

**TOGETHER, WE CAN SOLVE HUNGER.**

# FOOD for Thought

Helping our Idaho neighbors since 1984.

Volume 37, Issue 1 Spring 2021

## Learning More about the Communities We Serve

The Foodbank is working to improve our understanding of who is facing hunger in our state. This will allow us to continue to effectively serve communities and do so with dignity and through collaboration.

We already know that a disproportionate number of people living in rural areas experience food insecurity. Rural counties make up 63% of all U.S. counties but 87% of counties with the highest rates of food insecurity. According to data from Feeding America, food insecurity also affects 1 in 6 Latino households, 1 in 5 Black households, and 1 in 4 Native American households.

Just twelve of Idaho's 44 counties are not considered rural. To learn more, this spring we had the opportunity to engage community liaisons to deepen relationships and learn more from Idaho's Hispanic/Latinx, refugee, and Native American/Indigenous communities, as well as rural populations. Our early learning from this work has already impacted the services we are providing. We have expanded our food variety to specifically provide traditional cultural foods to Hispanic/Latinx communities. This includes food items such as peppers, hominy, tortillas, and beans. We have also supported equipment purchases



such as cold storage and trucks or vans that will allow partner organizations to better serve rural communities and key underserved populations. In 2020 The Foodbank also started a mobile pantry on the Fort Hall Reservation to reach community members.

When families are food insecure, their health is at risk. The Idaho Foodbank's mission is about more than just providing food. We also collaborate and engage with community and healthcare partners to promote health across the state. Research using data from the annual Map the

Meal Gap report finds that food insecurity is associated with higher health care costs across the United States and that these costs vary widely by geography. This is one of many reasons why we are excited about our work to learn more about the communities we serve. It helps us meet our goals of providing food and improving health for all Idahoans.

Thank you to the Micron Technology Foundation for their grant support to expand hunger relief services to Native American/Indigenous communities in Idaho, and to Feeding America for grant support of the community liaisons and our continued learning.

For additional stories, program information, or to show your support, visit: [idahofoodbank.org](http://idahofoodbank.org)

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## YOUR DONATIONS ARE NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER.

**\$1** Can provide food for five meals

**29,000** Volunteers

**94%** of Donations go to programs and services

**70,000** Donated hours of service



## Rising to the Challenge

One of The Idaho Foodbank's core values is **agility**, and this past year has been a true test of our ability to put that value into action every day. This past year we took aggressive steps to ensure our ability to continue to serve by safeguarding our facilities through restricted access, moving non-operations staff to working remote, and adapting how our programs distribute food. For many programs we completely changed how food was provided; instead of walk-thru distributions, food is now boxed and in many cases drive-thru models are used. Throughout all the unknowns and as we look toward a bright future, The Foodbank remains steadfast in our mission to serve Idaho families struggling with food insecurity.

Our value of **collaboration** has never been more important as we come together as supporters and advocates for neighbors in need. We are grateful for the unwavering support of our state-wide volunteers, our donors, and our 465 community partners and schools. Together we have been collaborative, agile, and innovative in our approach to the new challenges this pandemic has forced on us.

The hours given by our volunteers is the equivalent of more than 33 full-time employees. Moving food for millions of meals would not be possible without volunteers who continued to



**Feeding America reports, "Millions of people who never imagined they'd struggle to put food on the table, are now seeking help from food banks because of COVID. Today, we estimate 42 million people may experience hunger in 2021 due to the economic fallout of the pandemic." — March 1, 2021, Feeding America**

The Idaho Foodbank will continue our work on the front lines and remain steadfast in our commitment to bring hope to Idahoans. We are grateful to you, our supporters, during these challenging, yet hopeful times. Together we have made it through a hard year, and together we will create a bright and hunger-free future.

sign up, mask up, and roll up their sleeves to help us bring hope to Idahoans.

We're grateful to see the negative impact of the virus starting to diminish in our state. We are generally seeing fewer positive COVID-19 cases, vaccines are gaining speed, and some businesses are getting back on their feet.

Of course, this does not paint the full picture. While some people are returning from spring break vacations, others are looking at a mountain of debt that includes unpaid rent, medical bills, and empty pantries because their jobs, and subsequently their paychecks, vanished without warning. Our value of **dignity** will always be at the forefront of our work - treating our clients, partners, volunteers, donors, and coworkers with respect, empathy, and compassion without bias or judgment. We welcome and value the differences in all people and the challenges they may be facing.

Through good times and bad, our aim is to provide hope and resources for the individuals and families we serve. Our value of **integrity** has and will guide our work as we take responsibility for our words, are accountable for our actions, and demonstrate honesty.

The COVID-19 relief package signed in March 2021 by President Biden, which is known as The American Rescue Plan, is a \$1.9 trillion relief plan.

- The relief package appropriates \$3.6 billion for a handful of supply chain support measures. We are closely monitoring the details of how this money will be spent to support hunger relief work and the work of our partners around the state.
- USDA will focus on providing assistance through the nation's food bank system and nutrition programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps).

We will continue to work with our partners through the transition from emergency response to even more efficient and effective approaches to provide fresh and nutritious food.

# Why our Food Donors are so Important

One thing The Idaho Foodbank cannot say enough is a big “Thank You” to our Idaho food growers, producers and manufacturers. Our partnerships with these organizations are a key part of The Idaho Foodbank’s work.

From April 2019 to March 2020, the Idaho Foodbank sourced 22.5 million pounds of food. During the pandemic, from April 2020 to March 2021, we sourced 34.1 million pounds of food. This was a 52 percent increase in the volume of food received compared to pre-pandemic levels. We are grateful that during the

Did you know: Idaho is one of the top 5 states for dairy production!

pandemic we have received impactful donations of product from generous Idaho based growers, producers, and manufacturers including: AgriBeef, The Berry Ranch, Chobani, Clif Bar, Dairy West, Darigold, Genesis Organics, Happy Day Brands, Lamb Weston, Simplot, South Wind Farms, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and White Wave.

Donations from local food producers were not exclusive to the pandemic – they have always been important supporters. Of course, our amazing potato growers are a significant source of food donations. We also get a large variety of produce donations, such as beets, peaches, and plums. Our local food producers also have many summer community events that incorporate and benefit The Foodbank. We appreciate our dairy producers and love partnering with them for Dairy Month events in June. July is “Beef Counts” month, and we appreciate the support and partnership with Idaho’s beef producers. For updates about our generous food partners, visit [idahofoodbank.org/news](http://idahofoodbank.org/news).



**A special thank you to our A Fresh Approach Lead Donors for their ongoing partnership and investment in a healthier and hunger-free Idaho.**

Jacksons Food Stores  
Simplot  
Norco  
Scentsy  
The M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust  
Art and Michelle Beale  
The ALSAM Foundation  
Blue Cross of Idaho  
St. Luke’s

## Capital Campaign Update

Idaho’s newest and largest hunger relief facility is nearing completion. As part of our long-term strategic planning The Foodbank has steadily been increasing our capacity to receive, store, and distribute food across the state through our three facilities in Lewiston, Pocatello, and now Meridian through the *A Fresh Approach* campaign.

Thanks to our lead partners and all our supporters to date, we have raised 93% of our fundraising goal. Recently, we received another matching gift challenge from The M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust. The Trust is giving \$1 for every \$2 we raise, up to \$700,000.

While our administrative and program team members continue to predominately work remotely, we are operating out of the newly renovated Meridian warehouse and have volunteer services with small groups accomplishing tasks that allow them to remain socially distanced. The new facility has allowed us to increase our distribution, which has been critical as we provide for our neighbors who are affected by the pandemic, now and through recovery.

We hope to celebrate the Grand Opening of the new facility later this summer. For more information visit the website or contact Morgan Wilson, Chief Development Officer at [morganw@idahofoodbank.org](mailto:morganw@idahofoodbank.org).

To learn more go to: [idahofoodbank.org](http://idahofoodbank.org)



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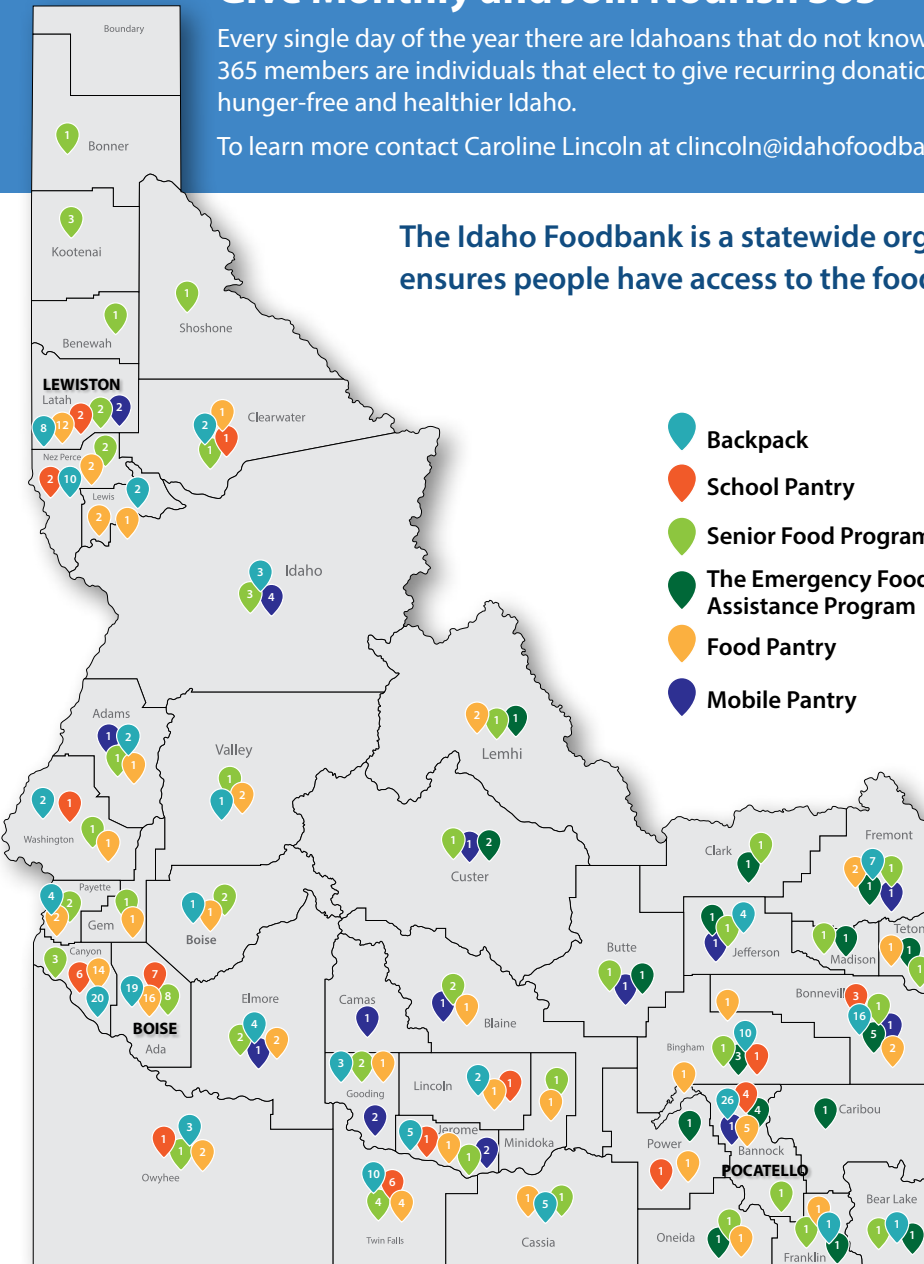


## Give Monthly and Join Nourish 365

Every single day of the year there are Idahoans that do not know where their next meal will come from. Nourish 365 members are individuals that elect to give recurring donations. Your donation is put to work daily to create a hunger-free and healthier Idaho.

To learn more contact Caroline Lincoln at [clincoln@idahofoodbank.org](mailto:clincoln@idahofoodbank.org) or visit [www.idahofoodbank.org/nourish365](http://www.idahofoodbank.org/nourish365).

The Idaho Foodbank is a statewide organization with a local touch that ensures people have access to the food they need to live healthy lives.



### Our Vision

A hunger-free Idaho.

### Our Mission

To help feed, educate and advocate for Idaho's hungry through collaborative partnerships to develop efficient solutions that strengthen individuals, families and communities.



The only Idaho nonprofit to receive a four-star rating for 11 consecutive years.