

STABILITY DURING THE UNKNOWN

Janie's daughter is undergoing chemotherapy. Janie also cares for a special needs granddaughter and an elderly mother—so everyone in her household is medically fragile. "Funds are getting very low. We're trying to stock up to make sure we have enough food," Janie said as she waited in line for food.*

"Sometimes I don't even know where my next paycheck is coming from. I work for a company part-time, and they just called me while I was in line today and canceled my work for this week."

For so many, 2020 held the promise of a new start. As a new decade rolled in, very few could have planned for a global public health crisis to halt life as we know it. Janie's story is similar to so many of the families we serve. In addition to the wave of people experiencing food insecurity for the first time and those already in need within our service area, this unprecedented crisis has compounded economic strain with a tremendous surge in families needing food assistance right now.

Feeding the Gulf Coast's service area is particularly vulnerable to the impact of hunger, where over 346,000 individuals, including more than 108,000 children,

struggle with food insecurity the majority of the year. Many of the clients we serve are high-risk populations, including seniors, rural and underserved communities, and those with chronic health diseases (e.g., obesity, diabetes, and hypertension).

Since March 13, Feeding the Gulf Coast has distributed over 5.7 million meals, a 25% increase in meals for this time of year.

In addition to increasing mobile pantry distributions, Feeding the Gulf Coast has worked with its network of community partners to establish drive-through style distributions serving entire households and grab-and-go meals sites for children. Yet, we anticipate that an additional 133,100 individuals will be impacted by this public health crisis, leading to a 40% increase in need throughout our service area.

Along the Central Gulf Coast, we are no stranger to the rebuilding process. We have rebuilt our homes and businesses following hurricanes and natural disasters, we have rebuilt our economy after recessions, and we will rebuild our lives following COVID-19. We are resilient. For the last 39 years, Feeding the Gulf Coast and its supporters have helped rebuild our Gulf Coast communities, meal by meal.

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The food bank is super helpful. I've never needed food assistance before COVID-19. But my kids LOVE opening the boxes. I lost my job as a hairstylist & hope everything goes back to normal soon.
—Norma

“

We estimate that the need in our service area will grow by 40% in 2020 due to COVID-19.

LEARN HOW YOU CAN

Visit our website
feedingthegulfcoast.org



FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

As I write to share our response efforts during this pandemic, I also share the sad news that Dan Emery is returning to Ohio due to a very serious family health issue and will no longer be with us. We are grateful for Dan's leadership during these difficult times.

As you know, times are uncertain. Job layoffs, business closures, and lost wages have created economic stresses for so many. Despite all that is going on, I am proud to know that this organization has continuously worked to serve people in need. Since the pandemic outbreak, the food bank has supplied over 400 agencies with enough food to provide more than 5 million meals. Our Child Nutrition Programs team has served over 5,000 children daily, serving more than 270,000 meals and snacks. In April alone, our Outreach team helped over 1,000 individuals apply for benefits to help people temporarily facing personal disaster. While the number of those in need has grown to unprecedented levels, so has our ability to respond—because of caring people like you.

The team at Feeding the Gulf Coast is on the front lines and will continue working tirelessly to meet the increased need in the communities we serve. The lines are longer, the need is greater, but with your help, we continue to provide stability for those struggling to make ends meet.

BRAD HICKS

2020 BOARD CHAIR, FEEDING THE GULF COAST

OUR GOAL

Connect clients to more resources

FROM CRISIS TO STABILITY

We're working to end the need for the food line.



EQUIP



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When the program began in March, we were excited to see how we might make an impact in our community by providing the drive-through meals for hungry children. What a delightful surprise! Parents and grandparents drive through with grins, while the children in the back seat may be bouncing with joy to receive the snacks and lunches! I am touched by the sincere thanks from both the adults and the little ones as they drive by to go home to eat the [meals provided through Feeding the Gulf Coast]. Thank you for letting us play a part in this much-needed intervention!

- Bellview Assembly of God volunteer, Dianne Roark

When schools closed early in March, one in four kids would have missed much-needed meals along the Central Gulf Coast. However, Feeding the Gulf Coast quickly sprang into action to organize and begin the emergency Summer Meals Program, a process that typically takes several months. With only three days to plan this year, the food bank partnered with local sites to start the program on March 19 so that kids in need throughout our service area would have a place to receive a healthy meal. To date, Feeding the Gulf Coast has served over 270,000 meals and snacks in response to schools closing for face-to-face learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Every summer, the food bank operates the Summer Meals Program, where any child ages 18 and younger has access to free meals all summer long. The program typically kicks off at the end of May, but with schools closing early, Feeding the Gulf Coast knew that it needed to quickly set up the program to ensure that children in need had access to meals.

By partnering with over 60 sites, including schools, YMCAs, Boys and

Girls Clubs, and other after-school care sites, Feeding the Gulf Coast has been able to provide more than 5,000 meals daily during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This program will continue throughout the summer. Last year, the food bank served over 13,000 children through the Summer Meals Program.

No Kid Hungry runs a texting service to help parents and caregivers find free summer meal sites in their area. Parents and caregivers seeking meals for children, ages 18 and younger, can visit our website or **text the word “FOOD” (or “COMIDA”) to 877-877** to find emergency food distribution sites near them.



FOR SITES WISHING TO GET INVOLVED, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE.



WHAT DOES COVID-19 MEAN FOR HUNGER ALONG THE CENTRAL GULF COAST?



INCREASED UNCERTAINTY

As closures caused by COVID-19 lead to a rise in unemployment and poverty, more people will experience food insecurity.

According to the Federal Reserve, 40% of Americans do not have enough cash on hand to cover a \$400 emergency expense.



INCREASED NEED

We estimate that in our service area, an additional 133,100 individuals could be food insecure in 2020 as a result of this crisis—for a total of nearly 480,000 people.



INCREASED SOLUTIONS

While COVID-19 has created many challenges, Feeding the Gulf Coast, has worked to respond. In partnership with our agencies, the food bank will continue to be an organization of hope and support for families facing hunger.

Heroes are often thought of as mask-adorned individuals wearing capes while fighting villainous bad guys. At Feeding the Gulf Coast, heroes take the shape of the ordinary, every day, yet beloved individuals who spend their time dedicated to making the world a better place.

For us at the food bank, these individuals take the form of our partners, staffers, and volunteers who have made it their mission to end hunger along the Central Gulf Coast.

Nationally, April is a month for celebrating volunteers. Our hearts have been warmed to see so many individuals step up to help the food bank meet the increasing demand for food assistance due to COVID-19 impacts.

"I am a substitute teacher, and of course, the schools were the first to close. As a sub, I do not have the responsibility of online teaching, so I was free to volunteer," said Pam Biggs, who has started volunteering every week since

the pandemic began. "I am a people person! So I quickly found ways to be able to interact with people at a distance. Delivering meals for my church, volunteering at Feeding the Gulf Coast, and sending "happy" texts and bible verses for encouragement."

Many of our volunteers are as joyous as Pam and quickly become a ray of light to the organization. "Being with people who want to spend their time helping others makes me happy," Pam reflected. "Spending time volunteering, I don't have time to think about negative things."

Our partners are an essential group of individuals as well. Many of our partners operate

mostly on volunteer support. Feeding the Gulf Coast works with over 400 community partners to help distribute over 24 million meals annually. During this public health crisis, our partners have been on the frontline to serve communities across the Central Gulf Coast.

Our staff has worked tirelessly over the past two months to ensure the food bank remains operational and functioning at a high capacity. We are honored to serve those in need alongside the many heroes we call partners and volunteers who are making a tremendous difference across the Gulf Coast. Today and every day, we are grateful for the everyday heroes who make our mission possible.

ADVOCACY CORNER | CLOSING THE MEAL GAP

Feeding the Gulf Coast is committed to its mission to provide emergency food assistance to the over 346,000 people facing hunger along the Central Gulf Coast. Due to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, we anticipate this number to increase by 40% or to nearly 480,000 individuals.

Working with state, regional, and national partners, Feeding the Gulf Coast continues to advocate for response policy, essential funding, and program flexibilities to help remove barriers to food access for some of our most vulnerable community members. Our Child Nutrition Programs, Agency Relations, and SNAP Outreach teams have helped provide over 5 million meals as a result. You can be an advocate for those struggling with hunger in your community.

LEARN MORE:

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WHAT COVID-19 MEANS FOR HUNGER AND HOW TO TAKE ACTION, VISIT WWW.FEEDINGTHEGULFCOAST.ORG/LEARN-MORE/COVID-19-RESPONSE.



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 24 million meals in 2019 through our network of over 400 partners.

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
 VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR FULL STATEMENT



MAKE AN IMPACT



Donations, whether big or small, support our work to reach those in need.

Every \$50 donated to Feeding the Gulf Coast can help provide 250 meals for seniors, children, and families in need. The impact of those who give is far-reaching and truly significant. On a daily basis, hunger is hidden among us. Hunger may live with our child's classmate, the clerk in the grocery store, a co-worker or a neighbor. During this time of economic uncertainty, hunger has found a place among those who have not before experienced it. Now, more than ever, donations to Feeding the Gulf Coast are critical to meet the increased needs arising from COVID-19. One person, one act of kindness, one donation, can help turn hunger into hope. We are incredibly grateful for the support of caring individuals and community partnerships that support our ability to address this growing health crisis along the Central Gulf Coast.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CANCELLED: CHEF CHALLENGE

Regrettably, we will not host our annual Chef Challenge event this year due to concerns stemming from COVID-19.

WAREHOUSE HOLIDAYS:

The food bank will be closed on July 3 in observance of Independence Day and September 7 in observance of Labor Day.

RALLY YOUR NETWORK TO SUPPORT THE FOOD BANK

Feeding the Gulf Coast is experiencing a decrease in food drives during this time due to COVID-19 restricting public functions and businesses.

It takes funds for us to do what we do and get food to those who need it most. To set up your food and fund drive, visit our website or contact Missy Busby at mbusby@feedingthegulfcoast.org

IN NEED OF FOOD ASSISTANCE?

Children, 18 & younger, can receive free meals this summer. Text "FOOD" to 877-877 or visit our website to find sites near you.

For food assistance, visit our website and click the orange Find Food button. Use the locator tool to enter your zip code and find meal sites and distributions near you. Every food pantry or meal program has a different process, so we encourage you to call the agency ahead of visiting.

visit FEEDINGTHEGULFCOAST.ORG | (888) 704-FOOD

MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY!

☐ \$20 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ Other: _____

☐ I would like to join the Hope Harvesters Monthly Giving Club.

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

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

☐ Give online at www.feedingthegulfcoast.org/donate