FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CATEGORY: I NEED FOOD ASSISTANCE

Q: How can I find a food pantry near me that is open?
A: To find a site near you, please use the FIND FOOD page on our website. At the bottom of the page, enter your zip code and find the location nearest you.

92% of our 500 agency partners are open and providing food during this pandemic - pantries we know have had to temporarily close their doors are noted in our pantry search as *TEMPORARILY CLOSED*. Please note we may not be aware of all closures or changes in time of distribution, so we recommend calling the pantry first to ensure they are open and to check their operating hours.

Q: Where are additional distributions taking place?
A: Our food relief programs and mobile distributions are scheduled throughout the 10 counties that we serve. We have added a number of weekly mobile pantries across our counties at this time to meet the increased need in the community, as well as added 2 MEGA pantries on Saturdays - one in Hillsborough at HCC and one in Pinellas at Tropicana Field.

Visit our FIND FOOD page to view the many options available, and to find the schedules and locations where food can be safely accessed.

Note: Our site is updated frequently. We encourage you to check regularly to find the date and location nearest you.

As food donations continue to fluctuate, please know that different items will be available at different times. Unfortunately, during this time we cannot guarantee specific food items, amounts, or categories. Our team continues to source whatever food we can and we are doing our best to provide a well-rounded box/bag of food for you and your family.

Q: What is required to receive food assistance?
A: We do not require ID, paperwork, or pre-screening to receive assistance. It is our privilege to provide a care package of food to all those in need of a meal. Please note that we may ask questions about your zip code and household size for our own data gathering purposes, but we do not require you to provide any information.
Q: I/my loved one is homebound. How can we receive home delivery of food?
A: Feeding Tampa Bay is working to provide home deliveries to those in critical need - especially those who are immuno-compromised, who are homebound due to immobility and do not have a family member to assist them, and who are not part of another home delivery program.

Please complete this online form and a member of our response team will reply as quickly as possible.

Each county has a 211 or 311 helpline and you may reach out to them for additional assistance.

Q: I see you're asking for people to complete a form. Is my information shared with anyone?
A: Feeding Tampa Bay does not share information with anyone; we collect information for internal purposes only to make sure we can meet the needs of our community. We are not the government and immigration status does not impact anyone’s ability to receive food from Feeding Tampa Bay.

Q: What's the best way to help?
A: If you are able, the best way to support our efforts is by making a monetary donation. You can donate online HERE securely on our website.

Monetary donations give us the flexibility to respond to the rapidly changing needs; from purchasing food in bulk, hiring temporary staff, and even adding additional transportation routes to get desperately needed food to where it is needed most.

Q: Do you need volunteers?
A: Yes! We are currently seeking volunteer support and are following CDC protocols to provide a safe environment for you and our team.
(See "What precautionary measures are in place?" below.)

Click HERE to find volunteer opportunities, times and locations, and to sign up for a shift.

Q: What precautionary measures are in place for volunteers?
A: Cautionary measures for volunteers include:
- Masks and gloves provided.
- Limiting the size of volunteer groups and dividing into teams based on size.
- Respecting the recommended six foot safe distancing policy.
- Handwashing/wellness breaks.
I WOULD LIKE TO HELP FEED PEOPLE

Q: I am an organization/agency. Do you have to be an approved partner agency of Feeding Tampa Bay to receive food for distribution?
A: We encourage all 501c3 organizations wishing to receive food through Feeding Tampa Bay to follow our prospective agency process; however, we do understand we are in the midst of unprecedented times and must respond to an increased need in our community. In order to best respond to all community needs, Feeding Tampa Bay analyzes areas of critical need, considers whether there are other distributions already in place, and looks for creative solutions to fill any gaps.

Feeding Tampa Bay has already established regular distribution sites and schedules and we encourage you to direct anyone in need of food to those programs.

In the meantime, we’d be happy to receive your request. Please contact Catherine Godwin at cgodwin@feedingtampabay.org with your organization’s information along with details of your request and we will get back to you as quickly as we can.

Q: Does Feeding Tampa Bay provide prepared meals?
A: Yes, we do. Meals are distributed to individuals daily at both Trinity Cafe locations and throughout the Tampa Bay community with the help of several partner kitchens. Together, we are producing to-go meals daily to serve our seniors and Tampa Bay area food insecure neighbors in need. If you wish to help distribute prepared meals, please reach out to info@feedingtampabay.org.

Q: Can I help serve children while school is closed?
A: With schools closed due to COVID-19, Feeding Tampa Bay is sponsoring BreakSpot Meal sites for children 18 and under at various schools across 4 counties. Visit the link to find a list of current sites.

MISCELLANEOUS

Q: How does Feeding Tampa Bay help?
A: As one of the nation’s top hunger relief organizations, Feeding Tampa Bay is ending hunger by fueling human potential in every family, child and senior across our 10-county region. By leveraging the daily connection around a meal, we are evolving our partnerships, programs, and services with a goal to break down barriers and create long-term health and capability in the lives of the individuals we serve. In 2020, Feeding Tampa Bay will deliver 60 million meals – 70% of which are healthy foods, create connections to benefits that supplement household income, and graduate our first 100 students from our workforce development program focused on truck driving, warehouse logistics and culinary arts training. Feeding Tampa Bay believes every human being has potential, and hunger should never be a barrier to reaching it.

We are doing the following:

- Coordinating with Feeding America, Feeding Florida, government agencies, school districts, county government and local community partners to strategically deploy
food resources.
- Changed all distributions to drive-thru/to-go distributions throughout the community to supplement closed agency sites, schools and to support many who need assistance for the first time.
- Analysing weekly where mobile pantry sites and meal opportunities are needed to lift the communities we serve.
- We continue to safely supply our partner agency network with food.
- Preparing thousands of to-go meals daily to send out into the community.
- Providing innovative logistics support to community partners.
- Working with community stakeholders to recruit volunteers.
- Advocating for federal and state legislation and funding that supports COVID-19 response and recovery.

Q: We see Feeding Tampa Bay requesting financial support. Why does Feeding Tampa Bay need so much funding?
A: As an emergency response organization, Feeding Tampa Bay has plans in place to respond quickly to any disaster; however, this pandemic is unlike anything we have ever seen before. With its staggering effect on our local economy, we have seen a 400% increased need for our services in just a few weeks’ time. This presents distinct challenges - first, many of our partners cannot meet the current need or the increased demand, second, needs are arising in areas not typically designated as food insecure - meaning we must create new methods to reach them, and third, more people are staying home than ever before leading to a smaller volunteer pool.

In order to counter these challenges and meet the need of our community, we must fill the gap with our own resources - purchasing more food than ever before, deploying extra mobile pantries, increasing hours for our onsite grocery market, and directing deliveries to affected areas. Not to mention, these programs also require the acquisition of extra resources in equipment (trucks, fuel) staffing, and, potentially, space. Funding makes all of these current efforts possible; but we also know that we will need to sustain these efforts months down the road until our economy and our neighbors recover. We must think and prepare well beyond the immediate need and ensure our efforts can be sustained into the recovery and rebuild phases of our community.

Q: If you will need to purchase food, can I just buy some and donate it?
A: As part of the Feeding America network, and our economies of scale and purchasing power, Feeding Tampa Bay can purchase food at less than wholesale costs. By donating funds to us, we can stretch your investment the furthest by purchasing food in bulk and sourcing all throughout the country.
Q: With all the increased need in the community, can one organization do it all?  
A: No! Collaboration is at the core of our mission and we know we can't do it without the help of our partner agencies, community partners, municipalities, volunteers and donors.

As a member of the Feeding America network, and the largest hunger-relief organization across West Central Florida, Feeding Tampa Bay has the expertise, logistics and infrastructure necessary to power the community's food distribution needs. With our nearly 500 partner food pantry network, we distributed 60 million meals last year - but relief efforts for the COVID19 outbreak require much more. A coordinated response with other hunger relief organizations and innovation with new partners, especially during this crisis, is essential. With scarce resources, we must work together to ensure everyone receives the food they need in the most efficient way.

Q: Where can I see all the work you've done as part of COVID-19 relief? 
A: Our website is updated weekly, [HERE](https://bit.ly/34HXbuA). Or follow us on social! You can find us @FeedingTampaBay on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube.

You can also listen to our podcast, Stick a Fork in It! at the locations below:
Spotify: [https://spoti.fi/38G608i](https://spoti.fi/38G608i)  
Apple Music: [https://apple.co/2WxnxE](https://apple.co/2WxnxE)  
iHeart Radio: [https://ihr.fm/2UPTDSn](https://ihr.fm/2UPTDSn)

Q: What safety protocols do you have in place?  
A: Feeding Tampa Bay believes that the safety of its employees and volunteers is paramount. During this pandemic, we have:

- Activated a staff prevention and leave policy that includes increased sanitation supplies, installed additional hand washing stations, cleaning and disinfecting surfaces, no touching, staying home when sick, required doctor clearance when sick, and more.
- Increased cleaning supplies in our facilities and signage throughout the facility reminding volunteers of safety protocols.
- Adjusted choice-pantry service models to a pre-packed model and Trinity Cafe meal services to a to-go meal model.
- Disseminated CDC and safety information to our employees, volunteers and network of partner agencies, including signage to post during distributions and recommendations to change all distributions to drive-thru.
- Placed head count limits on volunteer shifts and practice recommended distancing policies.

Q. I still have questions.  
A: If you still have questions, please Email Us or call 813-254-1190.  
*Please be patient. Due to the high volume of e-mails and calls, it may take one business day to receive a reply.*