

COVID-19 IMPACT REPORT



Thank you for your contribution and commitment to Feeding America West Michigan. Your generosity has allowed us to serve hundreds of thousands of people facing hunger during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Between March 16 and August 31, we achieved the following impact:



11.4 MILLION MEALS*

worth of food distributed to people facing hunger throughout West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula



of food gathered –
worth more than
\$17.4M
– a **37%** increase from the same period last year

782 MOBILE PANTRIES

provided **42%** more groceries for neighbors facing hunger than the same time frame last year



Feeding America West Michigan
distributed food in collaboration with
667 AGENCY PARTNERS

WHY IT MATTERS

Before COVID-19, 1 in 8 people in our service area faced hunger,



including more than
67,000 CHILDREN

Since March, that need has increased by **44%**



Long-term economic impact from COVID-19 will disproportionately affect vulnerable populations

The consequences of hunger on individuals, families, and the community are devastating



COVID-19 RESPONSE EFFORTS

Feeding America West Michigan is committed to connecting every person facing hunger with nutritious food, especially in times of crisis. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we amped up our distribution by way of various methods as shown below to provide critical hunger relief during this unprecedented emergency:



Provided 30% more food to the community overall through our agency partners' programs and our Mobile Pantries



Increased support and resources for our agency partners, including faith-based and charitable organizations



Implemented no-touch and drive-thru food distributions at all operating sites



Supplied additional food to rural Mobile Pantries in underserved communities throughout our 40 counties



Started many new agency and Mobile Pantry partnerships and expanded our work with local school districts to provide meals for children and families affected by school closures



Worked closely with 2-1-1 to help people seeking food assistance, particularly those who were homebound



Launched three temporary Mobile Pantry sites to serve unemployed service industry workers



Purchased 74% more truckloads of food in three months than are typically purchased to increase food distribution and offset declines in grocery donations and food rescue



For more information about how we are serving our community during this difficult time, please visit FeedWM.org/covid-19.

COMMUNITY NEED



Before COVID-19, 1 in 8 people in West Michigan and the U.P. faced hunger.
Now, we are seeing an estimated 44% increase in need.

In April, Michigan's unemployment rate jumped to 24%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. That's far above the April 2019 rate of 4.3% and above the current national unemployment rate of 8.4%.

Feeding America correlates a 1% increase in unemployment to a 10% increase in reliance on food assistance systems.

Making matters worse are continued disruptions to the food supply chain and soaring food prices. Grocery store prices rose dramatically from March to April – the highest ever month-to-month increase in nearly 50 years. These dire statistics translated to hundreds of thousands of people across West Michigan and the U.P. facing hunger – many who still struggle due to the food supply chain's continued instability.

When the COVID-19 pandemic first hit in mid-March, there was a tremendous surge in people facing hunger across our service area, many for the first time. Today, that wave of children, families and seniors in need is slowly getting smaller, but for so many in our service area, hunger isn't slowing down – **and neither are we, because no Michigander should have to worry about where their next meal is coming from.**

LOOKING AHEAD

Schools are open – whether online, in person or a hybrid of the two – but students, parents and teachers will, without a doubt, face virus-related hardships this academic year. Businesses that haven't gone past the point of no return are slowly opening back up, but the financial instability faced by many furloughed workers has thrown their livelihoods out of balance for the foreseeable future.

We know the impact of the pandemic will continue to affect our community for months to come. Feeding America West Michigan is committed to maintaining our increased level of service for those in need.

Being back to work – often at a limited capacity – won't immediately bring normalcy for many families. And, there's always a chance that schools and businesses will have to close again.

Additionally, with the colder months coming, the need for food assistance will increase due to seasonal factors such as higher utility bills and reduced outdoor work. When coupled with the pandemic, these challenges show we will have to work extra hard to meet the need for food in 2020 and beyond.

The turnout for a Feeding America West Michigan Mobile Pantry at Big Bear Arena in Sault Ste. Marie is a solemn reminder of COVID-19's impact on hunger.



We are inspired by you and the thousands of Michiganders who have generously given to Feeding America West Michigan during this unprecedented crisis. You make our work possible every day.

THANK YOU for your continued support

ABOUT FEEDING AMERICA WEST MICHIGAN

Serving local families in need since 1981, Feeding America West Michigan gathers surplus food from various sources – including farmers, manufacturers, distributors, retailers and the USDA. The food bank then sorts and distributes this food through a network of Mobile Pantry and agency partners – like food pantries, meal sites, food clubs (co-ops) and shelters – in 40 of Michigan's 83 counties from the Indiana border through the Upper Peninsula. For more information about the food bank, visit FeedWM.org or call 616-784-3250.