



St. Louis Area Foodbank Distributes More Than 16.7 Million Meals Throughout the Bi-State Region as Part of Covid-19 Relief Efforts

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ST. LOUIS – The St. Louis Area Foodbank has distributed 16,795,542 meals since March 16, 2020 as part of Covid-19 relief efforts, significantly more than the goal of 10 million meals by the end of June announced on April 23.

Prior to the pandemic, there were more than 400,000 people in the 26 counties served by the St. Louis Area Foodbank (14 in Missouri and 12 in Illinois) struggling to put food on the table. That number has increased due to job losses, furloughs, and kids being out of school for an extended period as a result of Covid-19.

“When we set the goal of distributing 10 million meals back in April, none of us knew what the future held,” said St. Louis Area Foodbank President and CEO, Meredith Knopp. “There is no playbook for something like this. Would we run into food supply chain issues? Would people continue to donate if their employment status changed? Would we still be able to utilize volunteers and if so, would they show up? People in this community rising to the challenge time and time again is how we were able to exceed our goal. We are so grateful because we know food is desperately needed by so many people in the bi-state region right now and will continue to be for the foreseeable future,” Knopp concluded.

The Foodbank has brought on 70 new food distribution sites since mid-March to address the increasing need in the region. Those 70 sites are in addition to the network of more than 500 community partner agencies that made up the organization’s hunger relief network prior to the pandemic.

Across the Foodbank's service territory in eastern Missouri and southwestern Illinois, 552 mobile distributions of food, cleaning supplies, and hygiene items were conducted from March 16 through June 30. For perspective, during the organization's previous 9-month fiscal year (10/1/18 – 6/30/19), there were 676 similar distributions conducted.

Bringing on new distribution sites and increasing the number of mobile distributions became a necessity as the Foodbank saw a 41 percent increase in the amount of product the organization was getting out to the community compared to the same time period in 2019. A big part of that poundage increase was nutritious food the St. Louis Area Foodbank received through the USDA's Farmers to Families Food Box Program (aka the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program or CFAP). Through the end of June, the organization received 3,033,428 pounds of food through this program.

In addition to the food being distributed during the pandemic, Foodbank staff members also helped 363 people in Missouri and 127 people in Illinois complete SNAP applications to help put food on their tables and inject dollars back into the local economy. Those 490 completed SNAP applications represent a 23 percent increase over the same period last year.

Support from the community - in the form of financial donations, food drives, volunteerism, and advocacy - has helped the Foodbank expand pandemic response and recovery efforts and will be needed in the coming weeks, months, and likely years to continue addressing the need in the bi-state region.

More information on the St. Louis Area Foodbank's Covid-19 relief efforts, where people can go to find food assistance, and ways the public can help feed neighbors in need can be found at <https://STLFoodbank.org/Covid19>