

REVEALING THE FACES OF HUNGER

COVID-19 RESPONSE REPORT

Before the pandemic, Food Lifeline provided more than 60 million pounds of food every year to more than 300 food banks, shelters and meal programs. With COVID - 19, in one dramatic moment our world changed. 70% of donated food streams dried up overnight. Grocery store shelves were empty. Food rescue partner restaurants shuttered. Mandatory social distancing guidelines closed down Food Lifeline's volunteer work force representing the equivalent of 31 full-time employees. As school's shifted to remote learning, districts scrambled to find new and alternative ways to get breakfast and lunch to students facing hunger.

More than 560,000 people lost their jobs in our region. In the midst of the greatest decline in the economy since the Great Depression, Food Lifeline's food resources were depleted and demand doubled. **The pandemic revealed what we long knew, many people are one job, one paycheck away from food insecurity. Time for reinvention...**

Community and corporate support was overwhelming. Local, state and federal government stepped in with new grants and innovative programs.

FOOD LIFELINE RESPONDS

We secured a large warehouse in SODO which provided for social distancing and engaged 252 members of the National Guard to replace the work our volunteer work force.

We worked fast to establish relationships with colleges, community centers and shopping malls to create drive-through community food distribution centers, an ideal way to get resources directly into the neighborhoods and populations that were most in need of food.

We partnered with local media, television and radio stations to get the word out to thousands of people who had never experienced food insecurity or visited a food bank before so they could access the nutritious food they needed for themselves and their families. We captured more than 100 earned media engagements in the first 90 days.

We shifted traditional warehouse operations to building food boxes to support our partner agencies and community food distributions - supplying more than 961,000 boxes and supporting more than 225,000 families.

We sourced government contracts, grants, and charitable gifts to meet the overwhelming need to purchase food to feed our communities, enabling us to spend more than \$14 million dollars in six months alone.

We secured a Feeding America grant which allows us to directly hire a local staff member in the Skagit/Whatcom communities.

We are proud at how we stepped up to meet the moment, doubling our ability to serve in mere months, but the demand isn't abating. Projections suggest the worst is still ahead, fully 1 in 5 people are expected to experience food insecurity by December 2020. We do not know what a second wave looks like, or how long it will take our region to recover economically.

We do know your on-going support is critical in the months ahead.

When the pandemic began, Rainier Valley Food Bank was forced to shutter their grocery store model operation because the space was so small, they couldn't properly socially distance. They were able to set up home delivery, but while the program has been effective at delivering food, it's left their clients feeling disconnected and isolated.



Gloria

"At the distribution, we can see them on a regular basis, and we can make sure they're getting enough food, and staying healthy."

Katy

"We do what we do so that kids can eat and families have what they need."



The pandemic revealed what we long knew, many people are one job, one paycheck away from food insecurity.

Katy is a schoolteacher with Seattle Public Schools, and without school meals, her students are struggling. That's why she and a half dozen of her friends come to North Seattle College every week to pick up food and deliver it to school families that need the help.



Chester

"We are retired, and our paycheck is not enough, so this really helps us right now."



Lavonte

"For people having trouble working, or providing for their families, this is another great way to help them survive this."

Lavonte works here at the Community Center, but his hours have been cut dramatically since the pandemic. There are four family members at home, and he is the primary wage earner. A crisis made even more devastating by an illness in the family.

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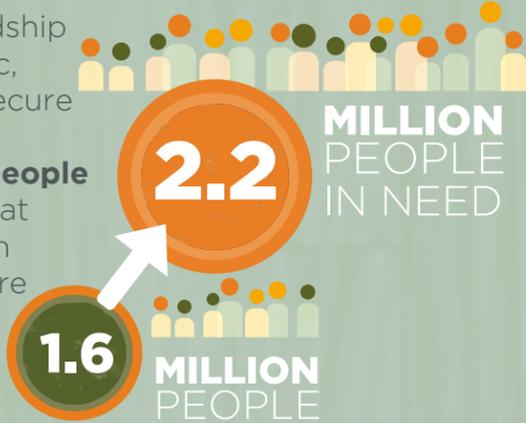
SITUATION:

In the wake of the **COVID-19** pandemic and our state's statewide stay-at-home order in March, Food Lifeline had to quickly adapt to dramatically increased demand for food.

For perspective, in a typical year about **850,000 people in Washington** experience food insecurity.



With the economic hardship caused by the pandemic, the number of food-insecure people in our state has doubled to **1.6 million people** with a high likelihood that it could reach more than **2.2 million people** before the crisis begins to subside.



CHALLENGE:

Donated food generally represents **4.4 million pounds** of Food Lifeline's supply every month, but with the **COVID-19** pandemic, those **donations dropped by 70%**.



SOLUTION:

Food Lifeline began the effort with producing emergency food boxes containing a variety of shelf stable items.

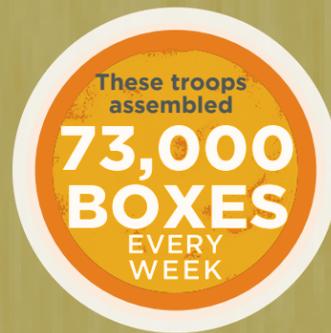


Responding to community requests, Food Lifeline added boxes of produce and assorted dairy to our distributions. We added **36 new agencies/food pantries** to support high-need neighborhoods.



PRODUCTION:

252 members of the **Washington National Guard** worked full-time at an emergency warehouse in the SODO district.



EMERGENCY DISTRIBUTION: March - August



DRIVE-THROUGH COMMUNITY DISTRIBUTION:

To meet the dramatic increase in need, Food Lifeline has initiated public distributions at local shopping malls, community centers, colleges, and the Hunger Solution Center. These distributions are for anyone who needs food during the crisis.

To date, Food Lifeline has distributed **87,000+ boxes** through this program.



When Crisis Hits... Hunger Happens

- More than **40%** of clients during the pandemic are visiting food banks for the first time.
- Black, Indigenous, Immigrant, and Refugee communities are disproportionately impacted by the crisis, **40%** of people of color are currently experiencing hunger.
- Government projections anticipate one in five people may become food insecure by December 2020.
- UW IHME* suggests that Washington could be headed for another lock-down. Food Lifeline must be prepared to meet our communities' needs, be innovative in sourcing nutritious and culturally appropriate food. We must continue to learn, evolve and respond.

* University of Washington Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation