

CALIFORNIA
ASSOCIATION OF
FOOD BANKS



Through It Together
Our Pandemic Year

Impact Report | March 2020–March 2021

FROM OUR CEO

Dear Friends,

When I joined the California Association of Food Banks a little over a year ago, our state was in the midst of a health and hunger crisis. I met — virtually — an organization in full sprint securing and coordinating food, funds, staffing, and other essential resources for our 41 food banks. I've acquired new appreciation for the phrase "hit the ground running."

The teams at CAFB had started their marathon sprint well before I arrived, working with state agencies to unlock an initial \$20 million in funds, and rapidly taking the lead on emergency food logistics and distribution for California. By March 21, we were shipping the first truckloads of food boxes out to food banks facing a 200-400% increase in people needing groceries.

Not only was I floored by the collective ingenuity, dedication, and resilience of our food banks, tested like never before; I was awestruck by the sheer magnitude of CAFB's expertise and response. I was inspired by the trust placed in CAFB by our state agencies, the Office of the Governor, and the many individuals, foundations, businesses, allies, and thought partners who together made our immediate response possible.

A little over 12 months and nearly 3 million food boxes later, we're relieved to be glimpsing light at the end of the pandemic tunnel; as I write, vaccinations are continuing apace, and the hardest-hit sectors are gradually re-opening. Unemployment has fallen to its lowest rate since before the pandemic, and food insecurity has slowly begun to recede from its high water mark.

And yet, as you'll read below, we still have a steep hill to climb. Food insecurity remains dangerously high in our state. Food banks are not slowing down anytime soon, and at CAFB, we're not either. Even as we press forward with our crisis response, we're translating the experiences of the past year into a set of strategic priorities and initiatives for a stronger and more sustainable food safety net — and a fully resilient and inclusive organization.

Our way out of the hunger crisis — which was with us before the pandemic, and that still affects some **8 million Californians** today — will require sustained resources, new partnerships, and bold policies focused on economic and social justice. We are called upon to imagine and enact new ways to combat the root causes of hunger and the systemic racism which gives rise to it.

CAFB couldn't have done it alone last year, and I look forward to all we can accomplish together as we turn the corner on this pandemic year.



Stacia Hill Levenfeld, CEO
California Association of Food Banks

“

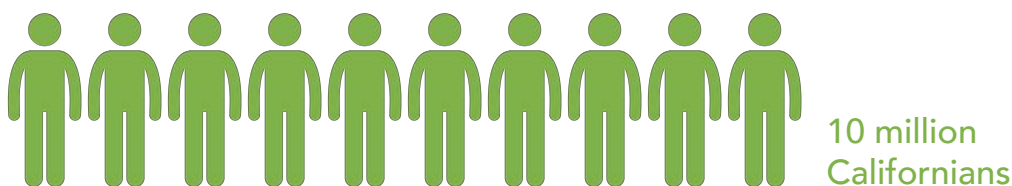
CAFB is the glue that holds California food banks together.”

*—Suzan Bateson, CEO, Alameda County Community Food Bank;
CAFB Board Member*



**OUR 41
MEMBER
FOOD BANKS**

AVERAGE FOOD INSECURITY IN CALIFORNIA THROUGH 2020



IMPACT ON FOOD BANKS

In 2020, our network distributed

1.1 BILLION pounds of food —

that's about **917 MILLION** meals.

In April 2020 alone, 32 of our 41 member food banks served well over half — **62%** — of the number of people they served for the *entirety* of 2019. That's about **4.5 million** people.

With social distancing and the massive increase in need, **costs surged** and **models shifted**: drive-through and home delivery distributions, typically rare, became core to food banks' models.

70% of our members expect that their programming and operations will remain changed in some way beyond the pandemic.

“ We swapped [to drive-through food distribution] within about four days, so it was a really quick, ‘OK team, what are we gonna do?’ It was really driven by the volunteers out there — they were like ‘We don’t want to stop providing this service, we know it’s necessary. So what can we do to continue to make this happen?’”

—Jessica Vaughan, Executive Assistant/Director of Development,
Second Harvest of the Greater Valley

“ The food provided is a huge help for feeding my family.”

—Drive-through at Food in Need of Distribution (FIND), serving Coachella Valley & its farmworkers



OUR RESPONSE

Just as food banks have shown how adept they are at improvising, innovating, and meeting this extraordinary health and hunger crisis head-on, every single one of CAFB's staff played an essential role in making the impact you'll read about in these pages.

Our teams began working around the clock even before Governor Newsom issued an Executive Order imposing "Stay at Home" restrictions on all 58 counties in our state.

CAFB's leadership activated its incident command structure, forming into teams and allowing staff to share in the massive work volume and immediate response needed.

We opened channels of communication to keep rapidly-changing information flowing to food banks and outreach partners, and to convey food banks' challenges and needs to state agencies and philanthropic partners.

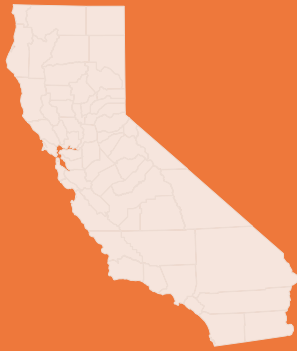
We advocated for immediate provisions in the food safety net that helped older adults, people with disabilities, undocumented families, and children access food through social distancing and school closures.

The following timeline offers a look at CAFB's early response as the crisis unfolded.



TIMELINE: MARCH–DECEMBER 2020

Our COVID-19 Response



MARCH 4

- Governor Newsom declares a State of Emergency in California
- First rounds of volunteer cancellations at food banks
- First school closures start with Elk Grove Unified

MARCH 11

- Legislation introducing Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT) — food benefits for families with children receiving subsidized school meals

MARCH 16

- Seven Bay Area counties enforce mandatory “Shelter in Place” order
- First COVID-19 relief package, “Families First,” signed into law

MARCH 17

- Governor issues mandatory “Stay at Home” order covering all 58 counties

MARCH 21

- California receives Major Disaster Declaration from federal government

- We launch round-the-clock triage for food banks and state & federal advocacy for children, older adults, immigrants, & other groups at highest risk of hunger
- We play a leading role in landing Pandemic EBT in Speaker Pelosi’s House version of “Families First” COVID-19 relief package
- We hold first of many crisis response calls with our 41 member food banks
- We begin fielding hundreds of calls from the public each month
- We work with CA Health & Human Services Agency (CHHSA) & Governor’s Office to ensure food banks/ food distribution centers are classified as “essential services” exempt from the closure orders & in all relevant CA Dept of Public Health (CDPH) guidance
- We unlock \$20M in first round of Emergency Food funding; submit letter to Governor requesting \$116M in additional emergency food funding & PPE, & immediate National Guard deployment for food banks
- In partnership with CA Dept of Social Services (CDSS), we ship first truckloads of Emergency Food Boxes & PPE
- Facilitated by our advocacy & coordination, National Guard troops begin rollout at six CAFB member food banks
- We work with CDSS to quickly implement legislation so P-EBT cards can be mailed to families with children when schools are closed
- Tapped by CA Departments of Aging & Social Services, we coordinate efforts across the state among food banks, public agencies, & private partners for home delivery to older adults
- We ship an additional 90 truckloads of produce the week of March 23 alone
- We launch & begin fundraising for Rapid Response Fund to support our food banks

APRIL

- Food supply chain crisis makes global news as unemployment & food insecurity surge
- Governor Newsom announces major public-private initiative to keep subsidized produce flowing to food banks through the year's end, in partnership with CA Dept of Food & Agriculture (CDFA) & philanthropist Kat Taylor
- Unemployment applications reach historic one-week high in CA
- Applications for CalFresh (CA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program/SNAP, formerly "food stamps") more than double compared to 2019

MAY

- Hunger crisis in farmworker communities in CA's growing regions makes global news
- CA's unemployment rate peaks at 16.3%

“

We have to be prepared for [disaster]. The pandemic has shown us that food banks must step up and broaden the scope of our services. We must collaborate with government agencies to be ready for this type of situation in the future.”

—Erik Talkin, CEO,
Foodbank of Santa Barbara County

JUNE

- P-EBT cards mailed to low-income families to help feed children during school closures

JULY

- \$600 weekly increase in Unemployment Insurance expires
- Senate Republicans' CARES-2 package unveiled; no increase in SNAP benefits or other nutrition programs; cuts benefits for laid-off workers
- New York Times reports that SNAP sees its highest ever three-month increase, with 6M people enrolling from February–April

AUGUST

- A Major Disaster Declaration is granted for CA's Lake, Napa, Monterey, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma, & Yolo Counties

- We recover & ship >20M lbs produce, facilitate donations of dairy & other foods to food banks
- We secure first grant — \$600K — for Farm to Family produce subsidies
- We work with CDSS to achieve waivers for signature requirements in federal emergency food programs, reducing risk in accessing benefits
- We secure \$300K grant for refrigerated trailers, helping 11 food banks obtain & safely store fresh food at surge capacity
- We build relationship with United Farm Worker Foundation & secure a \$2M grant to swiftly address food access issues
- We promote P-EBT among the public, our members, & CalFresh outreach partners
- We secure \$2M in grants, making 15 million lbs of CA-grown produce free to member food banks
- We conduct food bank volunteer needs assessments, coordinate with Office of the Governor & CA Volunteers for National Guard & volunteer deployment
- We secure an additional \$5M in State funding for COVID-19 food boxes
- We distribute first round of Rapid Response funds to member food banks
- We work with CA Volunteers to coordinate & promote deployment of National Guard, CA Conservation Corps, Red Cross, & other volunteer staff to food banks; send lists of 17k potential volunteers from CA for All to food banks
- USDA Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Farmers to Families boxes begin reaching CAFB members; we advocate to make program equitable statewide
- We secure funds to support smaller food banks in rural & remote regions
- We promote P-EBT with materials in English, Spanish, & Chinese
- We continue advocacy for food assistance for children though program flexibilities, extensions through summer, & improved access
- We continue supporting 50+ CalFresh outreach partners throughout CA during surge in CalFresh applications, with remote training & opportunities to connect
- We launch Food Access for Farmworkers Initiative, helping 11 food banks in growing regions feed farmworkers & their families though program flexibilities, extensions through summer, & improved access
- We lead full advocacy push & win reversal of USDA's denial of interview waiver
- We secure additional \$50M in State budget for COVID-19 food boxes
- We begin shipping food boxes to nine tribal locations
- We convene 100 CalFresh outreach workers for our first virtual CAFB Peer-to-Peer meeting

SEPTEMBER

- Approximately \$2B in P-EBT benefits sent to families of 3.7M school-aged children between March & September
- Governor Newsom signs landmark legislation long-promoted by CAFB (AB 1876) expanding access to the Earned Income Tax Credit (CalEITC) to all CA filers — a big win for undocumented ITIN filers

OCTOBER

- Wildfires tear through all but one of CA's 58 counties in what will be the most devastating wildfire season in state's modern history
- CA approves Disaster CalFresh (food benefits) for several counties affected by wildfires

NOVEMBER

- CDFA Secretary Karen Ross announces launch of virtual State Employee Food Drive to bring food, funds, & volunteer support to food banks
- CA extends Disaster CalFresh to 10 counties in response to wildfire spread

DECEMBER

- Governor Newsom & the CA Dept of Public Health announce a renewed Stay-at-Home order limiting gatherings & shuttering businesses
- State announces National Guard deployment to food banks should remain at current levels through March 2021

- We ship emergency food boxes to seven locations impacted by fires
- Our Emerson Hunger Fellow launches first-in-nation statewide research study to document participants' experiences with P-EBT; survey receives more than 1,400 responses

- We translate 100+ public-facing Disaster CalFresh outreach materials on tight timelines for CDSS
- Partnering with CDFA to launch pandemic Senior Farmers Market Program, we safely bringing >20K boxes of fresh fruits & vegetables to older adults
- We achieve key expansion of P-EBT to children younger than six who are in CalFresh households
- We secure additional \$75M in state support through CARES Coronavirus Relief Funds for emergency food, \$15M for diapers

- We support online CalFresh EBT purchasing at grocery stores with training materials & information
- We lead remote Disaster CalFresh outreach strategy & implementation in 10 counties
- We advocate for National Guard to stay at food banks through March 31, 2021

- We launch mixed food produce box pilot to make fresh produce more accessible to more food banks
- We secure major federal policy victories in third stimulus package: 15% boost to CalFresh benefits, expanding CalFresh access for college students, and additional emergency food resources through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
- We close 2020 with a record \$12.5M in cash grants, produce subsidies, & other donated resources from public and private philanthropic partners passed through to our member food banks

“*CAFB's hard work and dedication to alleviating hunger is an inspiration to all of us.*”

—Karen Ross, Secretary, CA Department of Food and Agriculture

FROM MARCH 2020

TO MARCH 2021

We supplied
California food
banks with healthy
FOOD

250 MILLION

total pounds of fresh &
shelf-stable foods — that's
208 MILLION meals

We raised
FUNDS for our
member food
banks

supporting their overall **74%**
increase in food distributions

We helped
connect people
to critical public
BENEFITS

supporting **50 partners**
who helped:

186 MILLION

pounds of that was
fresh produce

3 MILLION

food boxes to food banks
& targeted support for tribal
communities, farmworkers, &
those impacted by wildfires

\$15 MILLION

in cash grants, subsidies,
& support for operations &
infrastructure

\$195 MILLION

in emergency food funding

25,000

households apply for CalFresh

6,000

households keep their benefits

BEHIND THE NUMBERS

Our Farm to Family Program

Did you know that **more than half** of all the food supplied by California food banks is fresh fruits and vegetables, and most of it California-grown? The majority of it flows from CAFB's Farm to Family program. Formally established at CAFB in 2005, Farm to Family has grown into one of the nation's largest collaborative agricultural networks and charitable food recovery programs, over the years working with **more than 240 growers, ranchers, packing houses, and shippers** to recover and distribute donated crops (and other commodities like dairy and other proteins) to food banks throughout California. Each year, the program supplies California food banks with about **160 million pounds** of fresh produce and **8 million pounds** of healthy proteins.

HOW IT WORKS:

Farmers receive a 15% tax credit for their donations, as well as a modest reimbursement for harvesting and packing costs. This model makes quality fruits and vegetables available to food banks for pennies on the pound. It's a way to **support farmers, food banks, and families** — a triple win, especially through the supply chain breakdown in the early months of the pandemic.



Farm to Family played an essential role in California's emergency response, not only recovering and shipping record levels of produce to food banks, but leading on logistics and distribution for California's Emergency Food program — a critical support to food banks as they awaited federal assistance.



In early April, CAFB secured its first grant to fully subsidize produce. By the year's end, thanks to partnerships with a small group of private philanthropists, the Office of the Governor, and California's Department of Food and Agriculture, CAFB had received **\$4.6 million in produce subsidies**, which translates to about **33 million pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables** at no cost to food banks.

On March 21, with little over a week's lead time, CAFB shipped the first loads of shelf-stable food boxes. From that point, through the end of March, 2021, CAFB supplied food banks across the state with nearly **3 million Emergency Food Boxes** containing shelf-stable pantry staples like beans, pasta, rice, and canned fruits and vegetables.



"Van Groningen & Sons partners with CAFB's Farm to Family program quite simply because it is good and right. We aim to invest in 'good' and 'right' things in all that we do. This partnership is right because it supports our food-insecure community members by supplying produce that is responsibly and ethically grown. It is good because it eliminates food waste in our industry. The added bonus is that we get to partner with a community of people that we enjoy and admire."

—Jeanna Hoff, Van Groningen & Sons, Farm to Family Donor

And we're still going: Farm to Family has begun supporting a new initiative to feed farmworkers and their families, and has launched a mixed-produce box program — a model shift to support the changes food banks are making. Farm to Family produce arrives in huge pallets, which need to be broken down and re-packed by food bank staff and volunteers. With many food banks continuing **direct distributions and deliveries**, offering Farm to Family produce in a box like a farm share (CSA) helps our members distribute more fresh produce more quickly and with less labor — meaning **more fresh fruits and vegetables reach more people**.

“

CDSS and CAFB have great been partners for several years, and as the pandemic unfolded in early 2020, that partnership proved to be invaluable for California’s food banks and those experiencing sudden and immediate food needs. CDSS was able to leverage CAFB’s existing network of suppliers and distribution partners to quickly procure and deliver millions of boxes of food. Within a week of CDSS contacting CAFB late on a Friday night, the contract was in place, the food was ordered, and boxes of food were flowing into every community in California. CAFB’s level of responsiveness and connection to community allowed CDSS to respond in a way that it never had before and set a precedent for what’s possible with government partnerships.”

—Brian Kaiser, Bureau Chief, CalFresh and Nutrition Programs,
California Department of Social Services



FILLING ALL PLATES

Food Access for Farmworkers

Through historic heat waves, through air thick with smoke from record-breaking wildfire seasons, and now, through a pandemic, California's farmworkers do the essential, back-breaking work of hand-picking and sorting delicate fruits and vegetables so that they arrive on our plates at peak ripeness and in good condition.

Last March, when California locked down, the situation for farmworkers became dire. With schools and many food pantries closed, and with food bank distributions occurring during work shifts, farmworkers were struggling to feed themselves and their families while working to supply nearly half of the nation's produce.

In spring 2020, CAFB began developing a partnership with the United Farm Workers Foundation (UFW Foundation) to learn more about the needs of farmworkers and their families, and to explore how CAFB might position our leadership to swiftly get food flowing to these farmworkers and their families.

On behalf of our food banks in growing regions, we began a listening and learning campaign with the UFW Foundation — to better understand the barriers to food access, and how food banks might address them. These efforts led to CAFB being awarded a \$2 million grant to support 11 food banks in agricultural communities. The Food Access for Farmworkers Initiative launched in July 2020, with food banks conducting outreach and food distributions at farmworker housing sites and other community-based agencies that support farmworkers. Food banks sent mobile pantries in or near the fields, and set up distributions at local health clinics and other sites providing medical care.

“ I am thankful that the food bank came to bring food [to the farm]. It is a relief to be remembered.”

—Farmworker, Watsonville, CA



Early on, our food banks conveyed that the state and federal emergency food boxes they were receiving did not include staple pantry items that many of those in their farmworker communities were used to eating and cooking with. We brought this concern to our funder, along with the ongoing and pandemic-exacerbated issues of healthcare access. This resulted in additional funding to help CAFB and our food banks address both issues.

We're happy to report that the first of just under 30,000 food boxes for farmworkers started shipping in March as a pilot project with our Family to Family program. Each box contains dry pinto beans, masa corn flour, brown rice, and red or white menudo with hominy, enough to feed a small family for four days. So far, we've heard only positive feedback about the quality and variety of the boxes, and they are helping CAFB and our food banks meet our shared goal of offering healthy food to clients with respect and dignity. We're currently seeking funds to keep these boxes flowing to the 11 participating food banks so they can continue supporting farmworkers and their families.

The new grant is also helping the 11 food banks develop partnerships with health clinics, local county public health departments, and community-based health *promotoras* to spread information to farmworker communities about personal protective equipment (PPE), COVID-19 testing, and vaccines. Food banks have partnered with health clinics by setting them up as food box distribution sites, and are also providing nutrition education and outreach at distributions to help eligible people enroll in CalFresh.

We look forward to learning more as we go, gathering those lessons, and, together with our advocacy team, deepening our work in supporting and sustaining food access and food justice for all farmworkers.



As of March 1, 2021 the initiative has served 191,000 households and provided 9.6 million pounds of food at 194 distribution sites to our essential farmworkers.

“

[This program] has helped us to have a consistent presence that has fostered trust in the farmworker community, by providing tailored services, critical information, and resources for COVID-19 and vaccination efforts.”

—Lorena Marroquin, Director of Community Impact, FIND Food Bank

“

We would have been in a world of hurt without the National Guard. We had up to 140 National Guard members at one point. They were absolutely critical in our food connection line; and invaluable in helping us clear up a log jam of calls, particularly the Vietnamese language specialists.”

—Tracy Weatherby, Second Harvest of Silicon Valley



FARMERS' MARKET IN A BOX

Each year from May through September, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) offers the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, which provides vouchers redeemable for fresh produce to low-income older adults at distribution points throughout the state. Last spring saw the temporary closure of many of the agencies that distributed these voucher booklets, as well as strict Stay-at-Home recommendations for older adults. The program could not operate as it had; meanwhile, supporting the health of our older neighbors had become more critical than ever.

For the "pandemic version" of this vital program, our friends at CDFA reached out to CAFB's Farm to Family team and a cross-section of experts in the field, including our member food banks. Together, the group brainstormed how to create a plan that would center farmers in the solution and uphold a shared commitment to supporting the nutritional needs of older adults. The group devised a way to bring the farmers' market to older adults — in a box.

California Association of Food Banks put out a call for bids from farmers who would pick, pack, and ship mixed produce boxes to seven food banks and partner agencies from San Diego to Humboldt County. Each box contained a variety of foods, adding up to about a week's worth of fresh fruits and vegetables to complement the proteins, grains, and other pantry staples older adults received from the food banks. From August to September, participating food banks received a total of 20,242 boxes to distribute.

We are proud to have played a role in this model of creative problem-solving and partnership. We salute the ingenuity of CDFA staff, the operational wizardry of our member food banks, and the resilience of California farmers, who all worked with us to ensure that this vital program would rise above the barriers of the pandemic.

One year later, we're delighted that CDFA has asked us to support the program through the summer of 2021. We're happy to continue finding innovative ways to help farmers get their bounty of California produce from their fields onto the plates of our older neighbors in need — with nine of our food banks being the essential connectors.

“ We had tears, we had 'God bless you!' ”

—CAP Kern Food Bank



WHERE WE ARE TODAY

The road to economic recovery will likely be long and uneven — economists are predicting that it will take **as long as a decade**.

Despite a recent hiring surge, as of mid-April 2021, California was still down **1.6 million total jobs**, with agriculture-producing regions among areas with lingering double-digit unemployment rates.

Food insecurity today is still **roughly double** the pre-pandemic rate, and most of our 41 member food banks continue to operate at surge capacity, as they have done continuously over the past 13 months.

Food banks are facing the very real prospect of a **nearly 50% drop-off in federal funding** for emergency food, which would leave them without a primary source of food while demand remains extremely elevated.

Even as they recover from the impacts of the pandemic, California food banks need to prepare as frontline responders when communities are impacted by natural disasters. As we write, headlines announce that **85% of California** is in severe, extreme, or exceptional drought conditions, compared to **12%** of the state last year.

THE PATH FORWARD: ADVOCACY

Legislative Priorities

This year, as food insecurity continues to affect roughly 8 million people in our state along deeply inequitable lines, CAFB is pursuing significant investments in the emergency food safety net — a total of **\$292 million** in one-time investments in Emergency Food, Climate & Disaster Resilience, and support for food banks' capacity enhancements to help them keep pace with elevated need through the long-haul economic recovery.

CAFB is working to achieve more inclusive, user-centered systems, and has taken the lead on advocating for — and providing — the critically-needed translations of outreach and informational materials into Spanish and other languages.

CAFB's policy advocacy team is also leading the charge on state and federal legislation with the potential to create real and lasting change in food access and hunger. To highlight a few of our top legislative priorities this year:

FOR CHILDREN:

Free School Meals for All Act (SB 364, Skinner) would make California the first state to enact legislation to end childhood hunger by providing universal free meals to all K-12 public school students and, building on the enormous success of Pandemic EBT, establishing programs to ensure children have access to food during school closures and disasters. This pioneering and innovative bill would also elevate farmers by increasing purchasing of California-grown food.

FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS:

Enhanced Access to SNAP (EATS) Act (H.R. 1919, Gomez) would end the harsh, outdated "student eligibility rule" and transform CalFresh access for college students.

FOR IMMIGRANTS:

Emergency Food Assistance For All (AB 221, Santiago) would provide immediate emergency food benefits for immigrants adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and who are excluded from federal aid because of their immigration status.

California Food Assistance Program Eligibility (SB 464, Hurtado) would improve long-term food access for immigrant communities by expanding eligibility for the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP).

“

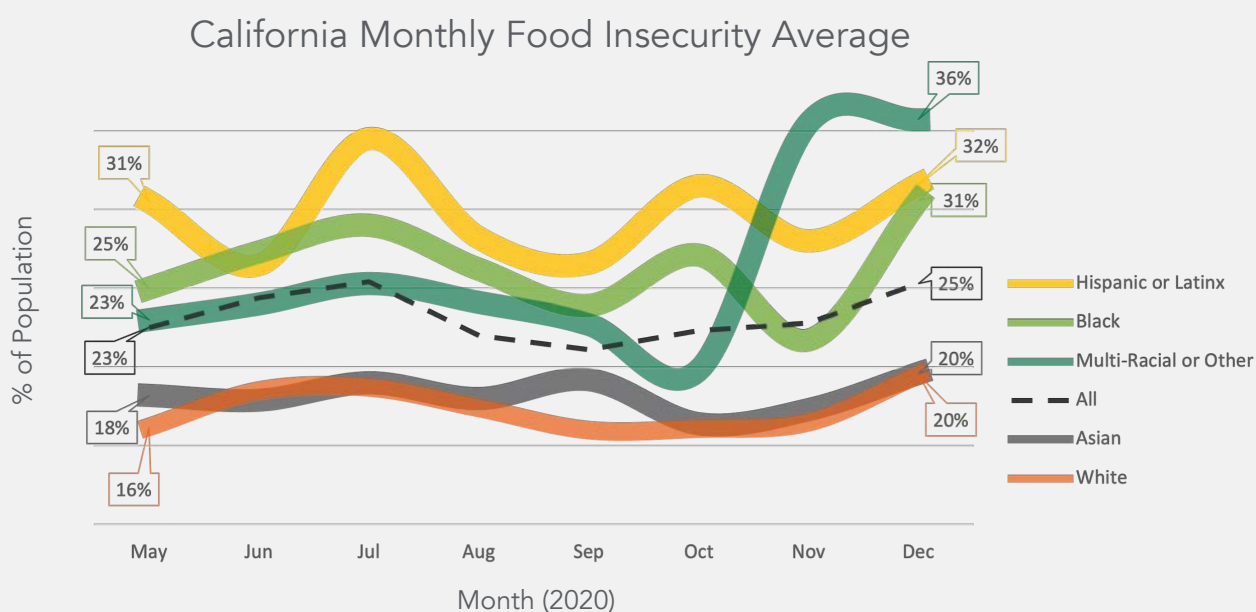
If you don't protect food bank operations, the community is told that equitable access is not available to 1) people that are food insecure, and 2) many people of color, who already struggle in regards to equitable access to resources.”

—Debbie Espinosa, CEO, FIND Food Bank

WHAT TIME IS IT?

Hunger is a racial justice issue

With tragic predictability, both COVID-19 and food insecurity landed more heavily on communities already experiencing the impact of systemic racism. Before the pandemic, children in communities of color were far more likely to start the day or go to bed hungry, and today — one year into this crisis — more than a third of Black families with children and more than 27% of Latinx families with children in California are experiencing food insecurity. As painful as this is to look at, we cannot dismantle what we cannot see.



In early April of this year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a statement recognizing structural racism as the public health threat that it is, and outlined the steps they are taking to address it. Like the “national reckoning” of last summer, it’s an acknowledgment many have awaited for a long, long time. So what will we make of this moment?

Food insecurity is a leading social determinant of health. At CAFB, we commit to fight against institutional racism and the multiple and overlapping systems of oppression that lead to and perpetuate food insecurity and its impacts on health and well-being. We continue to advocate for funds, policies, programs, and systems that build fully inclusive and equitable access to healthy food, and we are striving to work more with community advocates who are the experts at the heart of those efforts.

CAFB remains central to the coordination of food and resources for California’s food banks, and a leading advocate for strengthening the food safety net for all Californians.

THANK YOU

To our friends, our partners, and our growing community of supporters:

I hope this brief overview helps you appreciate the essential role CAFB has played in supporting Californians through the crisis of a lifetime.

We couldn't have done it without the outpouring of support we received last year.

Our private philanthropic funders, public agency partners, local business communities, corporate partners, and every one of the more than 1,300 individuals from all over California, across the country, and even around the world, showed up in force to let us know that "in it together" is much more than a sentimental tagline. You've helped millions of Californians get through this crisis — together. On behalf of our entire CAFB family, thank you.

Wishing us all health, resilience, and brighter days ahead,



Laurie Loftus Galvagna
Director of Development

We extend a special, heartfelt thanks to Governor Gavin Newsom, the Administration, and the California State Legislature. It is not an overstatement that your intervention saved lives and ensured that millions of Californians had access to healthy food through this crisis.

About Us

California Association of Food Banks is a 501c(3) leading the collective effort to end hunger in our state. Founded in 1995, CAFB promotes a collaborative and cohesive response to the challenges affecting low-income, food insecure people throughout California. Today, we're a nationally recognized leader and ally in anti-hunger and anti-poverty advocacy and programs, drawing on and representing expert knowledge from our food banks and the local community advocates they work with.

Helping get food to hungry people today – We operate the nation's largest charitable food recovery program, Farm to Family, which in a typical (pre-pandemic) year ships 160 million pounds of fresh produce and 8 million pounds of proteins like eggs, poultry, and dairy to California's food banks. CAFB also operates one of the state's largest CalFresh Outreach hubs, dedicated to simplifying and improving access to these essential nutrition benefits through a statewide network of 50+ partner agencies.

Working to establish a hunger-free future for all – We advocate for a stronger nutrition safety net, advancing critical state and federal policies that support and enhance equitable access to benefits like CalFresh, and representing food banks with the Governor's Office and other public officials in ensuring that they receive the emergency food funding and other resources they need to keep communities fed every day and through disasters.

STAY IN TOUCH

[See our latest news](#)

[Find your local food bank](#)

Follow us @cafoodbanks     / [Subscribe for updates](#) 

HELP US KEEP OUR RESPONSE GOING

[Support CAFB](#)

QUESTIONS?

Reach out to Laurie Loftus Galvagna, CAFB's Director of Development:
laurie@cafoodbanks.org

All photos and quotations used with permission and appreciation.

Photo credits:

Alameda County Community Food Bank
CAP Kern Food Bank
FIND Food Bank
Foodbank of Santa Barbara County
Jacobs and Cushman San Diego Food Bank
Second Harvest of the Greater Valley
San Francisco-Marin Food Bank
United Farm Workers Foundation

And a huge thank you to our member food banks.

California Association of Food Banks is proud to be a Partner State Association of Feeding America. This partnership allows us to work closely with the Feeding America National Organization and other Partner State Associations across the country to ensure equitable access to nutritious food for all — by facilitating deep collaboration across our collective strategies and furthering best practices, particularly relating to policy, advocacy, and food sourcing. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Partner State Associations like ours played a critical role in unlocking additional resources for the Feeding America Network, from securing additional food and funding resources from state, regional, and the federal government, to unlocking additional volunteer support through the National Guard.