



# FEEDING KIDS IN CRISIS

NO KID HUNGRY CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE REPORT

JULY 2020



“

I'll never forget a young girl telling me what it felt like to go to bed so she could forget about the hunger pains in her stomach. Or to decide which brother to give her food to because they didn't have enough to go around.”

**JERI BAKER, GRANTEE,  
ONE SPIRIT, S.D.**

How do we  
get more done

**DEAR FRIENDS:**

Hungry children in the United States are facing one of the worst crises we've seen in our lifetime. 1 in 4 children may face hunger this year because of the pandemic.

School cafeteria staff are seeing this first-hand, with families lining up at emergency meals sites nationwide.

One worker in San Antonio, Texas, told us, "A little girl was handed her bag of food, and it's like somebody gave her a million bucks. Talk about a very sobering moment to know you're feeding kids who otherwise wouldn't have it at all."

But thanks to you, **children are not facing this crisis alone**. We're working with schools, local nonprofits and elected officials to feed them, and we're continuing our focus on communities of color, who have borne the brunt of this crisis and years of systemic racism.

This is what we do, both in times of crisis and not – break down whatever barriers exist between a hungry child and a healthy meal. We couldn't do it without you.

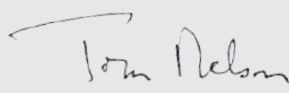
Your outpouring of support for that work has been both inspiring and humbling. In this report, you'll learn how we've responded together to this crisis so far, and why kids desperately need you for the difficult road ahead.

Sincerely,



**BILLY SHORE**

EXECUTIVE CHAIR



**TOM NELSON**

PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



## GRANTS & GUIDANCE

When the coronavirus closed schools, millions of kids lost the critical lifeline of school meals, just as their families lost paychecks. But with your help, we sprang into action.

### EMERGENCY GRANTS

- Since March, we've distributed nearly \$27 million in **emergency grants** to more than 1,120 school districts, local food banks and community organizations across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico.
- These grants helped launch meals sites nationwide, fueled school buses on meal delivery routes and stocked food bank shelves. All told, these funds are helping feed kids some 10.8 million meals a day.
- The coronavirus has hit communities of color especially hard, leading to higher rates of illness and unemployment. With that in mind, we've prioritized grants to schools and organizations serving Black, Latino and Indigenous communities.

### EXPERT GUIDANCE

We've leveraged partnerships built over years to do what we do best: connect the dots and fill the gaps through which hungry kids can often fall.

We've provided local schools and nonprofits with **best practices** and guidance on staffing, emergency planning, communicating with the public, meal distribution and more during the pandemic. As policies change, we've helped them understand new regulations and legislation to feed kids as safely and efficiently as possible.

We convened national groups like the School Nutrition Association, the Urban School Food Alliance and others to identify the challenges facing our partners and pool resources to respond through our network now and in the long recovery ahead.

## NO KID HUNGRY RESPONDS: **CORONAVIRUS**

Since the coronavirus crisis began,  
No Kid Hungry has:



PROVIDED EMERGENCY GRANTS  
TO SCHOOLS AND LOCAL  
NONPROFITS TOTALING NEARLY

**\$27 MILLION**



SUCCESSFULLY ADVOCATED  
FOR POLICY CHANGES TO HELP  
COMMUNITIES FEED KIDS IN

**ALL 50 STATES**



HELPED FIND  
FREE MEALS IN THEIR  
NEIGHBORHOOD FOR

**172,000 FAMILIES**



When it comes to feeding our kids who need it, especially in a time like this, it's critical you have the partnership of organizations like No Kid Hungry. The money that's coming from No Kid Hungry is actually changing lives."

**JOHN SASAKI,**  
**LOCAL PARTNER,**  
**OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL**  
**DISTRICT, CALIF.**

## ADVOCACY

The crisis has exposed and strained the fragile network of resources that many families in the United States depend on to feed their children. But with your support, we've helped shape national policies and program flexibilities to feed increasing numbers of children and families in need.

### OUR WINS SO FAR

- Our advocacy helped pass temporary flexibilities to support vulnerable families receiving [SNAP funds](#) and the activation of Pandemic-EBT, which provides low-income families with the dollar value of lost school meals to help feed their children.
- We successfully urged the USDA to implement and extend [critical nationwide waivers](#) that help kids and families get the food they need, in a way that works for their community.
- Alongside Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez of New York, we helped craft federal legislation to create a Community Meals Fund that, if passed, would pay local restaurants to feed families in need for free.

But we're not stopping there, because this crisis is real and urgent for so many families, and it will require a sweeping, coordinated response state- and nationwide, potentially for years to come. Programs like SNAP, Pandemic-EBT and free school meals all work together to feed hungry kids.

We'll continue to work with states and nonprofit partners to ensure these programs are implemented effectively and reach the families who need them most.



“

Without you, this wouldn't happen. If it wasn't for people like you, we would not be able to help others. I truly appreciate it, and our community appreciates it.”

**CARRIE FUTTRELL,  
GRANTEE,  
[MOUNTAIN VIEW  
SCHOOL DISTRICT, ARK.](#)**



## CAFETERIA INTO THE COMMUNITY

When the coronavirus closed California's rural Coachella Valley Unified School District, Marcus Alonzo faced a whirlwind of challenges. But he didn't hesitate.

"It's a very needy community," he said. "Most of the people here are below the poverty level."

Many of the district's 18,000 children rely on school for food, and suddenly the cafeteria was closed. At the same time, Alonzo lost more than half of his school food service staff to high-risk status for the coronavirus and emergency obligations at home.

Still, Alonzo thought of Coachella's families, some of whom didn't have potable water, transportation or secure work.

"These people don't have healthcare," he explained. "With the crisis, I don't think they even know where their next little bit of money is going to come from."

Over several long days and nights, and with a dedicated staff, Alonzo shifted his operations into the community, feeding children at 14 drive-thru sites and along school bus routes.

Thanks to you, No Kid Hungry was there to help with an emergency grant for coolers to get food out safely, and our advocacy work with the USDA helped extend waivers for his team to feed families out in the community. Now, they're serving some 100,000 free, nutritious meals a week.

Alonzo's story represents so many others', and we need you with us to reach them as this crisis continues and too many kids go hungry.

## RESOURCES

While we're working to empower local schools and organizations during this crisis, we're also quickly creating and distributing resources directly to the community through our media, corporate and program partnerships.

### KEY TOOLS

- We've launched our texting hotline to easily connect families with free meals for their kids this summer. By simply texting the word "FOOD" or "COMIDA" to 877-877, families nationwide can find their nearest meals sites.
- In addition to the texting line, we built the [No Kid Hungry Free Meals Finder](#), an interactive map that helps families find meals sites, food banks and others providing food relief during crises.
- With many Americans facing hunger for the first time, we created resources to help newly-eligible families navigate and sign up for benefits like SNAP and Pandemic-EBT so that families can shop for the food they need.

With your help, we'll continue to be there for kids and families impacted by this terrible crisis. Right now, kids are facing a staggering risk of hunger. We're staying in constant contact with school districts and local organizations nationwide to listen and respond to the evolving situation until no child goes hungry.

“

At the site, there were a number of kids, because their families were working. The oldest sibling might have been eight, watching the younger sibling who may have been five. They didn't know how to get into line for the food.”

**RANDI SHUBIN DRESNER,  
LOCAL PARTNER,  
ISLAND HARVEST  
FOOD BANK, N.Y.**





“

A dad came on his bike with his son, crying. He said, ‘Gracias. Thank you. You don’t realize how difficult it has been for us. I lost my job, and we’re not even from this school, but you all accepted us.’”

**ROBERT CUELLAR, GRANTEE,  
LAREDO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, TEXAS**

## **AWARENESS**

For years, many Americans have seen childhood hunger as a wallpaper issue: something that hangs in the background without urgent importance. But this crisis has put our cause and organization in the national spotlight in a way we haven’t seen.

### **GRABBING THE MIC**

- From The Tonight Show to CNN and The New York Times, the nation is learning about childhood hunger and our response – giving visibility to this issue on a scale that has been so important.
- Celebrities like Viola Davis, Shaquille O’Neal and Angelina Jolie have joined our cause, while new media partnerships with Univision, Lamar Advertising and others are connecting kids with the food they need.
- People are listening and looking for us. Our social media saw 6.7 billion potential views of our message, while we saw more than 2 billion impressions in traditional media.

But this is not at all about big names and numbers. Awareness of childhood hunger in our country is crucial to our ability to confront it. The more people know – especially those who don’t see hunger on a regular basis – the more we can do about it. Still, our task remains greater than it’s ever been.





“

Thank you so much for thinking of your neighbors, your fellow community members who are having the toughest time right now. Continue supporting as much as you're able because we don't know how long this is going to go on.”

**JENNA UMBRIAC,**  
**LOCAL PARTNER,**  
**MANNA FOOD CENTER, MD.**



## LOOKING AHEAD

The coming months will be unlike anything we have faced in a generation.

The coronavirus has amplified and produced devastating new hunger in our country. Americans have gone from shopping at grocery stores to lining up at food pantries. Many who never worried about food now find themselves rationing meals for their kids. And those who already worried need our help more than ever.

With your help, we're committed to being there for those families now and for the long-haul.

- We'll continue delivering critical funds to help schools and local organizations feed all children three meals a day and safely serve families with dignity.
- We'll stay on Capitol Hill to strengthen and raise awareness about programs like SNAP to meet the needs of all families.
- We'll continue to give families the tools to find food in their communities through our national texting service and website.
- And we'll further raise our voice – and investments – to counteract the systemic racism in our society that perpetuates childhood hunger and cripples communities.

We're deeply moved and inspired by the outpouring of support that has enabled us to respond so rapidly at this time of national crisis. Thank you, and on behalf of the millions of children and families in need, please continue to be the hero that hungry kids need in this moment and beyond.



As the days go by, more and more need is becoming evident. I would hate for this awareness to cease at the end of the coronavirus. Because it's not a result of the coronavirus. It's existed in our community since day one."

**JOHN RIVERS,**  
**LOCAL PARTNER,**  
**FEED THE NEED, FLA.**

## THANK YOU

In a difficult time, countless people and organizations have stepped up to the challenge of feeding hungry children in the United States like never before.

We're profoundly grateful for this generosity, as are the communities we serve nationwide. But don't take it from us. Carry these thank you's with you, knowing the bellies you've helped fill and the light you've brought into the darkness of this crisis.

Like them, we can't thank you enough, and they need us – together – to stay with them for the difficult days that lie ahead for hungry kids.

“

You're helping the children be able to eat. They're still getting their meals during these difficult times. You're making sure the children don't go hungry.”

**MARY WILLIAMS, GRANTEE,  
GIRLS CLUB & LEARNING  
CENTER, MISS.**

“

I don't know if you realize how much this actually does. I can't even tell you the thankfulness I have. For the forgotten districts like mine, we have to rely on you.”

**GAIL WOLSCH, LOCAL PARTNER,  
FLORENCE TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT, N.J.**



“

I don't think I even have the words to say how grateful I am, because I'll just start crying. I'm grateful that we're able to do this. We will feed any kid. We will feed you.”

**CHRISTINE CLARAHAN,  
LOCAL PARTNER,  
SCHOOL CITY OF HAMMOND, IND.**

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