

# YOUR SUPPORT DURING A PANDEMIC

## 2020 IMPACT REPORT FROM THE GREATER BOSTON FOOD BANK

As 2020 dawned over our great nation, no one could imagine the virus that would befall our world, changing it forever. Like everyone else, The Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB) had to re-imagine our capabilities to meet the incredible rise in demand. In early February, GBFB established a COVID-19 Response Team. We were prepared for the onslaught with a comprehensive and well-organized plan and the ability to be innovative and pivot to meet the urgent and immediate needs of our Eastern Massachusetts community. Our accomplishments during this turbulent year include:



Distributed 98 million pounds of healthy food, 68 million of which were distributed in just seven months (March through September 2020).



Raised \$60.4 million in private revenue.



Invested over \$3 million in the GBFB partner agency network to support COVID-19 response efforts.



Implemented new distribution models such as drop-shipping, in which food is shipped directly from vendors to agencies. Since the food never passes through GBFB's warehouse, it frees up space and person power, enabling us to maximize our efforts and ship more food. Using drop-shipping we provided 5.8 million pounds of food to the community.



Established a Business & Data Analytics Team, which will capture key data on GBFB agencies and clients, as well as service and census data, to influence public policy and steer programming.



## FOOD DISTRIBUTION & COMMUNITY IMPACT

Our partner agencies reported serving nearly 600,000 people in July 2020 alone, which is more than double the number of people served last July. The number of children served by GBFB partner agencies increased by 160 percent in July 2020 and overall households served increased by 111 percent. Since the beginning of the pandemic in March, GBFB has experienced the largest distribution months in its 40-year history for a total of 68.1 million pounds of food distributed in just seven months. We went from spending \$65,000 on food each month to over \$2 million.



## BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL

GBFB is thrilled to report that Breakfast After the Bell legislation was signed into law this summer. Breakfast After the Bell will require all public K-12 schools where 60 percent or more students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals to offer breakfast after the start of the school day. Through its leadership of a statewide coalition, Rise and Shine Massachusetts, GBFB dedicated three and a half years toward advocacy for Breakfast After the Bell.

Though the state already requires that schools provide breakfast to low-income students, currently less than half of eligible students are actually getting this important meal; unlike the school lunch program, which has 80 to 90 percent participation rates. The Rise and Shine Massachusetts coalition pointed to the fact that breakfast is being offered *before* school starts as a reason for low participation, which makes it difficult for students who take the bus or do not have reliable transportation to get to school early.

On Aug. 4, 2020, Governor Baker signed Breakfast After the Bell into law. It will go into effect for the school year beginning in 2022, increasing access to breakfast – the most important meal of the day – for more than 150,000 low-income students in the Commonwealth.



## RESILIENCY AND THE EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY FOOD NETWORK

The reason why GBFB is able to reach almost 600,000 people each month comes down to our partnership with 500+ hunger-relief agencies throughout Eastern Massachusetts. In order to bolster GBFB partner agencies during the pandemic, GBFB invested over \$3 million in the network in FY20 (Oct. 1, 2020 – Sept. 30, 2021) to support COVID-19 response efforts.

The GBFB agency network experienced less closures than our Feeding America food bank peers, who reported over 10 percent of their agencies closed or suspended operations in the month of August. By September 2020, only six percent of GBFB pantries remained closed.



## GBFB OPENS ITS FIRST, BEST-IN-CLASS FOOD PANTRY

Earlier this year GBFB made history by launching our first GBFB-supported food pantry, the Mystic Community Market (MCM). For the first time ever, GBFB was involved in the inception and development of a food pantry, allowing us to implement the knowledge accumulated from 40 years of working with our partner agencies to create a pantry that serves fresh, healthy food to a high-need community.

Although it is our newest partnership, the Mystic Community Market is already playing a vital role in our efforts to meet the growing demand for food during the COVID-19 pandemic. The MCM served 25,175 clients each month from April

through September 2020. With an emphasis on distributing fresh produce, protein, and dairy, Mystic Community Market has distributed over 1.2 million pounds of healthy food to our neighbors in need.



## PREVENTING AND MITIGATING FOOD WASTE

GBFB's Retail Donation Program connects retailers with local GBFB partner agencies to facilitate the donation of surplus food. By making these connections, GBFB prevents food from having to pass through our warehouse, allowing it to move from the retailer and into the community much quicker. This reduces food waste and increases capacity in the GBFB warehouse.

Since the onset of the pandemic, grocery stores, like food banks, have been squeezed to meet increased demand and it would be logical to expect retailers not to have extra food to donate. And yet many of them did, especially Amazon.

The COVID-19 pandemic created a mass migration of consumer grocery shopping from in-store to online, a market cornered by Amazon. Consequently, food donations from Amazon to GBFB skyrocketed from 77,000 pounds a month pre-COVID to nearly 800,000 each month since April. Amazon has quickly become our number one retail donor, donating a total of 3.6 million pounds for the year, a 308 percent increase over last year.

Other retailers also increased their donations. In total, in FY20 GBFB distributed 14 million pounds of food through the Retail Donation Program, five million more than the year before.

## FOOD INSECURITY CONTINUES TO RISE

New data from Feeding America projects one in eight people in Eastern Massachusetts is now food insecure. For children, the number is one in five. Children are at a higher risk of food insecurity compared to the overall population in every county. Both the state of Massachusetts and our service area of Eastern Massachusetts are projected to have the highest percent change for food insecurity in the country for children.

**Study: A million people in Mass. don't have enough food**

The state has the highest percentage increase of residents facing hunger in the country.

By **Janelle Nanos** Globe Staff. Updated November 5, 2020, 4:16 p.m.

Tags of food were organized and given out at the Brazilian Workers Center in Allston. SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

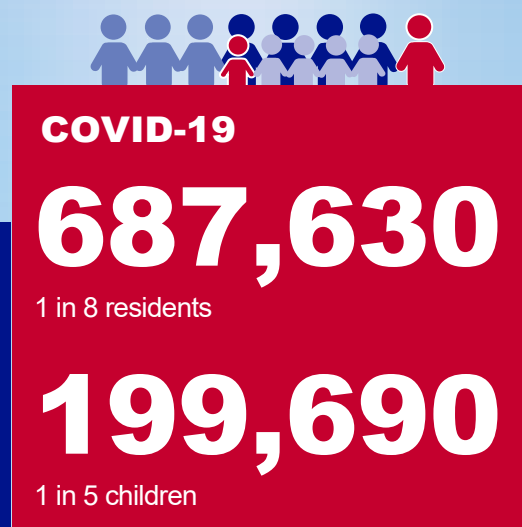
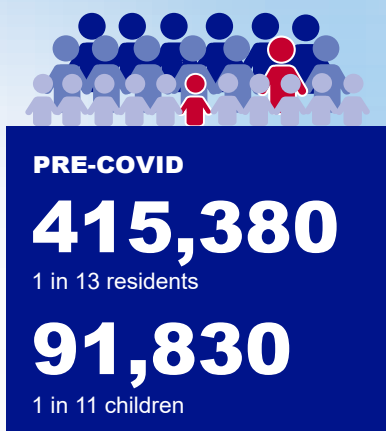
For more details on Feeding America's newest data on food insecurity, we invite you click on the image above to read a recent article by the Boston Globe.

Join **@Gr8BosFoodBank** on social media  
Find us on LinkedIn: /company/the-greater-boston-food-bank/





## Food Insecure Neighbors in Eastern Massachusetts



Source: Feeding America, *The Impact of the Coronavirus on Local Food Insecurity*, October 2020.

## Cost of a Meal

**MASSACHUSETTS** ranks as the most expensive state in the country:



**EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS**  
GBFB's service area has the highest food costs in the state:



Source: Gundersen, C., Dewey, A., Engelhard, E., Strayer, M., & Lapinski, L. (2020). *Map the Meal Gap 2020: A Report on County and Congressional District Food Insecurity and County Food Cost in the United States in 2018*. Produced by Feeding America.



**Nationally the price of groceries grew 2.6% in April 2020**, the biggest increase from one month to the next since 1974.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U)*: U.S. city average, by expenditure category, April 2020, 1-month analysis table

## Meeting the Rising Demand for Food

During the COVID-19 pandemic, The Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB) has doubled its efforts and remain undeterred in its ability to provide healthy food to those who need it.

**Food distribution increased 65% from March to September, the largest seven-month total in the 40-year history of GBFB. Distribution during those 7 months was approximately equal to the total amount distributed in all of FY2019.**

Source: The Greater Boston Food Bank.



MAR-SEPT 2019



MAR-SEPT 2020

