



The COVID-19 Pandemic is Deepening the Hunger Crisis. Food Banks Can't Do It Alone

A call to action: Major international networks of food banks urge for more industry support

We, the leadership of the major international networks of Food Banks including the [European Food Banks Federation](#) (FEBA), [Feeding America](#) (FA), and [The Global FoodBanking Network](#) (GFN), together call for urgent, strengthened, and sustained action for the critical work of Food Banks in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As coronavirus has spread across all of our borders, ravaging our communities and respective economies, the need to support the organizations that feed the poorest among us is greater than ever.

Our networks represent more than 1,500 community-based, food banking organizations in 70 nations of differing socio-economic and cultural contexts across the globe. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Food Banks around the world were on the frontlines of preventing food waste and fighting hunger in our communities, feeding more than 62 million food insecure and hungry people. Food Banks are the primary, private sector led, charitable response to hunger in much of the world. In thousands of communities, Food Banks work with stakeholders from the public and private sectors to provide essential food assistance and humanitarian relief services to people facing hunger. Food Banks are an effective local solution to specific community food security needs and serve a crucial and complementary role to public sector social protection systems, extending social protection gains or filling gaps when those programs are insufficient or absent, and improve the efficiency of food systems.

Today, with the spread of COVID-19, our Food Banks are now engaged in a massive and urgent global fight against hunger like none other in modern history. This fight to assure people struggling with hunger have adequate access to food is now being fought out neighborhood by neighborhood, community by community, nation by nation, by our member Food Banks. No nation has been untouched by this crisis.

In times of calamity, Food Banks have a long and effective record of aiding disaster victims with rapid distribution of food assistance to affected communities, supporting and coordinating with responder activities, and serving as an important resource and trusted institution with disadvantaged communities disproportionately affected by such adversity. The global pandemic we now face is unlike any other, Food Banks across the world are stretched and the people we serve are at great peril.

COVID-19 is revealing people all over the world who are now facing new levels of economic and social devastation. The economic downturn and likelihood of global recession caused by the pandemic emergency pose a significant risk for increased hunger and food insecurity in all our nations. For every global economic downturn of even one percentage point, the number of people living in poverty and food insecurity around the world increases by approximately two percent or by about 14 million people worldwide. In many countries and many more communities, the public health and food security impact is much greater and the lasting effect potentially more profound.

Through our respective networks, Food Banks in partnership with 150,000 local charitable agencies are working to feed ever-increasing numbers of families and people in need of immediate food assistance due to this crisis. As requests for assistance rise across the world, resources to meet the need are not keeping



pace as food distribution channels face disruption from transport interruptions, quarantine measures, and panic buying. No major disruptions in production of staple foods have occurred presently, though available food stock supply chains are being unsettled and threaten the frontline response of our Food Banks to meet community needs. In many countries, food price spikes are occurring at the national and local level making less food available to meet the need or making food less accessible to people already living on meager resources. Our Food Banks and networks are working around the clock to prevent this economic downturn from growing into a food crisis that disproportionately affects people who are newly unemployed or who were already struggling with poverty.

As food and financial resources are strained in countries throughout the world, volunteers whom Food Banks rely on are often being asked to stay at home or restrict movement, which complicates local humanitarian responses. Soup kitchens, shelters and neighborhood food distribution programs are being asked to curtail activities thereby limiting food access for people with the greatest need. As schools are asked to close to prevent the spread of the virus, Food Banks are serving as local food response for children and their families in need. This essential humanitarian response, operating in thousands of communities across the world, is now severely stretched.

As the leaders of the international Food Bank movement, we are calling on our private sector supporters, corporations, foundations, and agri-food donor partners to stand with us in solidarity at this critical time. Our communities are facing significant and rapidly changing food assistance needs and your support is essential. We are likewise calling upon multi-lateral institutions and governments to support the work of Food Banks as an indispensable response of civil society to address rising food insecurity accompanying this pandemic. Significant resources must be committed from all societal stakeholders and urgently made available to support the people we serve who are often marginalized, disadvantaged, vulnerable and desperately in need of food assistance now and tomorrow.

No country, no region, nor any community is completely immune from the devastating effects of COVID-19 pandemic. We believe it will take a coordinated global effort to roll back this pandemic and the surge of food insecurity that comes with it. We ask you to continue to stand with your Food Banks and help us on the frontlines preventing food waste and fighting hunger in our communities, and for the good of all.

Signed –

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