



RESPOND RECOVER REBUILD

Annual Impact Report 2020





The mission of the
Capital Area Food Bank is to
create access to good, healthy
food in every community.





“

Why should there be hunger and privation in any land, in any city, at any table, when man has the resources and the scientific know-how to provide all mankind with the basic necessities of life? There is no deficit in human resources.

The deficit is in human will.

– Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Letter from the CEO

The turn of the calendar to January 15, 2020 was meant to begin a year of commemoration activities as we marked the date, 40 years prior, that the food bank opened its doors. We had started with a kickoff gala a few weeks earlier and followed up with participation in several

activities honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose life and legacy inspired our founding.

What soon unfolded instead, no one could have foreseen. COVID-19 tore through communities and industries. It wreaked havoc on the health of individuals and our economy. And it upended the financial stability and food security of hundreds of thousands of people in our region. Even before the pandemic, the number of individuals experiencing uncertainty about where their next meal would come from was unacceptably high at 400,000 people. By fall, that number had risen to nearly 600,000—an increase of 50%.

But while 2020 turned life upside down for all of us, it also renewed our deep commitment to our most central purpose: ensuring that people have the good food they need, even during difficult times.

It also gave fresh urgency to our strategic work focused on addressing hunger's root causes by pairing food with additional support services provided by others. The pandemic has disproportionately affected those who were already financially vulnerable—many of whom are people of color, households headed by women, and young people. As we build back our regional economy, it is imperative that we do so in a way that's inclusive and creates more opportunity for more people, and we're committed to leveraging the power of food and advocacy to help do that.

Most of all, this year continuously showed us that when we're there for the community, the community is there for us and for the people we serve. Volunteers kept showing up every day to help pack food in our warehouse. Unexpected and creative partnerships—with groups from Goodwill to DC's taxi drivers—emerged to help us box and distribute emergency meals. And we saw generous support from people and institutions across the area.

In short, this moment highlighted not a deficit in human will, but rather, the strength of it. It lent power to Dr. King's words as never before and showed what can be accomplished when people come together.

We know that the road ahead is long. Recovery will be a marathon, not a sprint, and we anticipate that very high levels of food insecurity will continue well into 2021. But together, we'll keep supplying the food that people so critically need today while also helping them build paths towards brighter futures tomorrow through advocacy and programs that address the root causes of hunger.

2020 wasn't easy, and it wasn't what anyone planned for. In the end, however, it provided the opportunity to commemorate a milestone year in the most meaningful and appropriate way possible: through continued service to our neighbors.

With deepest thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Radha Muthiah".

Radha Muthiah
President and CEO

PHASE 1

RESPOND

March 2020 – Present

PHASE 2

RECOVER

September 2020 – Present

PHASE 3

REBUILD

Present – 2021 and Beyond



Even before the pandemic, nearly 400,000 people in our area struggled with food insecurity. Today, that number has increased dramatically to nearly 600,000 individuals as the economic impacts of COVID-19 affect people around the world and in our own backyards.

We know these impacts will be with us for many months—and likely years—to come. Supporting our community’s food needs in the midst of widespread public health risks and a faltering economy has and will continue to require a dynamic approach—both to meet the challenges of today and to build the foundations for a stronger and more equitable region in the years ahead.

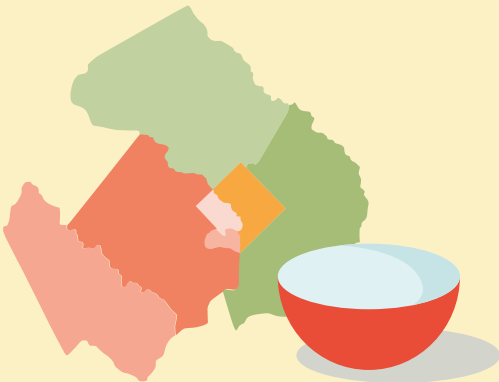
Our roadmap for addressing this pandemic in both the short and longer term consists of three overlapping phases in which we will Respond, Recover, and Rebuild.

Impacts of COVID-19



725,350

unemployment claims have been filed in our service area since March.



50%

more people experiencing food insecurity across our region: now a total of 600,000+ individuals.



50%

of our nonprofit partners closed. We ordinarily have 450 network partners.



30–400%

increases in numbers of people coming through our nonprofit partners' doors.



75%

decrease in retail donations due to supply chain disruptions—a lost in-kind value of \$2 million per month.





MARCH 2020 - PRESENT

RESPOND

TO THE IMMEDIATE CRISIS

From the start of the pandemic, we've focused on quickly modifying our operations and distribution methods; establishing new partnerships; and finding new food sources to significantly increase the number of meals we're providing. We've done this with an emphasis on ensuring that those most affected by COVID-19's economic fallout—people of color, women-led households, and children—have ready access to the food they need.



The Voice at the Other End of the Hunger Lifeline

Manned by Capital Area Food Bank staff and volunteers, the Hunger Lifeline connects people seeking emergency food with the food bank's partner organizations. And since COVID-19's arrival, the hotline has been ringing almost non-stop.

CAFB team member Denise Yates has been answering Hunger Lifeline calls since December 2019, when she began as an extra ear on the phone during the holidays. She had no idea how crucial her role would become.

Calls have more than tripled during the pandemic, says Denise. They pick up towards the end of the month, when paychecks are spent or SNAP benefits exhausted. She notes that many seniors, unable to leave home or to cook for themselves, call in search of partners that can deliver food directly. And she shares that more people are also reaching out from Spanish-speaking communities.

Layoffs and school cancellations lead many to seek help. They're often embarrassed, but Denise works hard to ensure they feel no shame. "I tell them, don't ever feel bad or be too proud to call and say 'I need help'. The worst thing is to not ask for it."

Calls can be hard. Denise recounts a call with a woman who lost her job at a hotel and said she didn't know how to answer her two children when they asked if they would eat that night. Fortunately, Denise found her assistance.

With an address, Denise uses the food bank's interactive partner map to find a nearby partner or school where callers can get help. "My job is to make sure they get fed," she says. "Most of the time when they hang up, they're in a better place than when they called."

Being on the front lines can be exhausting, but Denise doesn't let it get her down. "It feels good at the end of the day," she says with a smile. "I helped somebody, they feel better about themselves, and their stomach's not growling."



200%

more people calling our Hunger Lifeline to get help finding food.

Doing More for Kids: Children's Meals at St. Stephen

Last year, the food bank's partner St. Stephen Baptist Church in Temple Hills, Maryland served lunch to about 40 kids through its summer camp program. Then came the COVID-19 pandemic in March of 2020.

Suddenly, with help from the food bank, the St. Stephen team was serving 3,000 lunches and snacks to families every Tuesday. And the numbers kept growing.

"We have a lot of people who have not returned to work. Unemployment has run out," said Robin Reis, St. Stephen's Food Distributor Coordinator. She adds that the community served by the meal site is in a "food desert," where affordable, healthy food options are limited.

Each week, more than 100 volunteers arrive to help distribute food. According to Robin, they come out in "rain, snow, sleet, and 100-degree weather."

While the distribution starts at 11 a.m., Robin says that people start lining up in their cars at 7 a.m. Often, the team doesn't stop distributing food until 3 p.m. or later.

"We all have our 'aha' moments, where we see that it's all worth it. It's worth the aches, it's worth the exhaustion," she says. For her, that moment came when "a mother just burst into tears." Until that moment, she said, "she didn't know where her next meal was coming from for her children."

Volunteer and church trustee Sabrina Scott's moment happened when she handed lunch to a family with five kids in the car. "One little girl started smiling, and she just ripped it open and started eating. I thought, 'This is why I do this,'" she said.

"It's a humbling experience," says Robin. "And it's fulfilling to know we're a little piece of making sure children have enough food to eat."



20

Community Hubs have been set up—large nonprofit partners distributing extra food to account for the closure of other locations.



36

children's meal sites remained open to feed kids with a daily grab and go dinner.

Providing More Meals Than Ever Before

The dramatic increase in need among our neighbors, driven by the pandemic's economic impacts, has required that we source and distribute more food than any time in our 40-year history.



52.3 million

meals distributed this year with the support of our community—an average of 1 million meals every week.

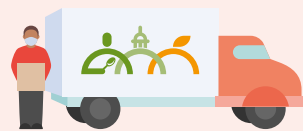


New Sources of Food

The year's unprecedented increase in need happened alongside a rapid decrease in retail food donations. When food started to fly off the shelves due to more people cooking at home, grocery stores suddenly had no excess inventory, and retail donations declined by 75% within the space of a week in mid-March.

As a result, CAFB purchased record levels of food in 2020. From January through December, we bought over 771 truckloads—26 times more than the year prior—to keep inventory level with demand.

Looking to the year ahead, we know these numbers are unlikely to decline any time soon as demand for emergency food stays at record levels and retail donations continue to be impacted by supply chain challenges.



771

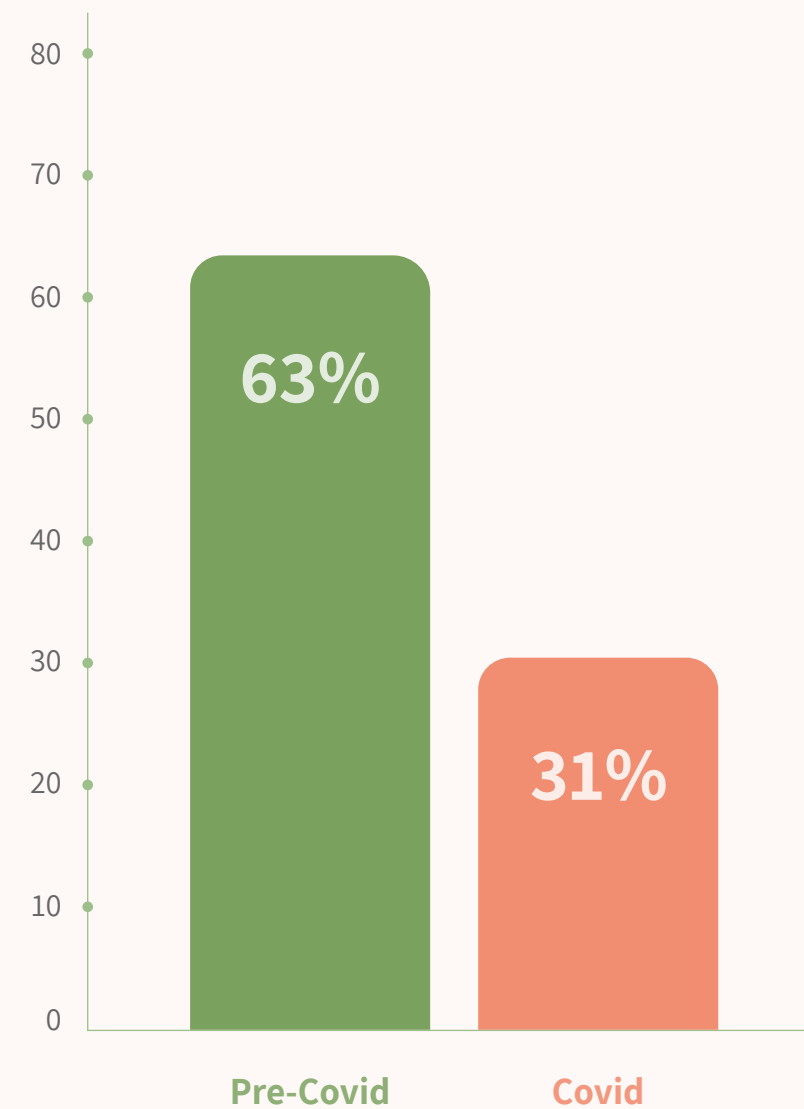
truckloads of food purchased since April—almost 26x what we purchased all of last year—to keep inventory level with demand.



884,169

boxes of produce and dairy distributed by the food bank through the Farmers to Families food box program.

PERCENTAGE OF FOOD THAT IS DONATED TO THE CAFB



From Helping Others to Needing Help Themselves: Gabriel and Constanica's Story

Gabriel and Constanica like to do most everything together. Up until March, they both worked for an organization that brought food to seniors in Washington, D.C. Constanica helped prepare the food, and Gabriel delivered it.

"It is a joy to help others," Constanica said.

When COVID-19 cases began to rise and people were told to shelter at home, they both lost their jobs on the same day. Gabriel applied for unemployment multiple times, but there were issues with the paperwork.

"We have zero in the bank. We have no resources other than this place," Gabriel said of a CAFB partner pantry they've been coming to since the end of March. "It's a blessing to come here. It's our grocery store."

Constanica is a great cook, he added. She makes Gabriel's favorite American foods as well as dishes from the Philippines, where she was born.

The couple had never needed food assistance before the pandemic. "God has blessed us through the years," he said. "We have a house over our heads and no medical problems."

While Gabriel shared that the pandemic has been "painful", he and Constanica continue to persevere day by day.

"It's been a hard experience, but we stick together."



177

direct distribution locations are open, providing emergency boxes of shelf stable food, meals, and/or produce to people across the region through 6 programs.



10,000

seniors are still receiving boxes of supplementary shelf-stable groceries every month.



SEPTEMBER 2020 - PRESENT

RECOVER

OUR FOOD DISTRIBUTION NETWORK

While the impacts of the pandemic are ongoing, our region has also re-opened some parts of the economy in recent months. As local restrictions eased, we focused on recovering our distribution network to help meet current demand.

Providing Meals Directly

After implementing new social distancing protocols, we have restarted distributing fresh, seasonal produce safely at our three Community Marketplaces—free monthly farmer’s markets in Northwest DC, Glenarden, Maryland, and Reston, Virginia. We’ve also launched a new location in Arlington, Virginia.

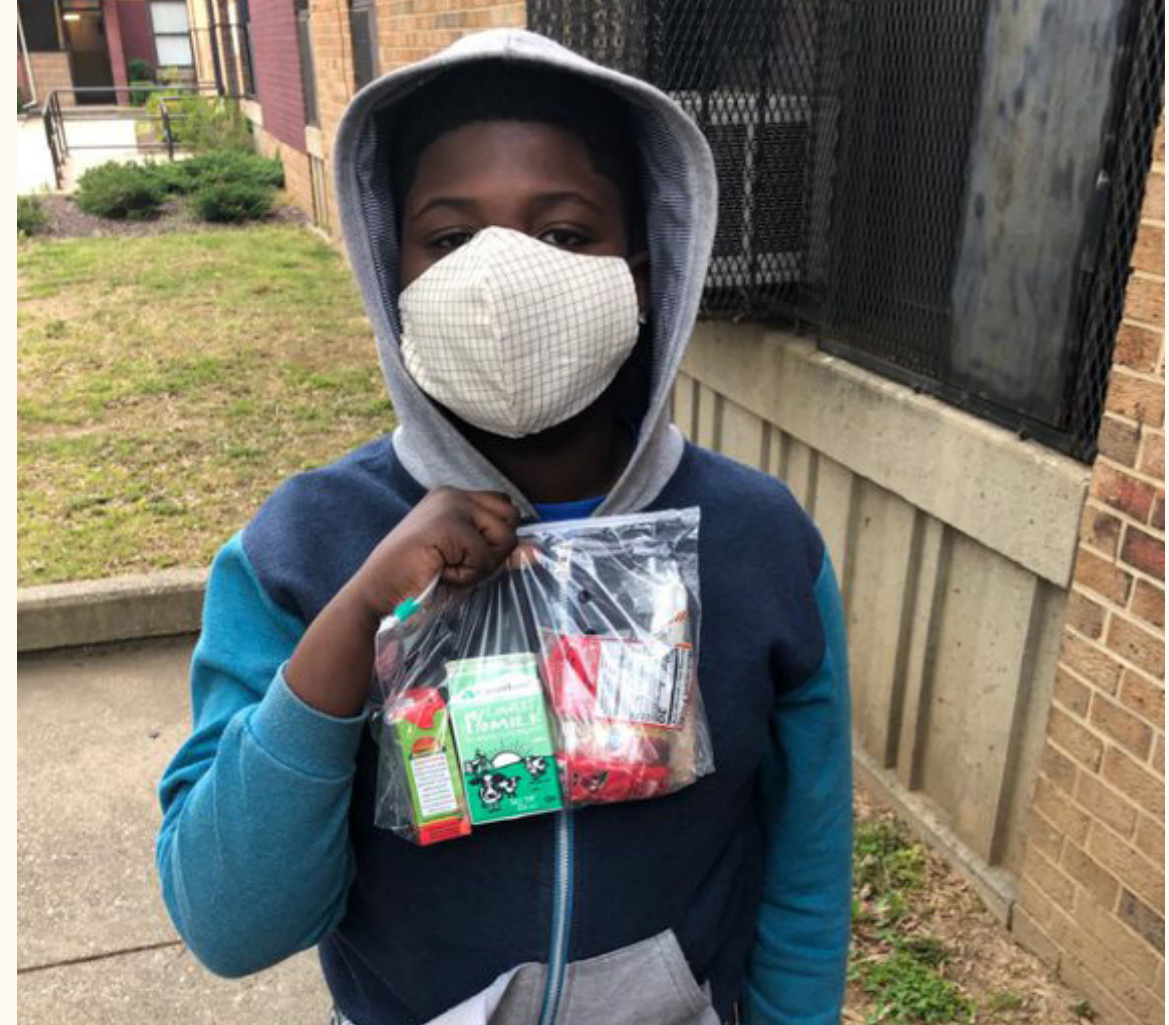
Additionally, we’ve re-launched our direct distribution of groceries at 57 Mobile Markets located in high-need neighborhoods, as well as school-based food distributions in 49 area schools.

As children continue to attend school virtually, and seniors are advised to stay home, we are continuing to supply boxed and “grab and go” meals for over 3,000 children who would normally receive food at school. We’re also providing monthly supplemental boxes of groceries to over 10,000 seniors through contactless delivery.

Restoring our Nonprofit Partner Network

With half of our nonprofit partner network closed in the pandemic’s initial months, we focused on helping partners recover by making \$2.5 million in financial grants available to procure additional food and personal protective equipment. Over fifty of our partners have resumed operation this fall and winter, with more opening up weekly.

We are also looking carefully at where hunger exists now, and where new pockets of food insecurity might emerge in the coming months. Our aim is to establish new partnerships and innovative distribution channels to build our network with an eye toward the future.



312

of the CAFB’s usual 450+ nonprofit partners are now operating, including 53 that have re-opened following temporary closure due to the pandemic.



\$2.5 million

in partner grants have been made available, allowing our nonprofit network to source additional food and acquire PPE for staff and volunteers.



285,820

emergency boxes have been distributed by the CAFB since March, each providing the food needed to feed a family of four with meals for up to five days.



Forming Creative Partnerships in Times of Need

The need for emergency food was more significant than ever this past year. Due to several new operational challenges, including the closure of many of our nonprofit partners and deliveries of purchased food coming in at volumes above what we could immediately store and transport, 2020 called for some creative new partnerships:

- **Marriott provided extra storage** at one of its local properties to stage some of the 771 truckloads of food we purchased this year.
- **New partners like the Peace Corps and Get Shift Done** assisted with packing emergency boxes of food—often up to 14,000 per week—that each provide four to five days of food for a family of four.
- **Goodwill supplemented our fleet of trucks** by transporting hundreds of pallets of food to our partners. Goodwill's vehicles normally transport goods between their retail locations, but many were off the road this spring due to temporary closure of their stores.
- **The Taxi Senior Food Delivery Program**, launched in partnership with DC Health and the DC Department of For-Hire Vehicles, helped to provide food deliveries directly to the homes of nearly 1,000 seniors during the spring.
- **Every local government** across our metropolitan Washington service region has provided support for acquiring food and/or for distributing it directly into communities.

A woman wearing a black winter coat, a black beanie with a logo, and glasses is smiling and standing in the open door of a bright green food bank truck. The truck's side is decorated with large, colorful, hand-drawn illustrations of various food items including a banana, a bunch of grapes, a carrot, a fish, a bell pepper, and a tomato. A white banner is partially visible on the side of the truck. The scene is set outdoors on a clear day.

PRESENT - 2021 AND BEYOND

REBUILD

**OUR REGION TO BE MORE RESILIENT,
EQUITABLE, AND INCLUSIVE**

As we look to the future, the imperative for our region is clear: we must rebuild in ways that address inequity and create greater opportunity. In service of achieving those outcomes, we will continue to prioritize advocacy, data sharing, cross-sector partnerships, innovative programs, and initiatives that empower and amplify the voices of our clients.

Emerging Stronger from Crisis

The global health emergency of COVID-19 exposed deep and pre-existing fault lines in our economy and, more broadly, in our society. In addition to the health risks it poses, the pandemic also threatens to deepen the wealth gap in our region, creating even more substantial barriers to financial sustainability for people who are already struggling. Those who have been most severely impacted are those who are often already the most economically vulnerable—people of color, households headed by women, and young people.

The challenge and the opportunity today is to rebuild from this crisis in ways that are more equitable, and that enable more people to participate in—and benefit from—our regional economy. This kind of inclusive growth will require many strategies:

- **Advocating for public policies** that reduce poverty and support food security
- **Listening to and amplifying** the voices of often under-represented members of our communities
- **Sharing more data** and information to inform decision making
- **Working in partnership** across sectors on innovative new initiatives

Activities to advance each of these approaches were an important part of the food bank's 2020 work, and will continue to play a critical role in the new year ahead.

“The challenge and the opportunity today is to rebuild from this crisis in ways that are more equitable.”



Advocating for Public Policy that Reduces Hunger and Poverty

While food banks play an essential role in our nation's hunger relief infrastructure, we cannot meet the need alone. Rebuilding our economy must combine programs with policy, and governments at every level have the capacity to aid our national and regional recovery at the largest scale.

From working to advance increases in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) and expanding eligibility for other related government programs to empowering elected officials with data about hunger in our region and perspectives from our clients and local communities, advocacy for strong anti-hunger and anti-poverty policies has been central to our work in 2020 and will continue to expand moving forward.

Client-Centered: Introducing the Food Bank's Inaugural Client Leadership Council

The people the food bank serves are at the core of everything we do. In 2020, a commitment to hearing from those individuals more frequently and directly led to the formation of a Client Leadership Council (CLC).

Council members come from across the region and have an array of backgrounds. By sharing their diverse experiences, challenges, and aspirations, they provide an essential perspective to the food bank. Their insights—about their goals, and the barriers they may face in achieving them—help to shed light on new ways we can support members of our community and create “on ramps” to greater opportunity through food and programming, as well as with services provided in partnership with others.

Participants in the Council, which will include up to 24 members each year, will also take part in a 10-month advocacy training. The program is designed to empower them to advocate on behalf of themselves and their communities, and to serve as effective agents of influence and change.

“Client Leadership Council members’ insights—about their goals, and the barriers they may face in achieving them—helps to shed light on new ways we can support members of our community.”

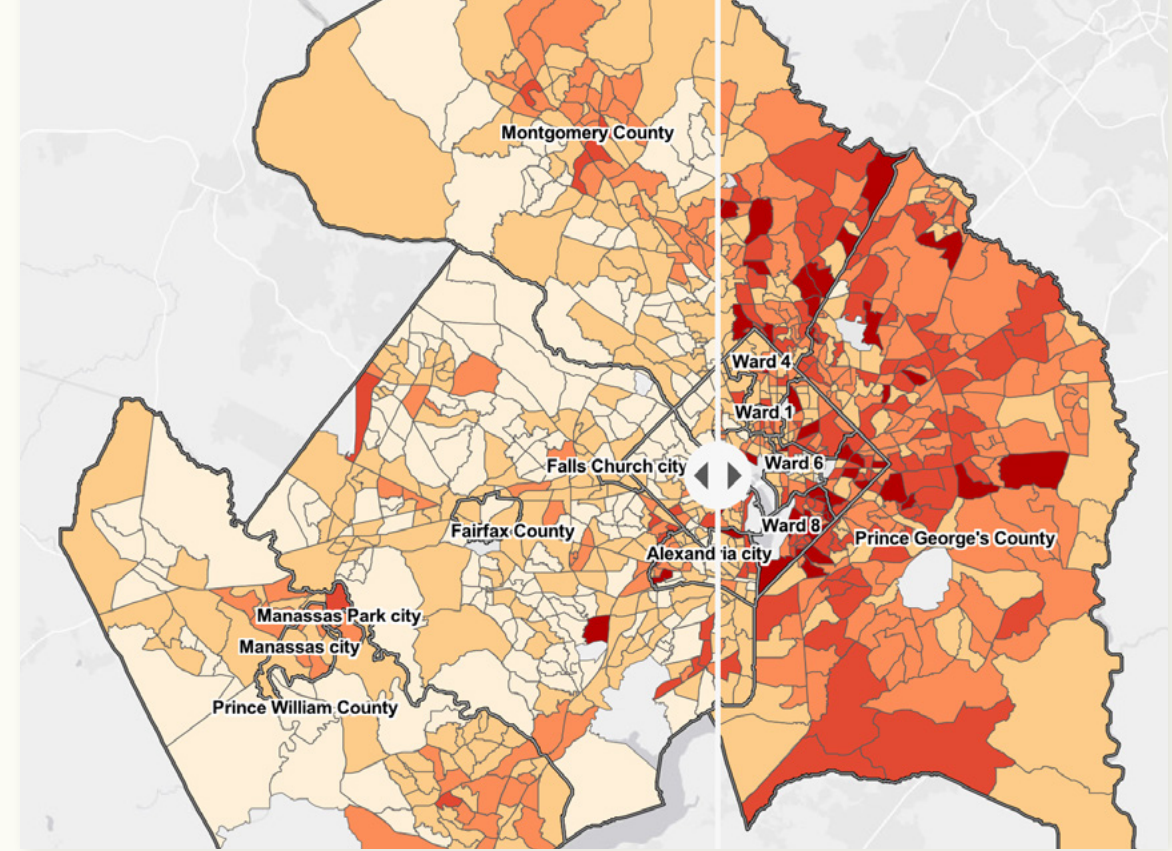


Image of Map from Hunger Report 2020: Food Insecurity Pre- and Post COVID-19.

Data Driven: *Hunger Report 2020*

We continuously research and analyze a variety of data sources in order to better understand the nature of poverty and hunger in our region, and to better respond to the needs of the people we serve. In July, we brought much of that information together into one report—*Hunger Report 2020*—to provide a single, holistic picture of food insecurity in the Washington metro region for service providers and policymakers.

As the effects of COVID unfolded, many of the long-standing, deep-rooted inequities that perpetuate food insecurity and poverty in our region were revealed and exacerbated by the pandemic. Among the findings *Hunger Report 2020* explores is that these inequities disproportionately impact Black and Latino people, and households headed by women.

We are hopeful that insights from the report, in combination with ongoing discussions with representatives across many sectors of our region's economy, will help accelerate work being done to advance food security and increase equity in the greater Washington area.



Building Regional Resilience

Even as we continue to address today's challenges, we're working to build greater regional preparedness and ensure continuity of the food supply in the case of a future disaster. To do that, the food bank is working in partnership with organizations and local governments in our region to plan now for future scenarios.

Among these partners is Connected DMV, with whom we're organizing a series of emergency response exercises. These exercises will convene a diverse set of cross-sector stakeholders to anticipate and rehearse new ways of connecting people in need with available food during an emergency situation in our region.

Continuing to Address Hunger's Root Causes

Addressing food insecurity's root causes is more important than ever in the wake of COVID-19's economic shocks. Knowing this, we moved to resume several pilot programs built to enable our clients to create pathways out of hunger. Known as "Food Plus", this program model acknowledges that those experiencing food insecurity are often in need of other services as well. Food Plus programs bundle access to nutritious food with other partner-provided social services, including health care, workforce development, and education.

While many of these pilot programs paused in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, we were able to launch a new partnership with George Washington University that provides patients who have recently experienced strokes, and who may also be experiencing food insecurity, with medically tailored groceries upon leaving the hospital and when coming in for follow-up visits. The program seeks to improve patient access to nutrition during a critical time, decrease post-stroke hospital readmission rates, and improve health outcomes.

The second half of 2020 was spent preparing several other pilots for launch in the new year, including:

- **Partnerships focused on providing healthy food** as a medical prescription
- **A program to make tailored food boxes** available for pregnant women as part of their prenatal care
- **Workforce development partnerships** that provide groceries to food insecure program participants through an onsite pantry
- **Initiatives to address food insecurity** among college students by partnering with local colleges and universities to establish and supply campus pantries.

Curbside Groceries: An Innovative New Approach to Food Access

In Washington, DC's Ward 8, many of our neighbors face barriers to transportation and access to affordable, healthy food. This is despite strong interest among area residents in purchasing groceries and prepared meals if offered at reasonable prices and within walking distance from home, work, or school.

We set out to find a solution—meeting with community partners, discussing options with local leaders, and brainstorming internally how to use our unique resources. Together, we determined that the addition of a mobile retail grocery option could help remove these transportation barriers, create access to healthy food, and enable healthier diets for all residents in the ward.

From these conversations came the idea for Curbside Groceries: The Food Store That Comes to You.

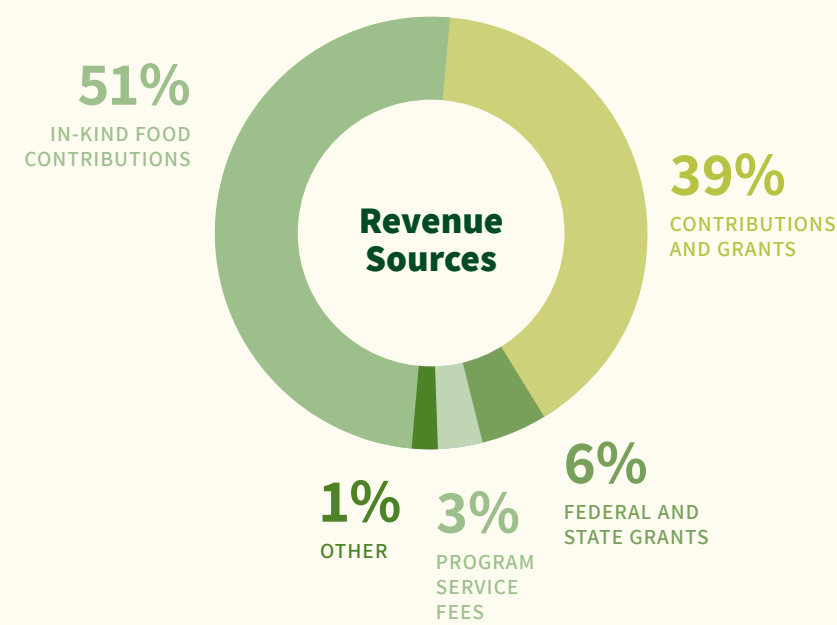
Presented by a coalition of partners including the food bank, Giant Food, The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation, and the A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation, Curbside Groceries delivers a full market basket of goods and groceries year-round. Through Curbside Groceries, we aim to encourage entrepreneurship in the Ward 8 retail space by collecting and sharing data to prove the value of alternative-format grocery stores.

After a brief trial period in early 2020, Curbside Groceries was put on hold during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic. In November 2020, the Curbside Groceries initiative officially launched with multiple safety protocols and procedures in place to protect customers and staff. In 2021, the Curbside Groceries route will expand to serve communities in Prince George's County, Maryland.

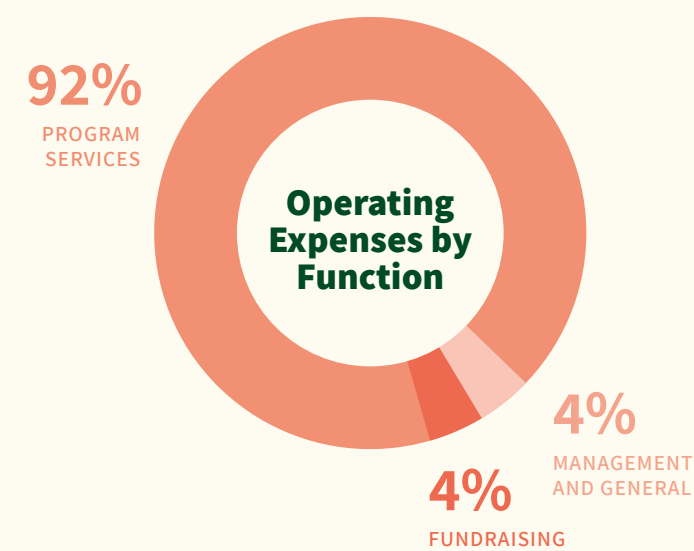


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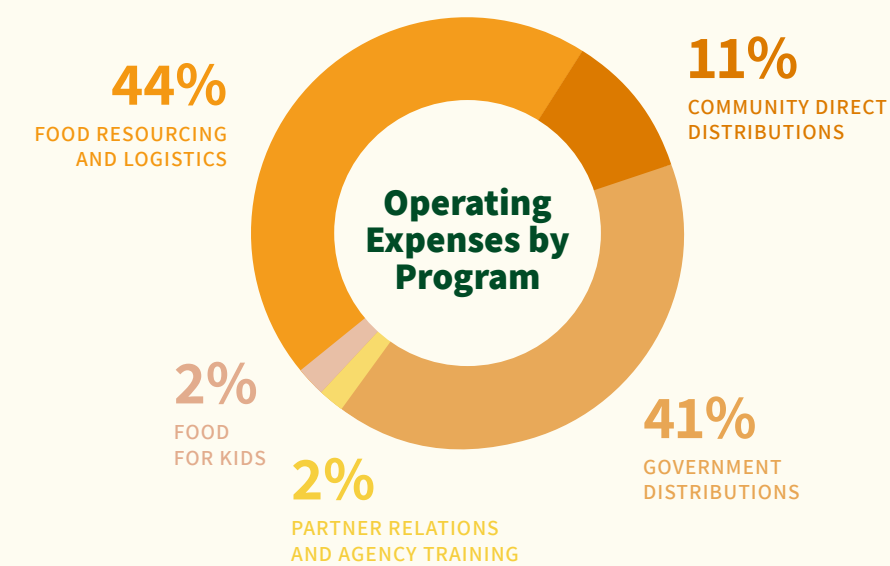
Financials



In-kind food contributions	\$47,278,011
Contributions and grants	\$36,145,594
Federal and state grants	\$5,474,087
Program service fees	\$3,036,129
Other	\$1,235,002
Total	\$93,168,823



Program services	\$69,297,308
Management and general	\$3,276,294
Fundraising	\$2,987,484
Total	\$75,561,086



Food resourcing and logistics	\$30,541,383
Community direct distributions	\$7,696,005
Government distributions	\$27,997,762
Partner relations and agency training	\$1,551,838
Food for Kids	\$1,510,320
Total	\$69,297,308

Capital Area Food Bank was audited for Fiscal Year 2020 by Marcum LLP. A copy of our most recent audited financial statements is available on our website, or upon request.

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Cathryn Le Regulski

DLA Piper





THANK YOU!

Your vital support provides the food our neighbors need today and creates pathways towards brighter futures tomorrow.

HOW TO HELP

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Volunteer

JOIN US ONLINE

Click the icons to connect online.



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