



## Hurricane Ida Relief Serving Individuals Impacted

**“Thank you from the bottom of my heart. You are a blessing to my family. We lost everything in Bay St. Louis, and your generosity is a Godsend.”**

The note above, written by a family in line at a recent food distribution for individuals impacted by the storm sheltering in Mobile, Alabama, was handed to a staff member as they loaded up a car with food and water. The feelings that day resounded as staff encountered weary travelers displaced by the storm. Many were seeking refuge in the area until they received the green light to return home, uncertain what they would face when that day arrived. Staff and volunteers loaded up car after car, packed full with luggage and family belongings. Many families sheltering together expressed their gratitude for access to food when so many other unknowns remained.

In late August, Hurricane Ida made landfall in south Louisiana, largely impacting our Mississippi service area and sending many of our neighbors to the west to seek temporary shelter in our central Gulf Coast region.

Sharon Tatum oversees the food pantry at Pleasant Ridge United Methodist Church in Stateline, MS. This church in Greene County is no stranger to storms, having served the community after Hurricane Katrina 16 years ago. After Hurricane Ida tore through Louisiana and Mississippi, Sharon got to work making sure the people in Stateline who turned to the church continued to have access to nutritious food.

“Thanking you for blessing our community,” said Sharon. “People were overwhelmed and excited. They couldn’t stop coming up to me, rolling their windows down to say how thankful they were. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you so much for thinking of us. I love being able to serve people. We are in a poor rural area, and we are in need of so much but don’t have the financial capability, just God! Thank you!”

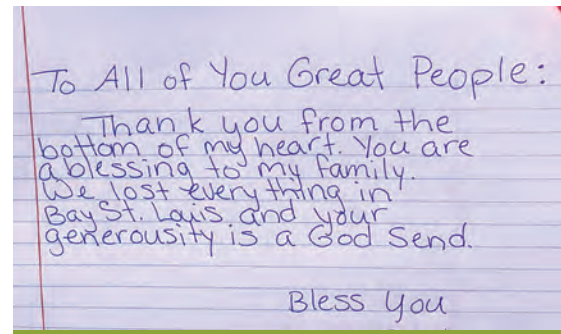
Since Hurricane Ida hit, Feeding the Gulf Coast has distributed nearly 776,000 pounds of food and emergency supplies to families impacted by the storm, including 19,000 pounds to individuals seeking refuge in our service area until they are able to return home.

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**FOOD BANKS PLAY A VITAL ROLE DURING AND FOLLOWING DISASTERS.**

LEARN HOW YOU CAN

Visit our website  
[feedingthegulfcoast.org](http://feedingthegulfcoast.org)



## FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

If we ask how our voices and actions can serve as a catalyst for a better tomorrow, the answer is resoundingly TOGETHER. As our community continues to face challenges, a choir of voices and marching feet continue to meet the challenge head-on. We are truly better together, a sentiment once again proven in the face of great adversity.

In 2020 our communities faced challenges and uncertainty unlike any in recent history. Unfortunately, many of these same challenges remain as families and individuals work to stabilize and reclaim lost ground. The resilience of families and individuals across our communities was tested as we were stretched to our limits. But through it all, we are brought together. It is the dedication and willingness of partners to help that allowed us to support our neighbors during a year like no other.

Forty years ago, a group of motivated and inspired people saw the need for a food bank, and they used their voices and actions to make it a reality. Today the seeds they planted have grown into a strong organization capable of inspiring and leading efforts to reach those facing hunger. But, of course, none of this is possible without the ongoing support of our partners, volunteers and donors. We thank you for working with us towards a better tomorrow.

**MICHAEL LEDGER**

PRESIDENT & CEO, FEEDING THE GULF COAST

JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE

**40**  
Years of Hope

1981 - 2021



# Be a Holiday Helper Make a Difference this Season of Hope

**C**armen\* never had trouble affording a turkey for Thanksgiving. She could never imagine needing the help, until it happened. “It’s been a rough couple of months for me,” she said.

That’s because when the hospital she worked at started construction and closed a number of patient rooms, the staff was restructured and she lost her job. Luckily, she was offered another position – but with significantly fewer hours. “My funds are pretty low right now,” Carmen said. “Losing hours is hard, especially around the holidays when there are a lot more expenses to worry about.”

But Carmen and her family will not have to worry about whether they can afford a turkey or sides for Thanksgiving because they are getting all of that from a special holiday food distribution. “This is a tremendous blessing,” Carmen said.

“Before I lost my job, I told my family I was going to have Thanksgiving dinner at my house for the first time. It’s pretty huge to have the food. It’s up to me and my sister to keep the family united and Thanksgiving is a great time to bring everyone together. This food helps us do that.”

As Thanksgiving approaches, many of us look forward to everything the holiday brings. It is a chance to gather with friends and family, make memories, and give thanks around the table.

But this year, Thanksgiving will feel very different for people along the central Gulf Coast. For many of our neighbors, ongoing economic hardship means their tables will be bare once again this year. They are not looking forward to a joyful holiday; they are wondering where their next meal will come from.

\*Testimony from the Feeding America network.



View Online

**2020 ANNUAL REPORT:**  
VISIT [WWW.FEEDINGTHEGULFCOAST.ORG/LEARN-MORE/FINANCIALS](http://WWW.FEEDINGTHEGULFCOAST.ORG/LEARN-MORE/FINANCIALS)



That is why Feeding the Gulf Coast, formerly Bay Area Food Bank, partners with pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and other hunger-relief organizations to make sure our neighbors have access to nutritious food this Thanksgiving.

Families like Carmen's work hard to ensure their children do not feel the impact of going without. These families end up working multiple odd jobs, skipping meals, and making tough choices to keep food on the table. Even if they can cover rent and utilities, there is not always enough money left for trips to the grocery store as well.

We believe no one in our community should go hungry, and we are committed to ensuring our neighbors have the nutritious food and relief they need.

Your generosity will provide meals to those who have nowhere else to turn. With your help, they can look forward to a new year filled with hope—not hunger.



### 40 Years of Hunger-Relief Mission Moments

We are looking for food bank stories from the past 40 years to share on social media and in our various communication channels. If you would like to share your story of how the food bank has impacted your life in any way, please connect with us at [communications@feedingthegulfcoast.org](mailto:communications@feedingthegulfcoast.org).



#### A CLOSER LOOK AT HUNGER

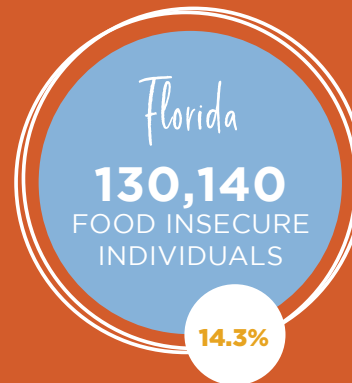
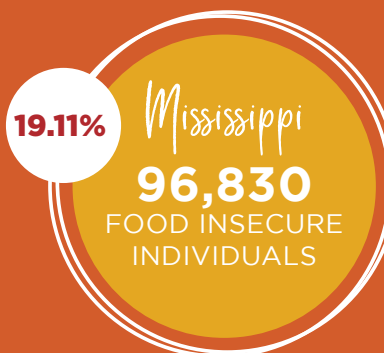
## Map the Meal Gap

**Hunger is prevalent throughout the communities we serve, and yet it is often hidden from view. To better address hunger, we must know where it resides.**

**A new study recently released by Feeding America shows that household budgets were seeing further strain despite improvements in overall food insecurity rates before the pandemic. Map the Meal Gap is the only study that provides local level estimates of food insecurity and food costs across the United States and has been produced by Feeding America for the last 11 years. In Feeding the Gulf Coast's service area, the food insecurity rate is 15.3%, equating to 350,370 individuals, including 101,210 children, along the central Gulf Coast who struggle with hunger at some point in the year.**

**This year's study, which provides data for 2019, shows a widening gap for households struggling to get by ahead of the COVID-19 pandemic. Rural counties are likely to experience the highest rates of food insecurity. Additionally, the study finds that many people who live in food-insecure households are likely ineligible for SNAP and other federal nutrition programs, meaning they are caught between earning enough to afford nutritious food year-round and qualifying for assistance programs.**

**Food insecurity is a measure defined by the USDA as lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members. The 2021 release of Map the Meal Gap continued to show that all counties are home to people facing hunger.**





Feeding the Gulf Coast works towards the vision of establishing a hunger-free Central Gulf Coast for our neighbors in need throughout 24 counties in Alabama, Mississippi, and the Florida Panhandle.

The food bank distributed over 33 million meals in 2020 through our network of over 400 partners.

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*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR FULL STATEMENT



**CHARITY NAVIGATOR AWARDS FOOD BANK WITH** ★★★★★

Feeding the Gulf Coast's strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency have earned the food bank a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator. Since 2002, using objective analysis, Charity Navigator has awarded only the most fiscally responsible organizations its highest rating—4-stars.

"Feeding the Gulf Coast's exceptional 4-star rating sets it apart from its peers and demonstrates its trustworthiness to the public," according to Michael Thatcher, President & CEO of Charity Navigator. "Only a quarter of charities rated by Charity Navigator receive the distinction of our 4-star rating. This adds Feeding the Gulf Coast to a preeminent group of charities working to overcome our world's most pressing challenges. Based on its 4-star rating, people can trust that their donations are going to a financially responsible and ethical charity when they decide to support the food bank."

As a supporter of Feeding the Gulf Coast, this 4-star rating assures you that Feeding the Gulf Coast will honor your intentions and act as good stewards of your gifts. You can trust that your donations to Feeding the Gulf Coast are being spent to fund programs that directly serve people in need in the community.

**View Our Profile**

Feeding the Gulf Coast's rating and other information about charitable giving is available on [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org).

**GET INVOLVED**

**NOVEMBER 6 SCOUTING FOR FOOD GREER'S MARKETS**

Join the Boy Scouts in their annual food drive. Residents can donate at their nearest Greer's Market, CashSaver or Food Tiger.

**WAREHOUSE HOLIDAYS:**

The food bank will be closed on November 11 in observance of Veteran's Day and November 25-26 in observance of Thanksgiving.

**DECEMBER 1 40TH ANNIVERSARY STUFF THE TRUCK CELEBRATION**

GREER'S CASHSAVER  
4055 COTTAGE HILL ROAD  
MOBILE, AL 36609  
2:00 PM TO 6:00 PM

Help us stuff the truck in honor of our 40th Anniversary at Greer's CashSaver on Cottage Hill Road. We are aiming for 40,000 pounds, and we need you to join the fun as we celebrate.

**NEW DATE!**

**APRIL 28, 2022 22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL CHEF CHALLENGE EVENT**

MOBILE CONVENTION CENTER  
6:00 PM TO 9:00 PM

Join us for a culinary experience as some of the area's finest chefs come together to fight hunger in our community, served with a little friendly competition.

To purchase tickets or sponsorship, visit our website or call us at (251) 653-1617, ext. 141.

visit [FEEDINGTHEGULFCOAST.ORG](http://FEEDINGTHEGULFCOAST.ORG) | (888) 704-FOOD

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY!**

\$20  \$50  \$100  \$250  \$500  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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Feeding the Gulf Coast's federal identification number is 63-0821997.

**Payment Options**

Please charge my credit card:

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Please make check payable to: **Feeding the Gulf Coast**

Give online at [www.feedingthegulfcoast.org/donate](http://www.feedingthegulfcoast.org/donate)

**Donor opt-out policy:** If you wish to opt out of having your name listed as a donor in any of our publications, please email [communications@feedingthegulfcoast.org](mailto:communications@feedingthegulfcoast.org).