



December 8, 2020

An Open Letter to Food Lifeline Stakeholders from the CEO

The Path Forward

I first want to express my gratitude to each of you. Since the pandemic began, we have worked tirelessly to end hunger by advancing the belief that all people deserve access to enough nutritious food, and hunger is unacceptable in Washington state. Our work has been grounded in the desire to come together to find lasting solutions that meet people where they live, in their own communities. We simply could not have done this without supporters like you.

In the months ahead, we believe the new Administration and Congress will implement a national strategy around Covid-19 testing, tracing, and therapeutic response, while working to shore up a deeply diminished economy. A renewed emphasis on desperately needed public health resources must be successful, and it must be joined with a push to increase equitable access to nutritious food, as well as an effective safety net.

As you may know, hunger relief agencies across the state have faced an exponential increase in community needs. The pandemic and economic fall-out has pushed the hunger relief system far beyond its limits. We've worked without delay to meet the rapidly growing demand; yet longer lines at food pantries are not only about the need for expanded capacity, they are also a symptom of deeper issues we have yet to fully reckon with as a country. We must address both.

The pandemic has laid bare the root causes of hunger in our state unlike any national event in recent memory. Disparate impacts across communities from Covid-19 are clearly delineated by the historical trends of racial inequity, income inequality, and housing instability that shaped the formation of those communities. It is time to fix these things.

There is good news, with the 2020 election behind us, our work as a hunger relief organization begins anew. Our advocacy efforts are directed at creating change in the systems that ultimately result in *food security* in vulnerable communities. We aim to make positive impact progress in hunger relief programs, and challenge systemic inequities that are root causes because *we know access to food as a basic human rights improves access to the foundational promise of opportunity and prosperity that's woven so tightly into our national ideals.*

Now, more than ever, this era of uncertainty can only be met by our own determination to find new ways of working together.

Sign up to be part of the chorus of voices calling for change and an end to hunger [here](#). I look forward to you joining me on the front lines.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda".

Linda Nageotte
President & CEO