



## **Hunger Task Force Operational Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

*Updated: March 16, 2020*

Hunger Task Force is Milwaukee's Free & Local food bank and Wisconsin's anti-hunger leader. In the wake of the recently declared State of Emergency, Hunger Task Force will remain open in service to seniors, low-income households and children throughout Milwaukee County.

Our primary focus will be to deliver targeted emergency food supplies within the community to well-equipped nonprofit organizations, schools and government institutions. Hunger Task Force will continue its regular food banking operations, providing access to free food for the hungry, by utilizing available USDA commodity foods, purchased foods and donated foods, in addition to generous cash gifts from the community.

Hunger Task Force traditionally supports local food pantries, soup kitchens and homeless shelters, offering nutritious a healthy food supplies free of charge. Additionally, 10,000 seniors age 60+ receive a free monthly box of USDA commodities called "Stockbox."

Two Mobile Markets are operated in Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha Counties in partnership with Malicki's Piggly Wiggly grocery stores. These single-aisle grocery stores on wheels will continue to serve food deserts throughout the Greater Milwaukee Area, offering opportunities for low-income shoppers to access healthy, affordable foods in their neighborhoods. All food on the Mobile Market is offered at 25% off traditional grocery store prices, which makes buying healthy food affordable for low-income households. Everyone is welcome to shop the Mobile Market, which accepts debit, credit and FoodShare for payment. View the schedule online [here](#).

Hunger Task Force anticipates program closures and decreased access to emergency food as a result of the State of Emergency and population of regular volunteers. In response, Hunger Task Force is creating a network of compatible, easily-accessible locations to serve populations of need by offering emergency food supplies. Senior centers, emergency food pantries, schools, nonprofit organizations and congregations will host opportunities for food distribution. All of these groups will conduct "drive-thru" distributions of food and will suspend required proofs and documentation of need that would otherwise require excess exchange of pens and paperwork.

Hunger relief work has always been dependent upon on volunteers, and cancellations of group volunteer work are hindering our capacity. Nearly 90% of Hunger Task Force's current network of pantries is voluntary and help is crucial. Small groups of 15-20 are needed to help build Stockboxes, while individual volunteers will support operation of the Mobile Markets. Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older.

**Cash donations will be of critical help to Hunger Task Force at this time to cover shortfalls in specific food donations and operations for emergency food distributions. Individuals, corporations and foundations can make monetary gifts at online at [Hungertaskforce.org](https://www.hungertaskforce.org).**

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Hunger Task Force will continue to supply our network of emergency food pantries. The food pantry and meal program network is an essential part of the public health continuum and Hunger Task Force will act as a flagship system of help and assistance during this local health emergency.

Hunger Task Force has taken additional precautions to ensure the health and safety of the community we serve and the employees and volunteers who commonly come into contact with the public. In addition to typical protocol, these added measures are taking place during daily operations:

- Carrying hand sanitizer, gloves and masks on hand at all times for food/resource distribution.
- Utilizing gloves for all deliveries and handling of fresh product.
- Instructing all volunteers to wear gloves when handling sorting or packing of food boxes.
- Offer rescheduling for individual volunteers who communicate or show flu-like symptoms.

Hunger Task Force has also distributed a statement to volunteers and coordinators to help mitigate infection and keep our work healthy. These recommendations include:

- Stay home with any flu-like or respiratory illness symptoms such as coughing or fever;
- Direct health questions to a health professional;
- Keep hands away from face, eyes and mouth;
- Clean all frequently-touched areas frequently with alcohol wipes/disinfectants;
- Frequently wash hands for at least 20 seconds with hand soap and warm water;
- Use 60-95% alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available; and
- Practice social distancing when possible.

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