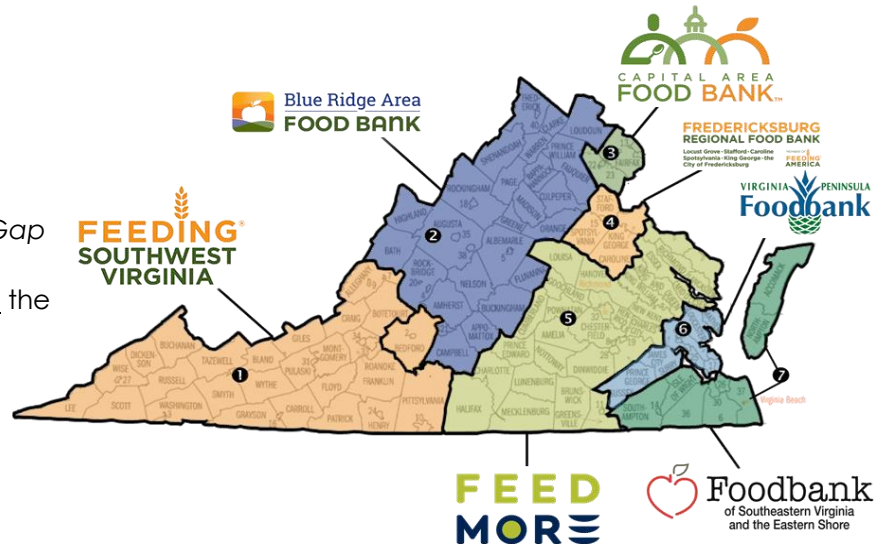


2020 Impact Report

The Federation of Virginia Food Banks comprises the seven Feeding America food banks serving every locality in the Commonwealth. Collectively, we represent the largest charitable response to hunger in Virginia, distributing 118 million pounds of food to nearly 1 million individuals through 1,560 partner agencies each year.

According to Feeding America's *Map the Meal Gap Report*, 840,000 Virginians were food insecure before the COVID-19 pandemic



COVID-19 has spiked the demand for emergency food assistance across Virginia

- Feeding America estimates up to 275,000 more Virginians may experience food insecurity in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing the Commonwealth's food insecurity rate from 9.9% to 13.1% on an annual basis.
- An April 2020 study by Virginia Tech found that 69% of low-income households said it was 'often' or 'sometimes' true that "I/we worried whether my food would run out before I/we got money to buy more."
- Virginia's food banks have served at least **30,000 more unique households** this year compared to 2019.
- Food donations were down by one million pounds through the first half of the year due to food supply disruptions.
- On average, each food bank is purchasing **twice as much** food each month to keep up with the need.





Our Response: Leading Through Collective Action

We Care Food Box Program



Launched with a gift of \$1 million from Sentara Healthcare and Truist, We Care is an innovative solution to the supply chain and distribution challenges presented by the pandemic. A commitment of \$2.2 million in CARES Act funding from Governor Northam's administration has enabled the Federation to build and distribute **100,000 shelf-stable food boxes in 2020**. Each box contains the equivalent of 15 nutritious meals and is designed to be quickly assembled and distributed to vulnerable, low-income households with little to no physical contact.

Child Nutrition Programs

Virginia's food banks operate several programs designed to fill the nutrition gaps faced by our children. More than 450,000 students rely on free or reduced-price school meals, but still face food insecurity on evenings, weekends, and school breaks. Access barriers have become even greater as schools have shifted to virtual learning during COVID-19. **Summer and afterschool meal programs, school-based pantry programs, and weekend food backpack programs** are all innovative service models uniquely tailored to the needs of their communities.

In 2019, the Commonwealth of Virginia granted \$3 million in federal funding (TANF) to help the Federation expand and sustain its federal nutrition programs. We were able to introduce programming into more than twenty localities for the first time, and in total, **our food banks served 173,000 children at 228 distribution sites**. The funding also helped us provide nearly two million pounds of staple grocery items, including 589,000 pounds of produce, to the households of low-income children.



Healthy Pantry Network

Recent research has affirmed the critical roles of nutrition and healthy food access in health outcomes. Low-income households and individuals living in food deserts are at greater risk for a variety of diet-related diseases, including diabetes and hypertension.

Due to a generous \$1 million grant from Sentara Healthcare and Optima Health, Virginia's food banks have strengthened their collective response to issues of health disparities and food insecurity throughout the Commonwealth. Working in an unprecedented degree of collaboration, we have improved access to nutritious foods by building the capacity of their local agency partners and forging new partnerships with healthcare providers. We are implementing food security screenings, referral systems, and new distribution models to better accommodate the unique dietary needs of patients facing food insecurity.



Farms to Food Banks



Agriculture is the Commonwealth's #1 private industry, but more than one million Virginians will face food insecurity this year. The Federation and our member food banks have prioritized partnerships with local growers to support the regional ag economy and increase the supply of fresh, nutritious foods.

Milk for Good is a partnership with the Virginia Dairymen's Association, the Dairy Alliance, and the Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative. Milk is the most requested but least donated product in the emergency food system. Since the start of the program in 2019, we have supported the distribution of more than **90,000 half gallons** of fresh, locally processed milk.



This year, the Federation successfully advocated for additional support from the USDA's **Farmers to Families Food Box Program**, which was created to address COVID-related supply disruptions in domestic agriculture while addressing a significant increase in need. Virginia's food banks have distributed more than **17 million pounds** of U.S. produce, meat, and dairy from May to October alone.

Advocating for Change

The Federation believes that we must work with the people we serve to elevate their needs and advocate for policies that work to end food insecurity in the Commonwealth. We play an active role in educating the public and government leaders about the negative consequences of food insecurity and the need for additional investment to address the issue. This year, we participated in coalitions which successfully advocated for resources to grow school meal programs, spur investment in food-based businesses in underserved communities, and increase access to federal nutrition programs.

The Federation was a lead author of the 'Roadmap to End Hunger,' a set of policy recommendations for combatting food insecurity released by Governor Northam and the Virginia Department of Social Services on October 20. You can learn more at www.FeedVA.org.





Our Partners

The Federation of Virginia Food Banks is grateful to the following organizations for partnering with us to end hunger in the Commonwealth:

We Care Food Boxes



Milk for Good



Farms to Food Banks

