

# COVID-19 Response

fighting hunger in a pandemic



“ *COVID has wreaked havoc on our family. We have five high-risk people in [our] house and don't qualify for food stamps. This has been a weekly lifesaver.* ” – Summer program guest

## Food Gatherers' COVID-19 response

The COVID-19 pandemic created a “perfect storm” of increased demand for food, declines in donated food, and significant disruptions to volunteer programs, distribution methods, and other core aspects of our operating model.

Our neighbors who were already experiencing food insecurity before the pandemic faced increased hardship, while others found themselves in need for the first time. In Washtenaw County, our partner programs experienced a 30-300% increase in visitors.

Food Gatherers immediately took steps to ensure that our network of 170+ partner programs and agencies had the resources they needed to safely provide food assistance to the communities they serve:

### INCREASED NETWORK SUPPORT

Distributed **record levels of food** through our hunger-relief network, and provided **capacity-building grants** to partners.

### NEW SERVICE MODEL

Transitioned to **low-contact** distributions, and built **pre-packed boxes** to provide more shelf-stable foods.



### EXPANDED OUTREACH

Launched campaigns to **raise awareness** about available resources, including a new website with searchable **Find Food tool**.

Food Gatherers anticipates that this elevated response will need to continue **for another 18-24 months**.



## In 2020:



**60** million people OR **1** in **5** every **5** received charitable food assistance in the U.S., an increase of 50% over the prior year.

**40%**

of food pantry guests in Washtenaw County and the U.S. had never visited a pantry before.

Food Gatherers distributed **9,000,000** lbs of food or the equivalent of 7.5 million meals in FY21, an increase of 14.5% over the prior year.

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**Food Gatherers**

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