



# Your Investments in Action

Spring 2023  
Impact Report

**FEEDING**  
**AMERICA**



Above: Babineaux-Fontenot speaks to staff at Golden Harvest Food Bank in Augusta, GA.

## A LETTER FROM THE CEO

I am often asked, “What else can I do to help people facing hunger?” and I like to say Feeding America needs food, funds and friends. Food and funds are just as important now as ever. Pandemic-era emergency allotments have expired and food banks across the country are reporting increased demand. The loss of emergency allotment benefits, along with increased food prices, is forcing families to make impossible decisions. But there is hope. And there is a key opportunity to be a friend of the movement to end hunger this year.

In 2023, Congress is working to review and renew the farm bill, legislation that funds critical agricultural and nutritional programs that support farmers and provide healthy, nutritious food to people facing incredibly challenging circumstances. The decisions made now will have a substantial impact on farmers, food banks, and especially neighbors facing hunger for years to come.

During the pandemic, I saw our nation leap to action in unity to ensure that no one went hungry, and we can do that again if we work together. Hunger should not be a partisan issue. Research on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, often called food stamps and funded by the farm bill, shows it is effective in helping people lift themselves out of poverty, especially children, and for every dollar spent, approximately \$1.50 goes back into communities. Programs like this are an investment in our communities and in our future.

Congress must hear that we are no longer willing to accept an America where people go hungry, and every voice matters. Thank you for being a friend.

Proudly standing with you in the movement to end hunger,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Babineaux-Fontenot'.

**Claire Babineaux-Fontenot**

Chief Executive Officer, Feeding America

## TOGETHER, WE HELP MILLIONS OF NEIGHBORS, LIKE MIGUEL



In January 2023, Miguel went to work one morning. Later that day, after weeks of torrential rain near Santa Cruz, California, he was unable to return home. Withering rain and windstorms had flooded neighborhoods, including near his house.

“Where I live, I can’t even return anymore,” he said. “And now I don’t have work.”

But Miguel was not to be deterred from doing all he could to provide for his family of four and make sure they had the food they needed. Waiting to safely return home, Miguel made the brave decision to visit an emergency food distribution hosted by **Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Cruz**. At the distribution, held at a local church, Miguel received a box of fresh produce, water and shelf-stable food to help nourish his family during a devastating time.

“This is how we’re going to eat for the week,” he said. “It makes a big difference.”

Thanks to Feeding America’s nationwide network of partner food banks, the generosity of retailers and farmers, the hard work of people facing hunger and kind supporters like you, more of America’s families, like Miguel’s, are able to put food on their tables, including when disasters strike.

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“This is how we’re going to eat for the week. It makes a big difference.”

# WORKING TO HELP FAMILIES FACING HUNGER ACCESS MORE PROTEIN

Throughout the U.S., people are working hard to make sure they and their families have the food they need to thrive. For the tens of millions of neighbors facing hunger, building out grocery lists can yield hard choices during difficult times, particularly when items like fresh and frozen meat, poultry and seafood are more expensive and, in many areas, less accessible.

To help eliminate the 500-million-pound annual protein gap in America's charitable food system, the Feeding America network currently operates eight protein repack rooms where bulk, donated meat products can be safely handled, portioned, repacked, and labeled. In February 2023, we hosted the first-ever Protein Pack Room Convening at **Harvesters - The Community Food Network**, a partner food bank in Kansas City, Missouri. This impactful three-day event provided a forum for 56 leaders representing 15 partner food banks to learn, discuss and solve for challenges as we work to improve efficiencies of protein repack room operations. Discussion topics included labor and staffing, food resources and sourcing, automation and food safety.



Above: Leaders from partner food banks, Tyson Foods and Feeding America receive an overview of the protein pack room at Harvesters - The Community Food Network.



## INCREASING ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOOD AT FOOD BANKS

We are committed to finding ways to help **food banks rank their inventory more efficiently and increase their knowledge about the nutrition of the food they are serving** their neighbors facing hunger. As food banks continue to report Healthy Eating Research (HER) Guidelines data, it's promising to see the network's ongoing increased percentage of ranked inventory each year. For example, one food bank only ranked 18% of their inventory in 2021—one year later, they ranked 86%. Supported by grants made possible by donors and partners like you, food banks are leveraging more resources and assistance implementing the HER guidelines to better serve their communities.

# PARTNERING WITH YOU TO CREATE AN AMERICA WHERE NO ONE IS HUNGRY

## ADDRESSING RACIAL EQUITY TO INCREASE FOOD SECURITY

In January 2023, we launched Phase 3 of Community Accelerator—our multi-year, community-focused initiative—implemented in counties in the Delta region with some of the highest rates of food insecurity and racial disparities in access to food and resources. In addition to increasing food distribution in these counties, teams have reported the importance of leveraging partnerships and building trust with—and amplifying the voice of—the community, having important and difficult conversations about racial equity, and identifying ways to change systems. In Phase 3, teams are creating and implementing experiments that move learning into action and support the capacity needed to sustain their work.

## WORKING TOGETHER TO REACH NATIVE AND TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

Native American individuals are approximately three times more likely to face hunger than white individuals. We are deepening engagement with tribal leaders and local community food practitioners to better understand how Native American and tribal communities are experiencing food insecurity and to support local initiatives that advance access to healthier, culturally preferred food. In January 2023, our Natives Prepared Program, which promotes tribal sovereignty and equity in Native communities, began Phase 2: Five tribes are being supported and resourced to develop and customize their own disaster preparedness/food sovereignty plans so they can provide food to their citizens who are impacted by a disaster. Phase 2 concludes at the end of 2023 and Phase 3 will run January 2024 through December 2025.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Nearly \$3 billion in temporary monthly emergency food assistance benefits that started during the pandemic have ended**—a significant and sudden loss of grocery purchasing power that will severely impact the approximately 32 million people facing hunger in the U.S. Although the emergency benefits were always expected to end, inflation continues to impact budgets and cause increased food demand.

**The best opportunity to advocate for more resources for the neighbors we serve is through the [2023 Farm Bill](#).** We are urging Congress to help ensure people have access to the food they need by strengthening critical nutrition programs, like The Emergency Food Assistance Program and SNAP in the legislation. Your continued support is crucial as these benefit reductions will exacerbate food insecurity for neighbors, especially seniors.

**For ways you can help, please see the back cover of this report.**





## INNOVATING TO HELP NEIGHBORS IN NEED

Boundless Collaborations are joint ventures between two or more food banks that transcend historical service-area boundaries. To date, 52 food banks have participated in Boundless Collaborations, which entered its third grant application cycle in January 2023. One such venture is the **Kitchen Coalition** an initiative (rebranded from Minnesota Central Kitchen) that united **Second Harvest Heartland** (serving Greater Minneapolis and St. Paul) and **Channel One Regional Food Bank** (Rochester, MN) in creating a collaborative model that brings prepared, nutritious, culturally preferred meals to individuals who cannot prepare a meal on their own, either because they are in crisis, do not have access to a kitchen or are unable to cook. The initiative has since expanded to **Great Plains Food Bank** in Fargo, ND.

Launched in 2020 during the pandemic, the program utilizes food bank food donations and purchases, invests in local kitchen partners and distributes over tens of thousands of meals every week through a network of more than 75 community partners. To date, the initiative has employed more than 100 workers at multiple kitchen sites operated by restaurants, catering companies, nonprofit agencies, and corporate dining facilities. This year, the Kitchen Coalition—which expects to reach a milestone of serving more than 4 million meals since its inception—hopes to improve implementation in rural communities, enhance a “playbook” for future sites, expand partnerships and identify new communities for expansion.

## WHAT NEW RETIREMENT SAVINGS LAWS MEAN FOR YOU

Are you 70 1/2 years or older? If so, 2023 might be presenting you with new laws and other changes that are affecting your charitable giving decisions. One law that might be of interest to you includes retirement changes, known collectively as “**Secure 2.0**,” that may make it easier for you to make a difference at the organizations you care about most.

We recognize your commitment to supporting the Feeding America network as we work together to help tens of millions of people facing hunger gain access to the nutritious food they need to thrive. We also want you to feel comfortable while planning for the future—that’s why we’re sharing below three keys to Secure 2.0 to keep in mind as they relate to charitable giving.

### Secure 2.0

1. Increases the required minimum distribution age to 73
2. Adjusts the annual limit on direct gifts to qualified charities from your IRA to keep pace with economic shifts
3. Allows for a distribution from your IRA to fund a life-income gift (one-time election up to \$50,000)

### Let’s Talk!

We can help answer any questions you have about how the new retirement laws affect your charitable giving. Please contact Jessica Noe to learn more at (800) 771-2303, Ext. 5593, [plannedgiving@feedingamerica.org](mailto:plannedgiving@feedingamerica.org), or visit our website where share more details about Secure 2.0: <https://plannedgiving.feedingamerica.org/new-retirement-laws>.

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# FROM THE FRONT LINES

## INSTITUTING MORE CHOICE OPTIONS FOR NEIGHBORS FACING HUNGER

To achieve food security in America, the voices of people with lived experience of hunger must be prioritized. Across the Feeding America network, partner food banks are working to improve neighbors' ability to choose their own food based on their personal preferences.

Recent enhancements supported by our multi-donor equitable food access grant—which helps partner food banks address barriers to food insecurity in rural communities and/or communities of color—helped some food banks introduce more flexible food distribution models to ensure that preferred food options are an intentional component of distributions. Other improvements included incorporating more choice opportunities for neighbors to tailoring services to meet the dietary and culturally preferred food needs of specific populations, including seniors, people of color, refugees, immigrants and Native Americans living on tribal lands.

These improvements were driven by feedback shared from individuals with their local partner food banks, through efforts supported by our multi-donor equitable food access grant. Food bank grantees are learning from neighbors through community-needs assessments, surveys, and input from agency partners and trusted community organizations. The collective learnings have contributed to a deeper understanding of neighbors' food preferences and needs—and led to the development of new strategies to overcome common challenges that prevent marginalized communities from accessing food assistance, including the time, location and method of food distributions employed by food banks and their partners.

*Special thanks to Anonymous Donor, Cracker Barrel, General Mills, and Morgan Stanley Foundation for supporting this work.*

## HOW NEIGHBOR-INFORMED CHANGES LEAD TO LESS FOOD WASTE

In addition to offering neighbors more choice options, food banks are measuring the impact that has for the people they serve. Initial evaluation findings show that distributions offering increased levels of choice reported less food waste and higher levels of neighbor satisfaction—because neighbors can choose food they prefer and that meets their current needs. Any site network-wide can offer more choice regardless of the type or size of distribution—meaning opportunities to improve the neighbor experience are endless.

*Special thanks to the Morgan Stanley Foundation for supporting this work.*



# AT OUR CORE

## FEEDING AMERICA LAUNCHES FARMERS FEED AMERICA

*New coalition demonstrates key relationship between food banks, farmers, food companies and retailers to end hunger.*

America's farmers produce the safest and highest-quality food in the world and are a critical part in helping people facing hunger gain access to food. In March, we proudly launched **Farmers Feed America**, a new, nonpartisan coalition comprised of farmers, food companies, food retailers, and hunger-relief organizations, including Feeding America and the American Farm Bureau Association, among others. We announced the coalition on the eve of the 50th anniversary of National Ag Day, a day to recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by American agriculture.

The **Farmers Feed America coalition** has established shared principles for the **2023 Farm Bill** to help meet the continued needs of communities facing hunger, bolster our nation's food resilience, and enhance markets for farmers and ranchers, who play a key role in the movement to end hunger.

**This broad coalition is united in calling on Congress for a strong farm bill that both meets the needs of America's farmers and protects federal nutrition programs that**

**help tens of millions of people who are working hard to put nutritious food on the table for themselves and their families.** This year, Congress is working to review and renew the farm bill—the nation's centerpiece federal legislation for food and farming that impacts access to nutritious food for people facing hunger.

During the pandemic, farmers, food companies and retailers joined with food banks to innovatively connect neighbors facing hunger to nutritious food. Strengthened by federal support, many initiatives, programs and a collective nationwide effort, people experiencing food insecurity were able to access 6.6 billion meals from the Feeding America food bank network in fiscal year 2021 and 5.2 billion meals in fiscal year 2022. This year's farm bill reauthorization process is a chance to reflect on the innovations that worked during the pandemic and apply those learnings to future food and nutrition policy.

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**Learn how the Feeding America network works with farmers** to get food from farms to food banks to families facing hunger across the country by rescuing food, supporting local food systems, and advocating to protect access to food.

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# SUPPORT A FARM BILL THAT STRENGTHENS FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Providing hunger relief is not something the charitable food system does alone—your voice and generosity matter. That’s especially true this year as Congress is working to review and renew the farm bill—the nation’s centerpiece federal legislation for food and farming that impacts access to nutritious food for people facing hunger. Here are three quick ways you can help:

- 1 Learn what’s at stake for the 2023 Farm Bill** and how you can advocate for strengthened food assistance programs: [FeedingAmerica.org/take-action](https://www.feedingamerica.org/take-action).
- 2 Share this social post with your network:** *Farmers and @FeedingAmerica partner food banks are counting on Congress to pass a strong 2023 Farm Bill so they can keep helping people facing hunger in our country.*
- 3 Click [here](#) to see how food banks and nutrition programs support people in your state.**



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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.**

