

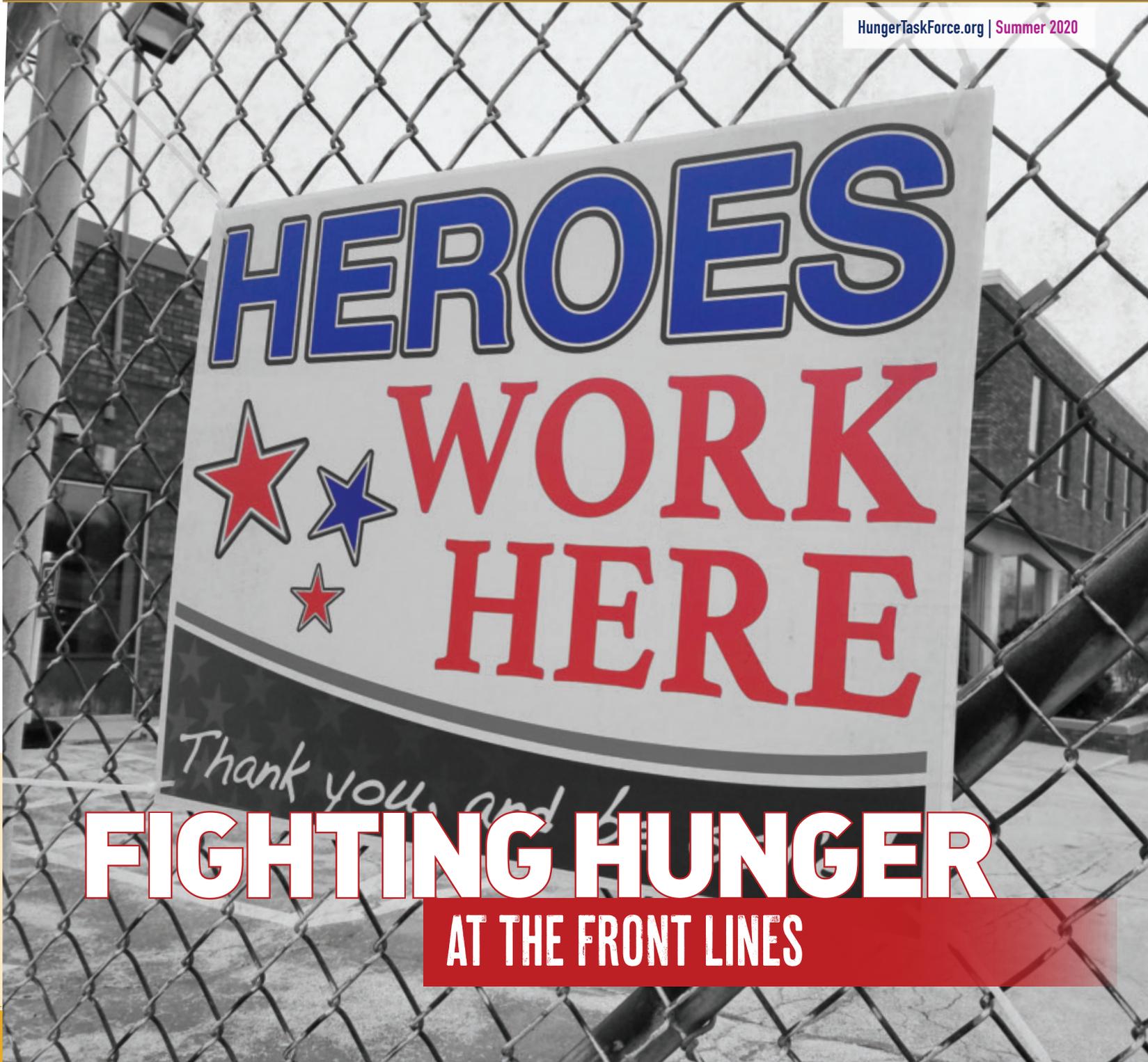
COVID-19: HUNGER RELIEF RESPONSE

HUNGER TASK FORCE

FREE & LOCAL

# HUNGER CONNECTION

HungerTaskForce.org | Summer 2020

A photograph of a white sign with blue and red text and stars, attached to a chain-link fence. The sign reads "HEROES WORK HERE" in large, bold letters. Below the main text, there are three stars (two red, one blue) and a handwritten note that says "Thank you, and...".

**HEROES**  
**WORK**  
**HERE**

**FIGHTING HUNGER**  
**AT THE FRONT LINES**

HUNGER TASK FORCE IS MILWAUKEE'S **FREE & LOCAL** FOOD BANK



# FLEXIBILITY AND STRENGTH: HUNGER TASK FORCE STAFF GET THE JOB DONE!

AS NEWS OF THE PANDEMIC SPREAD, EVERYTHING BEGAN CHANGING QUICKLY. SCHOOLS AND BUSINESSES WERE ABOUT TO CLOSE, AND IT FELT LIKE WE WERE ON THE VERGE OF A POTENTIALLY DEVASTATING PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS. HUNGER TASK FORCE WAS FACED WITH A CHALLENGE: HOW DO WE KEEP OUR EMPLOYEES SAFE WHILE CONTINUING TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY FOOD AND SUPPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY AT THE SAME TIME HEALTH OFFICIALS WERE TELLING US THAT, TO BE SAFE, EVERYONE SHOULD STAY AT HOME?

Our first consideration was the safety of our staff. We quickly identified and mobilized the staff that could perform their work from home. Early purchases of PPE, hand sanitizer and disinfecting materials allowed us to put safe-at-work protocols in place. All in-person meetings were cancelled.

Tougher decisions followed. We closed our offices to the public. Food delivery and public distribution protocols were modified to ensure the safety of our drivers. Finally, we suspended the use of one of our most valuable resources—our volunteers.

We were reinventing our workplace in real time. That meant asking our staff to take on new and unfamiliar roles and responsibilities. Our Farm staff became Stockbox builders and warehouse workers to ensure an uninterrupted supply of emergency food to low-income seniors. Office staff transitioned to building Family Boxes—free boxes of food that would support a household of two for a week—in preparation of a devastating shortage within the emergency food network.

Some of our FoodShare Assistants became pantry monitors, educating and monitoring our pantry network to ensure safe distribution of foods to the community; others acted as crisis counselors, assisting the ever-increasing numbers of individuals looking for help, whether it was applying for FoodShare or needing assistance locating emergency food. Still other staff members began assisting shoppers when one of our Mobile Markets visited their location.



WE WERE REINVENTING OUR WORKPLACE IN REAL TIME. THAT MEANT ASKING OUR STAFF TO TAKE ON NEW AND UNFAMILIAR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

Despite rapidly changing conditions, Hunger Task Force staff continues to demonstrate remarkable adaptability and resilience. They have stepped up at a time when all of us are experiencing chaos and uncertainty in our lives—to help take care of each other and those who need us most. When things fall apart, Hunger Task Force staff can be counted on to provide needed help and keep our community safe.



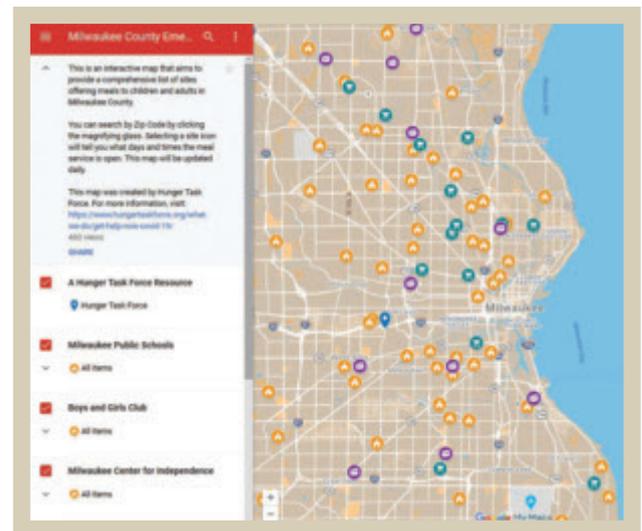
# A SAFE, STRONG EMERGENCY FOOD NETWORK

**THE PANDEMIC PRESENTED A NUMBER OF CHALLENGES TO HUNGER TASK FORCE'S NETWORK OF FOOD PANTRIES, SOUP KITCHENS AND HOMELESS SHELTERS. THE TOP PRIORITY REMAINED: SERVING THE HUNGRY WHILE KEEPING EVERYONE SAFE.**

The first order of change was converting food pantries and soup kitchens to curbside service. Seemingly overnight, staff and volunteers at citywide service points sprang into action, prepacking groceries and devising new plans for drive-thru and walk-up distributions.

At one point, 16 of the network's 51 food pantries had closed temporarily due to the shortage of volunteers—a critical blow felt by all members of our network, and nonprofits everywhere. Others expanded shifts or modified operating days and times to address staffing limitations. At the lowest point, the pantry network was still operating at about 59% capacity, ensuring that there were always resources available for those who couldn't rely on Emergency FoodShare or other nutrition programs for support to feed their families.

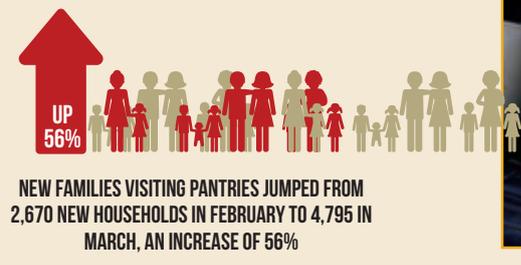
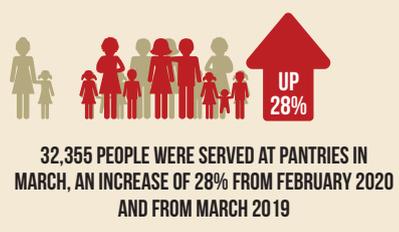
Field visits were conducted daily for each operating shift to provide support, assistance and assurance to each of the pantry partners. Additionally, Hunger Task Force created an online resource—an interactive map identifying more than 113 sites where emergency food was available. The map was visited more than 84,000 times.



**HUNGER TASK FORCE CREATED AN ONLINE RESOURCE—AN INTERACTIVE MAP IDENTIFYING MORE THAN 113 SITES WHERE EMERGENCY FOOD WAS AVAILABLE. THE MAP WAS VISITED MORE THAN 84,000 TIMES.**

## UNPRECEDENTED COMMUNITY SUPPORT ALLOWED FOR FOOD TO BE SERVED IN RECORD NUMBERS:

### INDIVIDUALS SERVED:



# ADVOCACY TO ACTION: HELPING FEED HUNGRY FAMILIES

THE UNPRECEDENTED DISRUPTION TO THE ECONOMY, INCOMES AND EMPLOYMENT TRIGGERED BY COVID-19 INCREASED HUNGER IN OUR COMMUNITY. WHILE MANY FAMILIES STAYED HOME TO STOP THE SPREAD OF THE CORONAVIRUS, OTHERS STRUGGLED TO PUT FOOD ON THE TABLE.

With tens of thousands of Wisconsinites newly unemployed or reporting a loss of wages, tens of thousands of children unexpectedly at home and no longer eating meals at schools, and many community resources closed, charity alone could not meet the need.

Hunger Task Force stepped up and quickly advocated for policymakers to act and strengthen the federal nutrition program response to the pandemic. When WIC-approved items disappeared from store shelves, changes offered families flexibility of choice. After schools closed, schools could serve grab-n-go meals to students and Hunger Task Force immediately convened community partners to start the summer meal program.

In the midst of these changes, two vital policy initiatives were approved to help Wisconsin families.

- Emergency FoodShare provided all FoodShare households the maximum allotment, providing nearly \$135 million in food-buying power to struggling Wisconsin families, moving them out of the food pantry and into the grocery store.
- Pandemic-EBT was created in response to families losing access to free or reduced-price school meals as schools closed across the country. P-EBT provides households an EBT card with the value of free school breakfast and lunch reimbursement for the days that schools were closed.



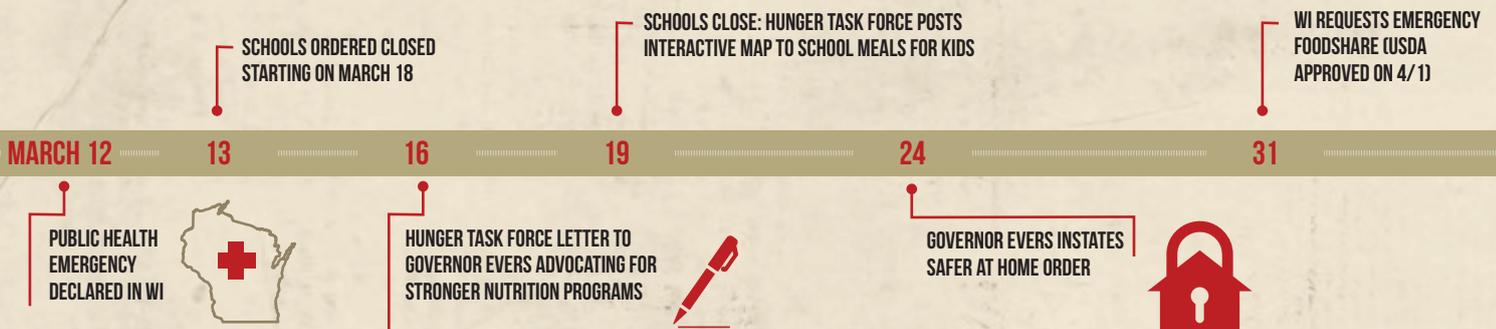
FOODSHARE HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVED THE MAXIMUM ALLOTMENT OF \$197 IN MARCH, APRIL & MAY

PANDEMIC-EBT PROVIDED \$34.5 MILLION DOLLARS TO 103,000 HOUSEHOLDS

Food insecurity is a critical aspect of the current public health crisis. Extraordinary circumstances require extraordinary responses. Hunger Task Force will continue to advocate for struggling families to ensure everyone in our community is able to feed their families.



## COVID-19 RESPONSE TIMELINE



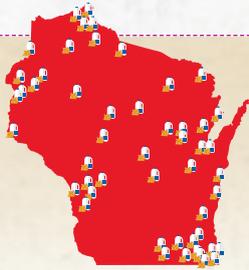
# HUNGER RELIEF FEDERATION: DAIRY RECOVERY PROGRAM



SHORTLY AFTER THE PANDEMIC BEGAN, NEWS REPORTS SURFACED OF DAIRY FARMERS SPILLING MILK—MILK THAT WAS NO LONGER NEEDED IN SCHOOLS OR RESTAURANTS. HUNGER TASK FORCE DEvised A SWIFT REMEDY, A PARTNERSHIP WITH DATCP AND DAIRY FARMERS OF WISCONSIN CALLED THE WISCONSIN DAIRY RECOVERY PROGRAM.

This program provided a critical lifeline for local dairy farmers while also supporting hungry families statewide by providing fresh Wisconsin milk and cheese to families in need.

Hunger Task Force initially committed \$1M to purchasing Wisconsin dairy products, thanks to generous community support. Dairy farmers statewide received a fair price for their milk, and the Dairy Recovery Program played a crucial role in helping some local dairy cooperatives avoid bankruptcy.



AT THE END OF MAY, THE \$2M SUPPORTING THE WISCONSIN DAIRY RECOVERY PROGRAM SUPPORTED THE PURCHASE AND DISTRIBUTION OF MORE THAN **40,800 GALLONS OF MILK AND 127,250 POUNDS OF CHEESE TO FAMILIES STATEWIDE.**

In addition to providing milk and cheese to the emergency food network in Milwaukee, Hunger Task Force coordinated delivery and distribution of dairy products throughout Wisconsin utilizing the Hunger Relief Federation of Wisconsin.

Due to the overwhelming success of the program and the continued support of local donors, Hunger Task Force has committed an additional \$1M for supplementary whole milk, Gouda, Baby Swiss and cheese curds, shreds and slices to the Dairy Recovery Program.



**HUNGER RELIEF  
FEDERATION  
OF WISCONSIN**  
FREE | LOCAL | INDEPENDENT

Hunger Task Force is the founding member of the Hunger Relief Federation of Wisconsin, a state-wide organization of free and local anti-hunger leaders working to prevent hunger through public policy and advocacy. The Federation grew nearly 42% during the pandemic, and today includes 85 member organizations serving all 72 Wisconsin counties and eight Tribal Nations. This membership increase will continue to strengthen the voice and impact of anti-hunger leaders statewide.

HUNGER TASK FORCE ANNOUNCES WISCONSIN DAIRY RECOVERY PROGRAM

APRIL EMERGENCY FOODSHARE ALLOTMENTS - \$43M

MAY EMERGENCY FOODSHARE ALLOTMENTS - \$43M

APRIL 11

15

23

24

27

MAY 24

MARCH EMERGENCY FOODSHARE ALLOTMENTS - \$43M

WISCONSIN 7TH STATE TO BE APPROVED FOR PANDEMIC EBT

196,000 CHILDREN IN 103,000 HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVE MARCH/APRIL P-EBT TOTALING \$34.5M



# SERVING PEOPLE MOST AT-RISK

**OUR SERVICE TO SENIORS HAS BOTH RAMPED UP AND IMPROVED TO ENSURE THAT THEY COULD SAFELY RECEIVE THE FOOD HELP THEY NEED.**

When Wisconsin's Safer at Home order was announced on March 25, all Milwaukee County senior centers and meal programs closed—16 local sites that, together, distributed more than 1,100 Stockboxes each month. To ensure that everyone would continue receiving their Stockboxes, Hunger Task Force implemented drive-thru distributions at each of the senior centers. We abandoned signature requirements, handed out masks for those without and provided Stockboxes along with bonus items, including fresh eggs, milk, apples, oranges, cheese and lettuce. We call it “Plunk in your Trunk” because the seniors never left their car and our team placed all the food in the popped trunk.



**TO ENSURE THAT EVERYONE WOULD CONTINUE RECEIVING THEIR STOCKBOXES, HUNGER TASK FORCE IMPLEMENTED DRIVE-THRU DISTRIBUTIONS AT EACH OF THE SENIOR CENTERS.**

Additionally, the Mobile Markets in Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha Counties—stocked by Piggly Wiggly—continue to operate during the pandemic. Seniors and other shoppers now receive “concierge” shopping. We give them a menu of items and prices and our team shops and delivers the food right to the car. Pairing the Stockbox with the Mobile Market and assuring total service to the person resulted in many, many “God bless you!”s, and we’re happy to deliver.



**MOBILE MARKETS IN MILWAUKEE, RACINE AND KENOSHA COUNTIES—STOCKED BY PIGGLY WIGGLY—CONTINUED TO OPERATE DURING THE PANDEMIC WITH MODIFICATIONS.**



## FARMING DURING A PANDEMIC



During the initial rise of the pandemic, our supply of Stockboxes for seniors ran critically low. The Farm Team answered the call and transitioned indoors. Over the course of three weeks, the Farm Team kept box building operations running seven days a week, building 15,000 Stockboxes for seniors and ensuring Hunger Task Force’s service to the community.

Meanwhile, our farmers also kept The Farm running and on schedule. The Hoop Houses are already on their third crop of the year, while our greenhouse has produced more than 250,000 seedlings. The Farm’s fields have already been planted—lettuce, broccoli, cabbage, collards and squash are mere weeks away from harvest. Altogether, 75 total acres of 20 different kinds of vegetables will be planted for 2020, ensuring local families and seniors will have access to high quality, nutritious produce.

On a sad note, we really miss our volunteers! To keep operations at The Farm humming during the pandemic, we hired additional seasonal staff. While our volunteer program is temporarily suspended, we look forward to welcoming our volunteer force back—hopefully in time for harvest!




**HUNGER TASK FORCE**  
**FREE & LOCAL**

201 S. Hawley Court | Milwaukee, WI 53214  
Phone 414.777.0483 | Fax 414.777.0480

Hunger Task Force believes that every person has a right to adequate food obtained with dignity. We work to prevent hunger and malnutrition by providing food to people in need today and by promoting social policies to achieve a hunger free community tomorrow.

Hunger Task Force, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer and provider. We do not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, religion, age, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, or disability, or any other category protected by law.

Thanks to Burton & Mayer who donated printing to offset the cost of creating this newsletter.

# COMMUNITY KEEPS HUNGER TASK FORCE STRONG

**THE MILWAUKEE COMMUNITY'S CONTINUED SUPPORT OF HUNGER TASK FORCE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS BEEN NOTHING SHORT OF AMAZING. WE ARE TRULY GRATEFUL TO ALL WHO HAVE HELPED!**

Over the past few months, thousands of individuals have made gifts online or donated their stimulus checks through the mail to feed the hungry. Foundations and organizations made leadership gifts to purchase truckloads of food and support our operations during these times of unprecedented need.

Here are some examples of the unique ways our supporters have found to contribute:



Central Standard Distillery made disinfectant out of vodka so our staff could stay safe and keep our facilities and vehicles clean.



The Windhover Foundation provided our food bank with not only financial support, but also special, reusable masks for our staff in the field.



WISN 12 rallied the community for an Online Food Drive during the entire month of April, which raised an incredible \$666,890 from nearly 7,000 viewers.



City Lights Brewing crafted "Essential Pilsner" and proceeds from these special cans and growlers support our work.

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Make a donation online:  
HungerTaskForce.org



*Thank you!*



Hunger Task Force would like to thank the generous and wonderful people of the Milwaukee community and beyond for their support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Your gifts are feeding the hungry and keeping families safe.

To all those who volunteer during the summer or have made food or monetary donations at local festivals now postponed, know that your help will be needed in the future for food drives and events.

Whether you are a long-time supporter or new friend, be sure to check out HungerTaskForce.org and our social media for all the latest news, updates and ways you can get involved.

>> Check out our social media channels or go to [HungerTaskForce.org](http://HungerTaskForce.org) to keep up to date on ways you can get involved!

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