:

**The Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund and Chenier Farms will have separate but related collaborations with Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana to focus on the support of Black farmers, ranchers and landowners in Louisiana.** The Federation will establish a full-time office in Louisiana to double the network of local farmers (from 50 to 100), provide training and workshops in sustainable crop production and food safety marketing, and expand direct assistance opportunities to prevent Black land loss. Chenier Farms will provide fresh produce for food bank distribution in six parishes. Through this partnership, they aim to create a more robust local food system and healthier community.

**The Food Access and Sustainability Team (FAST) Blackfeet Food Pantry and Montana Food Bank Network are working together to focus on Native American communities.** The Blackfeet Reservation in Northwest Montana, one of the largest reservations in the U.S., experiences the highest poverty rate of Montana's seven reservations. While developing the reservation's Food Sovereignty Plan, FAST Blackfeet identified the need for a food resource center, which would house a USDA-certified kitchen, food pantry, gardens and a community center located next to the local school in an effort to integrate community and school nutrition. The center will address the need for emergency food through preservation and preparation of traditional foods.



## BUILDING COMMUNITY-WIDE CAPACITIES

Through strategy and collaboration, we are identifying and determining the role of local, multi-sector partnerships aimed at improving food security in rural communities. As part of Community Accelerator—our multi-year, place-based initiative—five food banks and their partners are engaged in conversations about the history of the Delta communities they support to better understand the context of their work and build relationships. At the August 2022 Feed Nourish Connect Conference, partners working with [Southeast Missouri Food Bank](#) shared their learnings, including the history of racial inequities and how that history impacts current conditions and structures. This understanding is helping food banks and their partners gain new perspective, build partnerships, foster trust, and identify strategies to address race equity and the root causes of food insecurity.



## AT OUR CORE

### PIONEERING RESEARCH TO UNDERSTAND HUNGER

With your support, we continue to conduct research that deepens our understanding of hunger in America. In July, we released our annual study, [Map the Meal Gap](#), which sheds light on the extent and variation in local food insecurity levels in the United States in 2020—the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the first time, this year's release includes local food insecurity estimates disaggregated by race and ethnicity for select groups (individuals identifying as Black, Latino and white). The addition of this new information in the study—based on data from 2020—helps illuminate the relationship that food insecurity has to racism and structural oppression.

By examining variations in local need as of 2020, including how need varies by identity, communities can develop more targeted strategies to spark policy changes and practices that will help reach more people facing hunger. Among the key findings in the study, food insecurity persists in all 3,143 counties and 436 congressional districts in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. However, not all people or places experience food insecurity equally. Several factors, including but not limited to unemployment, poverty and persons reporting a disability, are associated with an increased risk of food insecurity and often reflect underlying inequalities, such as longstanding economic and social disadvantage resulting from systemic racism.

This is the 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that Feeding America has produced *Map the Meal Gap*.



# DID YOU KNOW?

Hunger is a reality for 1 in 4 active-duty service members and their families in the United States. With Veterans Day on the horizon Nov. 11, we want to ensure that service members across the nation have a dignified quality of life, free from hunger and which honors their service. [We break down three reasons military members may face hunger—and what you can do to help.](#)

## WAYS TO ENGAGE



**Participate in #GivingTuesday on Nov. 29** to join a global movement that unites people around generosity and kindness.



**Consider supporting Feeding America before Dec. 31** to maximize your tax benefits or minimize your year-end product inventories.



**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 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.**

