



FOOD BANK OF
NORTH ALABAMA

Impact

Together we can solve hunger™

VOLUME 14 | SUMMER | 2020

Demand for Food Increases Due to COVID-19

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our families, neighborhoods and communities, the Food Bank of North Alabama is working hard to provide food for those struggling — many who are experiencing food insecurity for the first time ever.

From March 15 to May 19, the Food Bank of North Alabama distributed 2,269,866 pounds of food, a 9 percent increase from 2019 when numbers were already elevated due to trade mitigation and a 67 percent increase from 2018. That 2.3 million plus pounds of food is approximately 1.9 million meals distributed across 11 counties in North Alabama.

Or another way, that's nearly 29,000 meals a day for Alabamians in need.

Food Bank of North Alabama Operations Director Josh Matthews said it has been extremely significant that the Food Bank has been able to increase distributions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*"The demand for food has been extremely high with so many people being laid off or furloughed during the crisis," Matthews said. **"We have been distributing about double the amount of food that we do during a normal year. Much of that food has been going to people that are seeking food assistance for the first time in their lives."***

This increase in food distribution comes even at a time when there are several challenges for the operations team

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A Food Bank warehouse tech Jonathan Henderson loads a pallet jack.



The Food Bank of North Alabama is so proud and thankful for the volunteers, like the one seen here, who have come in and helped with food sorting and packing food boxes while following social distancing and sanitation guidelines.

Because of donors like you ... *amazing things are happening!*



Publix has been a strong supporter of the Food Bank of North Alabama, assisting their COVID-19 response with fresh produce, dairy and dry goods.

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in the warehouse. This includes the need to sanitize surfaces multiple times a day and some food pantry feeding partners have closed their doors.

The COVID-19 pandemic has required new restrictions for food bank partners' access to the warehouse, Matthews said.

"We've had to restrict access to our warehouse to only staff members and have been trying to limit physical contact between staff and our agency partners that are coming to pick up food," he said. "Luckily, all of our partners have been extremely understanding as we have instituted these temporary policies."

Matthews added that the Food Bank of North Alabama's feeding partners have been flexible and committed to the Food Bank's efforts to ensure everyone's safety during the crisis.

"Many have stepped up to hold additional distributions to meet the needs of their local communities," he said. **"We are truly lucky to live in an area with so many gracious, kind folks willing to volunteer their time and resources to help their neighbors in need."**

One such feeding partner is Rose of Sharon in Huntsville. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic happening during a renovation to their space,

Megan Letson, the business liaison at Rose of Sharon, said they are still working as hard as they can to get food out to the community.

Letson said they've seen a big increase in the number of people seeking assistance, including many who have never sought food assistance before. **She said they handed out nearly 1,700 sack lunches in April and about 100 food boxes a week.**

"We are thankful that we've been able to provide those boxes and that people seeking them are able to come and get them," she said, adding "We have had a lot of new people getting food boxes and the meals that we provide. But everyone receiving assistance is very grateful and thankful."

One of the long term challenges, Matthews said, is going to be keeping the distributions up for as long as is needed.

"It has been difficult to increase our distributions as much as we have, but we've been lucky that we have had the support of our donors, and the local community," he said. "Hopefully, we will continue to have the level of support in both financial and food donations throughout the entire length of the crisis and economic recession."



We know that with donors and supporters like you, no one in North Alabama will go hungry. **Thank you!**