Rising to the Occasion
Dear Friends,

The year 2020 will be forever remembered as a year when our community, the nation, and the world faced a challenge unlike any other. This year tested our limits as individuals, a community, and a food bank. Together, through the resolve of the member pantries we support, the hard work of our volunteers and staff, and the support of community members who care about their neighbors in need, we all rose to the occasion.

When our fiscal year started in July 2019, we planned for a year of growth and achievement, working in an economy that was booming. But by February, it was clear that the novel coronavirus was going to have a huge impact on our country, and soon after, our local communities. By early March, our region began to see how severe an impact the virus was going to have.

Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin has always been a bedrock organization for our community, but very quickly, our critical infrastructure was pushed and tested. At times, the pressure of being an essential organization seemed to stretch our capacity, our resources, and ourselves to the extreme. Yet we faced every challenge presented—turning the chaos into order and making sure that our neighbors facing hunger, many of whom were coming to us for the first time, had enough to eat.

Our team of essential workers and volunteers worked tirelessly to create new partnerships and creative solutions to get healthy food into the hands of those who needed it most at a time when demand surpassed all previous expectations. And with your help, we have been able to support our communities and feed our neighbors in need. Together we served more than half a million Wisconsinites devastated by unemployment, illness, social isolation, and fear.

It seems impossible to predict what our world will look like in the next year or longer. But we anticipate a continued increase in need. With your help, we will be able to face the challenges and successfully manage what the coming months and years will bring.

Thank you for your support, generosity, and dedication to our communities.

Patti Habeck
President and Chief Executive Officer
Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin

We are very pleased to welcome Mike Fordney to his new role as Board Chair on the Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin Board of Directors. Mike recently retired as the head of the Retail Industries division within BMO Harris’ Food & Consumer Group and has served as an active member of the board since 2014. We are confident that his expertise and engagement with the communities we serve will be key in our mission to solve hunger. Mike grew up and lives in Northeast Wisconsin. He’s a guitarist who enjoys time with family when he’s not helping us solve hunger.

Welcome Mike Fordney

Together we can Solve Hunger

Andrew Schlesinger
Immediate Past Chairman
Board of Directors
Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin
Our Impact

538,000
PEOPLE SERVED

36M
POUNDS
Food provided to neighbors in need

16,760,854
POUNDS
of fresh produce, dairy and meat donated to Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin by growers, grocers and manufacturers

180% ↑
IN THE AMOUNT OF FOOD PURCHASES
made by Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin to ensure a variety of high-quality, healthy product was available for pantry partners quickly

140,000+
FAMILIES SERVED

8,304,742
POUNDS
of food directly provided by grocers to our pantries through the Direct Connect program

86% ↑
in food provided by local farmers through our Farm Link program

180
MOBILE PANTRIES

85% ↑
compared to the same period last year

TOP THREE CATEGORIES OF FOOD DISTRIBUTED

1. FRESH FRUIT & VEGETABLES
   ↑ 15% FROM LAST YEAR

2. MEAT, FISH, & POULTRY
   ↑ 6% FROM LAST YEAR

3. DAIRY PRODUCTS
   ↑ 47% FROM LAST YEAR

379
pantry partners

60,000
volunteer hours

35
Eastern Wisconsin counties

For nine consecutive years, Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin has achieved a 4-star accountability and transparency rating from Charity Navigator.
Nothing about the first half of 2020 was business as usual. As the needs of our community grew at a rapid rate, our models had to shift to adapt. The way we sourced and distributed food had to change dramatically to ensure we could keep up with the increasing number of families that needed it.

More food was donated to feed neighbors in need through food drives (88% increase), manufacturers (46%), retailers (5%) and government commodity programs. The community’s kindness and generosity was instrumental in our ability to keep up with the need during this crisis. Donations from individuals (up 353%) and organizations (up 130%) who rallied to support their neighbors in need were key when purchasing more food became the most effective way to keep up with the skyrocketing need.

Traditionally, we purchase food to fill gaps in our inventory in order to provide foods that are not donated as often as others. We adapted our sourcing strategy toward food purchases, like meat, peanut butter, grains, and produce grown under contract with our Farm Link program, as retail donations decreased and we had to suspend food drives. This adjustment ensured we had enough high-quality product available to our pantry partners to meet the increased need.

In reduced numbers in order to maintain social distancing and provide a safe environment, staff and volunteers check food for quality, safely store it and prepare it for our member pantries. Volunteers also serve on the frontlines at our mobile pantries and food box programs happening each week in the communities where they live.

To keep our pantry partners safe, they no longer need to enter the building to pick up their food. Food is brought out to them when they arrive in our parking lot.

With the help of donors, pantries, volunteers, and staff, we are serving more families than ever before—some may even live right next door.

In addition to the roughly 500 hunger-relief member programs we support, we partnered with the USDA, local farmers, and food distributors to add drive-through mobile pantries to meet the increased need. (Learn more about the Farmers to Families distributions on the next page.)
Cars snake through orange cones, in line since 7:30 a.m., waiting to pop their trunks for 25-pound boxes of fruits and veggies, meat and cheese. By the end of the day, roughly 500 cars will have received food. By the end of the week, thousands of Eastern Wisconsin families will enjoy a meal made from the food in these boxes. In just the last two months of our fiscal year, roughly 115,000 families were helped by our Farmers to Family program.

We’ve always known that too many of our neighbors are just one missed paycheck away from falling into food insecurity and being forced to make impossible choices between buying food and paying for necessities like rent, utilities, or medicine. When the coronavirus hit our local communities, many of those families already living paycheck to paycheck had family members who lost their jobs, were furloughed, had their hours cut, had their childcare disrupted, or experienced health issues. Many families who had never relied on the hunger-relief network had quickly fallen from a situation of stability to one of uncertainty and hunger.

This increased need was so great, many pantries chose to open their doors extra days. Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin also focused on the frontlines by partnering with the USDA, farmers, and local distributors Valley Cooperative Associations, Maglio Companies, and Heartland Produce on the Farmers to Families truck to trunk food distributions.

Story continued on the next spread
To see a drone video of one of the drive-up distributions in action, visit: FeedingAmericaWI.org/driveup

Trucks rolled up to hand out food in Appleton, Berlin, Green Bay, Green Lake, Menasha, Menominee, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, Plainfield, Ripon, Shawano, Waupaca, and Wautoma.
Serving & Sorting Safely

Community members stepped up big during the coronavirus pandemic, both through monetary donations and their time. But as more details came out about the risks and transmission of the coronavirus, we had to quickly adapt our volunteer program to follow suit.

The safety of our neighbors in need, partner pantries, volunteers, and staff is our highest priority. We had to find ways to balance volunteer safety with the need to sort, pack and distribute even more food than usual for those in need. Increased sanitation protocols, mask and glove requirements, and social distancing were all put into place.

Before the coronavirus, typical volunteer shifts had up to 100 volunteers a day, often hosting large groups from schools or corporations. In response to the pandemic, we reduced our program to very small shifts of 10-15 volunteers. As a result, we were forced to do more with less to meet the increased demand for food in our community.

“While the typical volunteer duties looked a little different this year, here are some other unique volunteer opportunities:

Garden in our Flex Farms
Spend a few hours a month managing these hydroponic systems from seed to harvest.

Be a Donor Ambassador
Spend time engaging with potential donors out in the community.

Event Support
Play a critical role in setting special events up for success—online or in-person!

Volunteer Crew Leader
Help lead volunteer groups and provide a fun experience for volunteers.

If you are interested in any of the volunteer opportunities above or have a skill you’d love to share with us as we work to feed more families than ever, please contact info@FeedingAmericaWI.org.
Adapting to Meet the Need

Cars lined up for more than 10 blocks to take part in the drive-up pantry service at Greater New Birth Church, a Milwaukee pantry supported by Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin.

Over 1,300 families were served that day with 30 to 40 pounds of groceries each to take home to their loved ones. The food pantry typically serves 100 families each month. That was before the pandemic.

More than 35 volunteers took part in this particular distribution, putting together food bags, carrying the bags outside, and filling up cars after car at a safe distance. Pastor Jessie Griffin shared that he was astounded at the amount of families in need in the community.

“The need is more than we have ever seen,” shared Griffin. “We have had to allocate another entire room just for storing and bagging food for families.” The 224-square-foot pantry in the church now uses an additional 1,600 square feet of space to manage the quantity of food they are distributing.

Greater New Birth Church has been a member of the Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin network for over 20 years. The church sought new ways to help the community and adapt to the coronavirus by transitioning to a drive-up service. Between March and June, Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin provided 321,803 pounds of food to Greater New Birth Church. That’s more than 100,000 meals in just four months.

“‘We wouldn’t have been able to meet the increased capacity without Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin and the donors,’” explained Griffin. “‘Not just the amount of food we have been able to secure, but items that provide real sustenance like fresh produce and vegetables. Every family is getting boxes of really good food.’

The pantry’s typical two-hour distribution grew to five hours long with cars lined up from zip codes near and far. “There are so many families being affected now,” said Griffin. “It’s not just the city of Milwaukee. Its people from the suburbs too. It feels good that people trust an inner-city church to help.”

Before the pandemic, roughly 400,000 people have turned to Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin and its partner pantries for assistance each year. Now, due to the pandemic, 538,000 people needed to rely on the resource in our last fiscal year. In fact, 40% of people who are visiting a pantry for help are doing so for the first time. When they do, they will be in good hands.

“‘It’s so rewarding to see people coming out for the help and being able to help them thanks to Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin and our own volunteers,’” said Griffin. “‘Whoever needs the help, we are getting the food to them.’

100,000 MEALS IN JUST FOUR MONTHS AT ONE OF OUR 400+ PANTRY PARTNERS

We wouldn’t have been able to meet the increased capacity without Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin and the donors.

PASTOR JESSIE GRIFFIN
A picture is worth 40,000 meals

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. During the coronavirus pandemic, photographer Lindsay Stayton learned a picture is worth nearly 40,000 meals for the community.

When the pandemic hit, and the government shutdown forced families to hole up at home, Stayton wanted to document Milwaukee families during this unique time in history through her business Lindsay Stayton Photography: lindsaystayton.photos.

“I wanted to show what life is like for a variety of families in the area,” explained Stayton. “Additionally, I wanted to bring a bit of joy with fun activities. I knew from the start that I wanted to make the families laugh and smile through jumping, swinging, and hanging the kiddos upside down.”

Joy and laughter are helping many families through the pandemic. So are the food pantries they turned to for help filling their fridges while furloughed. Stayton did more than document with her porch portrait project, she raised funds for food with every picture snapped.

“Everyone’s basic need in life is food,” said Stayton. “What a better way to ensure that the project could help as many neighbors as possible. Not only was I able to donate to those in Milwaukee, but the whole eastern side of the state.”

A portion of each portrait session’s payment went to Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin and supported the critical work being done to help families facing hunger during the pandemic.

“Every family handles life’s curveballs differently,” explained Lindsay. “This project showed me that there is hope and smiles, even behind what for some is a really hard point in our world.”

Photos provided courtesy of Lindsay Stayton Photography.

Porch Project Snapshot

$12,250 RAISED
36,750 MEALS PROVIDED
739 FAMILIES
77,430 CAMERA CLICKS
10 WEEKS
484 HOURS TAKING PHOTOS, EDITING, & DRIVING
When Tandem—a restaurant in our own neighborhood—was temporarily shut down by the pandemic, chef and owner Caitlin Cullen found a new way to serve. “No one was prepared,” said Cullen, “I knew our neighbors were going to go hungry and I was not willing to accept that.”

The coronavirus has left many who have never fought to find their next meal looking for resources to help them make it through. Through donations and with the help of her network, Cullen has been able to provide food and comfort to her community.

“It's affecting a lot more people than folks are used to acknowledging,” said Cullen. “For people who are dealing with this the first time, it can be depressing. We want to add dignity to the experience by providing great meals from local chefs. From restaurants I've only been able to eat at a few times myself.”

Through donations, she was able to support area restaurants by paying them to prepare community meals and pans of food for families to take home. But the cost of certain ingredients went up as the pandemic went on, and the margins for the restaurants got tighter.

When the virus sidelined the NBA season, there was an unexpected upside. The Milwaukee Bucks donated food from the Fiserv Forum to Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin. Chef Cullen and her crew knew exactly what to do. They recruited area restaurants to pick through the Fiserv inventory of ingredients and prepare meals for the community. Like a strange episode of Chopped, chefs from 40 restaurants browsed the warehouse for the right ingredients to serve up meals to comfort a community that was ailing.

With the state opened up, the free meal program has since scaled back but continues. Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin provided 500 boxes of food through the USDA for families who came out to the last large-scale distribution where 1,200 meals were served. A former English teacher and principal, Cullen and her network are offering a free tutor and meal program for students as they had back to school in a partially virtual setting.

Without an end to the pandemic in sight, Cullen has taken on the task of supporting her community in whatever way is needed, saying: “This is what we do now.”
$1 donated can provide $10 in groceries

97% of every contribution goes directly to supporting hunger-relief

$60,220,425 Total Revenue & support

$57,956,737 Total Expenses

$41,179,507 DONATED FOOD

$9,563,534 CONTRIBUTIONS AND GRANTS

$7,863,362 FEDERAL COMMODITIES & RELATED FUNDING

$810,854 SHARED MAINTENANCE

$803,198 OTHER

$56,050,927 PROGRAM SERVICES

$1,261,434 FUNDRAISING

$644,376 GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE

$7,863,362 FEDERAL COMMODITIES & RELATED FUNDING

$1 = $10

$1 donated can provide $10 in groceries

20% 15.88%

13.06% 1.35%

68.38% 1.33%

96.71% 2.18%

1.11%
 OUR MISSION
To Solve Hunger

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES WE BELIEVE:

... together we can solve hunger.
... access to nutritious food is a right for all.
... all people deserve to be treated with dignity and compassion.
... collaboration with partners throughout our community leads to innovative solutions.
... our people are our most valuable asset.
... in fiscal responsibility, transparency, and accountability.

OUR VALUES
Collaboration
Commitment
Compassion
Dignity
Innovation
Sustainability

A Hunger-Free Wisconsin