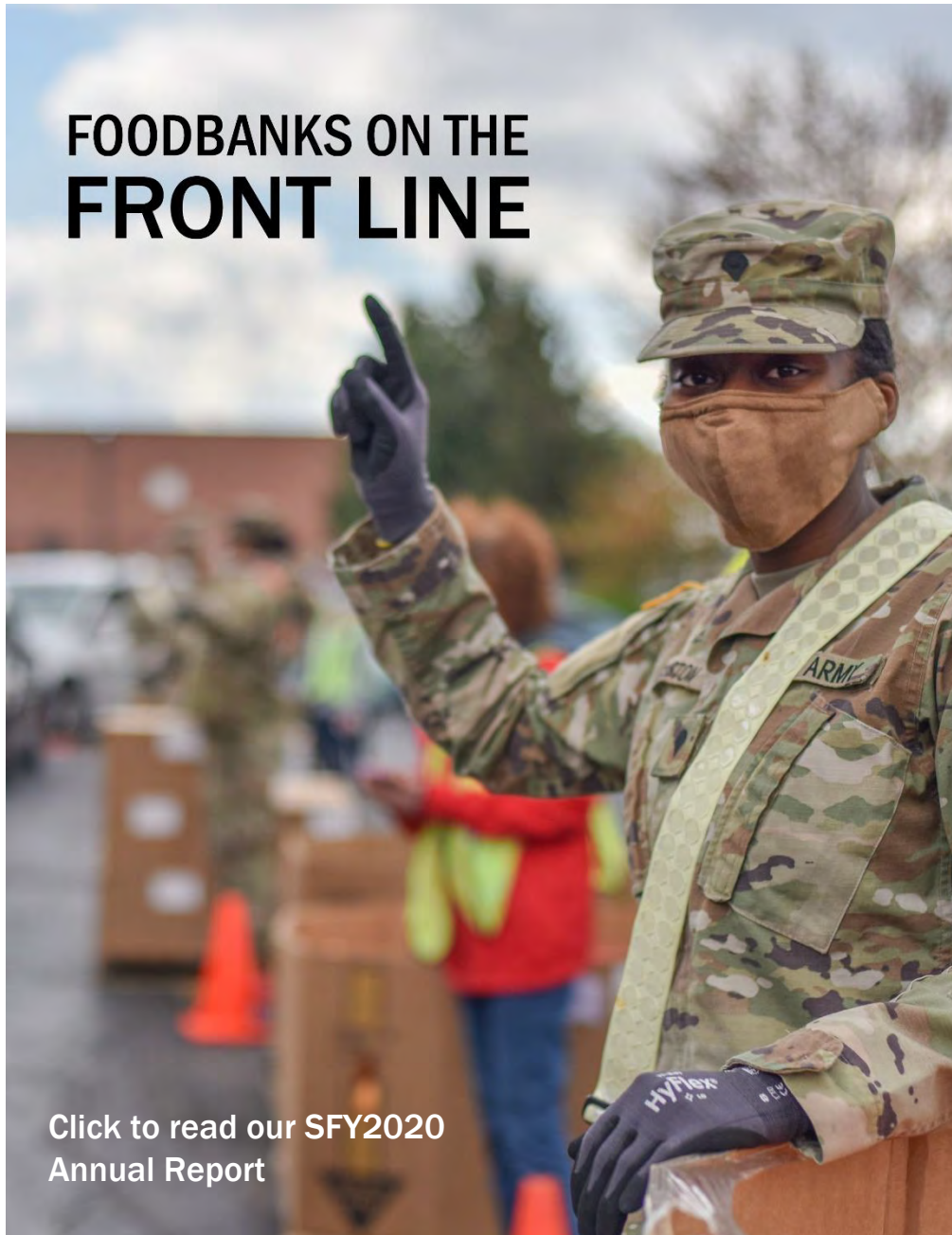


# FOODBANKS ON THE FRONT LINE



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Annual Report](#)

**Testimony to Ohio House of Representatives  
Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services  
Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, Executive Director  
Ohio Association of Foodbanks**

**March 4, 2021**

**H.B. 110**

Good morning Chairman Roemer, Ranking Member West, and distinguished members of the committee.

I'm Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, Ohio's largest charitable response to hunger. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss our association's budget request for the 2022-2023 state budget and our longtime public-private partnership with the State of Ohio.

The association represents Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks, 3,600-member food pantries, soup kitchens, and other hunger relief agencies, and the roughly 1 in 5 Ohioans we served last year. Our mission is to provide food and other resources to people in need and to pursue areas of common interest for the benefit of people in need.

### **Ohio foodbanks have become ground zero for the tremendous need caused by COVID**

It's difficult to believe, but a year ago this week, we became aware of a new term, the Novel Coronavirus. A mysterious respiratory illness caused by the virus began to sweep across the world and in just a few short weeks after its arrival, our daily lives changed as schools and businesses closed and we were told to stay at home and shelter in place. Mass layoffs began as restaurants, hotels, schools, child and senior care centers, retail businesses, and more closed.

Ohioans began to panic as grocery store shelves were stripped bare of essential foods and shortages of toilet paper and cleaning supplies were being splashed across our television screens. The economic fallout of this public health crisis became apparent almost immediately. Thousands of newly laid off Ohioans in desperate need of food and groceries began showing up in record numbers at our foodbanks. Food insecurity rates skyrocketed. Feeding America estimates that 18.1 percent of all Ohioans – including 27.1 percent of all Ohio children – were food insecure in 2020. But widespread unemployment, loss of income, increased childcare costs, and loss of access to other sources of food, including school meals, meant that foodbanks saw visits to our emergency food assistance network nearly double in many hard-hit areas of the state. Meanwhile, the elderly Ohioans who often volunteer reliably at foodbank warehouses, and who often single-handedly operate local faith-based food pantries, sheltered at home to protect themselves from exposure. Corporate volunteer groups understandably cancelled shifts as their employers told them to work from home and prohibited their volunteer activities. On March 22, 2020 during his press conference, Governor DeWine announced, "we are at war, and in a time of war we have to make sacrifices." The Governor issued a disaster declaration, declared Ohio foodbanks as essential workers, and deployed the Ohio National Guard to help us operate our foodbanks and food pantries, help box and package food and groceries, and establish mass food distribution sites across the state in order to help us respond to the overwhelming demand.

"I am a single mom of 3 struggling on Pandemic Unemployment trying to survive these days. We get food stamps but we just aren't making it through the month. The past year has been a scary struggle not knowing what's ahead. People struggle but this was scraping by and going without. Have you ever had to borrow or beg for money or anything for yourself or children? I have and it isn't pretty. Makes you feel less of a person and I've sucked up my pride many times to do what I had to do to make sure my children had what they needed. As a parent I feel you must use every resource especially when you're a single parent. Nobody in America should be homeless or go hungry."

*Comment from Amber, January 2021*

Hundreds of thousands of our fellow Ohioans, who were already struggling to make ends meet, living one low wage paycheck to the next, were decimated. Most had no savings, or much in their cupboards that would be needed to feed themselves and their families during the initial weeks of the lock down.

<p>Over 800,000 low income school aged children in Ohio will be working to make up for the learning loss and behavioral and mental health impacts of the pandemic. They need to have adequate, nutritious food to support their growing brains and bodies.</p>	<p>More than 1 in 4 Ohio kids (27.1 percent) lived in food insecure households in 2020. Most recently, the U.S. Census Bureau's Pulse Survey found that nearly 3 in 10 Ohio households with children (28.9 percent) experienced food insecurity in December 2020.</p>	<p>Ohio's seniors continue to turn to us for help with food on limited, fixed incomes. Now, more than 1 in 5 of the people served by Ohio's foodbanks are over age 60. Our network served seniors nearly 400,000 more times in state fiscal year 2020 than the previous year.</p>
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Over the past year, more than 500 National Guard soldiers and airmen have continued to serve, working side by side with our foodbank staff as we respond to the sustained food insecurity crisis. Now, nearly a year in to this once-in-a-century pandemic, we are continuing to experience record numbers of Ohioans in our lines. For nearly 1 in 5 Ohioans – we have become their food lifelines. For some, their temporary job losses have now become

“Need in our area was already high prior to the pandemic – the tornadoes alone displaced at least 2,000 people in June 2019, and at least 750 homes are still vacant. At the beginning of the pandemic, we saw an unprecedented increase in demand, and over 70% of households at some distributions were seeking food assistance from our network for the first time.”  
*The Foodbank (Dayton)*

permanent and their former employers have closed. For others, they're too far behind on other expenses and struggling to recover with contingent, variable hours at work. Many have been caring for children learning remotely for nearly a year or incurring added expenses to provide care for those children while they continue working, often in underpaid front line jobs. While we are as hopeful as any that a speedy economic recovery could still be achieved, we also know it will take significant investments to ensure that recovery is realized for every Ohioan, including those with low or no incomes.

The COVID pandemic and the economic collapse it caused has increased food insecurity to levels that have not been this widespread in Ohio in decades. Even during the Great Recession and its extended recovery, Ohio food insecurity rates did not exceed 17 percent.

Extended unemployment, growing job uncertainty, and widespread loss of income has led to a massive increase in demand at our state's foodbanks at a time when we are facing significant operational challenges, including declines in volunteers, traditional fundraising revenue, and donated foods.

- Ohio's hunger relief network is providing take-home groceries roughly 150,000 more times each month than pre-pandemic. They are providing an average of about 31.5 pounds of food, or about 26 meals, per person, per visit, up from 23.5 pounds of food, or about 20 meals per person, per visit pre-pandemic, in an effort to minimize person-to-person contact as much as possible while supporting Ohioans with access to balanced, nutritious foods.

- With retail and manufacturer food donations plummeting an estimated 5.5 million pounds from just July to December 2020, while need increased exponentially, Ohio's foodbanks have relied heavily on sourcing food from other channels including purchasing more food in an effort to keep up with the demand. Ohio's foodbanks have purchased about 1.4 million pounds of food each month during the pandemic with charitable dollars to keep up with demand for help. This amount of purchased foods reflects a 70 percent increase over the previous year and Ohio's foodbanks universally project it is unsustainable.
- Ohio's foodbanks are also absorbing sharp increases in operational costs, from transportation to increased food storage space to sanitation expenses to additional staffing. We project that increased costs are likely to continue long-term.

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks and our members are deeply grateful to Governor DeWine, FEMA, USDA, local, state and federal governments who have helped us respond to the dramatic increase for food assistance during these extraordinary times. Unfortunately, the need HAS NOT diminished, and the cost of food, personal care, personal hygiene and household cleaning items continues to skyrocket as manufacturers and supply chains struggle to keep up with the demand.

### **Opportunities to promote an equitable recovery and our request**

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks has been honored to partner with the State of Ohio for two decades. Now, more than ever, it is imperative that we work collaboratively to invest in food and economic security and ensure an equitable recovery for all Ohioans.

HB 110, as introduced, provides flat funding of \$24.5 million each year in support of the Ohio Food and Agricultural Clearance Programs and a one-time investment of \$7 million in CARES act funding in in the first six months of the 24-month budget.

The association humbly requests your consideration of an amendment to HB 110 to increase this funding to:

- **\$12 million in pass-through federal CARES Act funding, representing an additional \$5 million in support** in the first six months of SFY2022 for the purchase and distribution of emergency foods, including Ohio-grown fruits and vegetables, Ohio-raised protein, and Ohio-produced dairy, as well as shelf-stable items and essential non-food items such as personal care and personal hygiene products, household paper goods, and household cleaning items.
- **\$45 million per year in the 2022-23 biennial budget, representing an additional \$20 million per year (primarily funded through pass-through TANF dollars)**, including \$40 million per year for the operation of the Ohio Food Program and Agricultural Clearance Program, \$4 million per year to purchase, transport, store, and distribute essential household non-food items that can't be purchased with SNAP benefits, and

"I have 5 kids at home, husband works but not enough to cover bills. I can't work because I'm now teaching 4 kids in multiple grades at home and have a toddler. My food stamps are not enough to feed my kids 3 meals a day. The P-EBT REALLY helps, it's incredibly hard and hurts a parent so much when you can't provide something like food. Even today my food stamps don't come till the 12th, I don't know what we are going to do for dinner tonight. This pandemic has totally screwed all my family's plans of getting out of debt and once we were doing well finding a way and now it just seems hopeless."

*Comment from Ashleigh, January 2021*



\$1 million per year to support capacity building for local hunger relief organizations to ensure hard-hit communities don't lose local access to charitable relief.

We have partnered with the State of Ohio for over 25 years and operate the Ohio Food and Agricultural Clearance Programs. Two highly successful, cost effective and efficient programs that are funded through a line item in the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services budget. These food programs are a direct lifeline that provides over 20% of all the food we have to distribute to Ohio's hungry citizens. In addition, it helps Ohio farmers by providing a market for surplus or unmarketable fruits, vegetables and protein items (less than grade A retail) and permits the association to purchase directly from food manufacturers shelf-stable/center of plate foods that are missing from the donation stream.

Let me be clear. Food insecurity not only impacts the very poor, but also a growing number of low-income seniors including many who are caring for grandchildren. It impacts low-wage workers who find that their paychecks don't stretch to cover housing, healthcare, transportation, childcare, and enough healthy groceries to feed their families.

We recognize this may seem like a significant increase in funding for anti-hunger efforts. However, this is reflective of the unprecedented era of food insecurity and financial instability, widespread in our communities and across our state. This is a critical investment to help ensure that every Ohioan can be part of an equitable recovery that meets basic needs and invests in the health and well-being of each person.

Mr. Chair and members of the subcommittee, thank you for your time and consideration. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may. I will also ask each of you to visit your local food bank to see firsthand their operations and to learn more about what we are doing together to prevent hunger in the buckeye state.

On behalf of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, we request that you support this additional funding requests for House Bill 110 for the emergency hunger relief network. More specifically, we ask for your support on behalf of the more than 2 million Ohioans we serve who deserve the dignity of three balanced meals each day. Together, we can invest in an Ohio recovery that includes every person and meets every person's basic needs. We can help Ohioans heal.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director  
Ohio Association of Foodbanks  
[lisa@ohiofoodbanks.org](mailto:lisa@ohiofoodbanks.org)  
614-271-4803

The Ohio Food Program and Agricultural Clearance Program (OFPACP) has received bipartisan support from 5 governors and 12 Ohio General Assemblies since its creation in the 1998/99 state budget. OFPACP provides more than 20 percent of all of the food distributed statewide by Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks and their 3,600-member food pantries, soup kitchens, and other hunger relief agencies.

Beyond providing direct relief for hungry Ohio families, the State of Ohio's investment in OFPACP through its budget allocation and Executive Orders by Governor DeWine in SFY 2020 led to \$18.9 million in direct economic output and \$20.9 million in indirect economic output, as well as generating \$11.5 million in income and creating 401 Ohio jobs.



# ANTI-HUNGER PLAYBOOK

*Ohio's 134th General Assembly*

A LEGISLATOR'S GUIDE TO ADDRESSING HUNGER








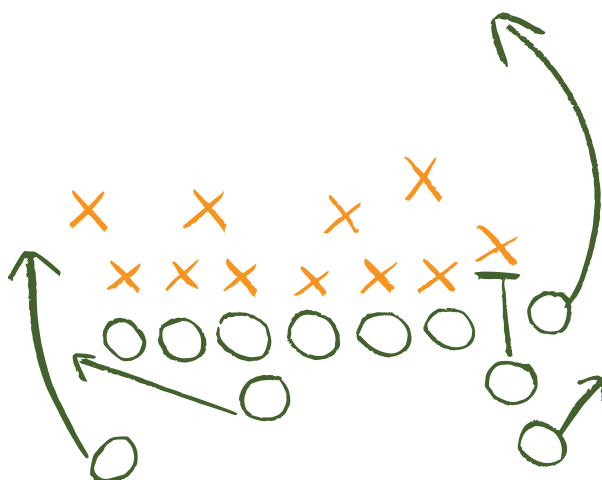






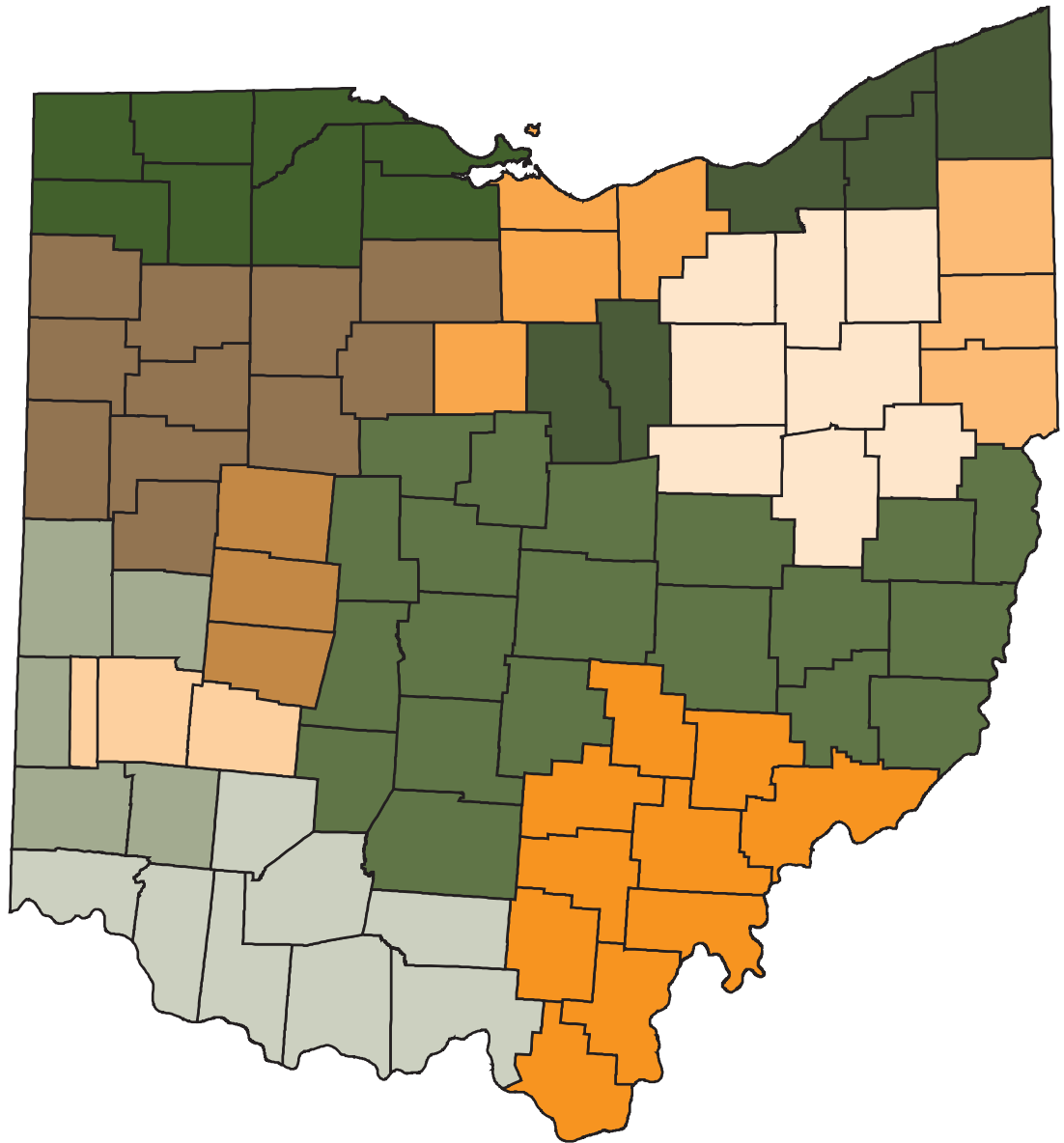
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# OHIO'S 12 FEEDING AMERICA FOODBANKS & MEMBERS OF THE OHIO ASSOCIATION OF FOODBANKS



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| <p><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #f5e6d3; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> <b>Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank</b><br/>Dan Flowers, President &amp; CEO</p> | <p><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #8b4513; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> <b>Second Harvest Food Bank of Clark, Champaign, &amp; Logan</b><br/>Tyra Jackson, Executive Director</p> |
| <p><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #f4a460; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> <b>The Foodbank, Inc.</b><br/>Michelle Riley, CEO</p>                          | <p><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #f4a460; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> <b>Second Harvest Food Bank of the Mahoning Valley</b><br/>Michael Iberis, Executive Director</p>         |
| <p><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #c8e6c9; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> <b>Freestore Foodbank</b><br/>Kurt Reiber, President</p>                       | <p><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #f4a460; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> <b>Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio</b><br/>Juliana Chase-Morefield, Executive Director</p> |
| <p><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #2e7d32; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> <b>Greater Cleveland Food Bank</b><br/>Kristin Warzocha, President and CEO</p> | <p><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #c8e6c9; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> <b>Shared Harvest Foodbank</b><br/>Terry Perdue, Executive Director</p>                                   |
| <p><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #2e7d32; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> <b>Mid-Ohio Foodbank</b><br/>Matt Habash, President &amp; CEO</p>              | <p><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #2e7d32; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> <b>Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank</b><br/>James Caldwell, President &amp; CEO</p>                     |
| <p><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #f4a460; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> <b>SE Ohio Foodbank &amp; Kitchen</b><br/>Andrew Mayle, Executive Director</p> | <p><span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #8b4513; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> <b>West Ohio Food Bank</b><br/>Tommie Harner, CEO</p>   |



## A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Congratulations on your election to the 134th Ohio General Assembly!

Food insecurity is a symptom of larger, systemic issues: poverty, income inequality, insufficient wages, racial inequity, weakened social safety nets, rising housing costs, food access gaps, and much more. The COVID-19 pandemic has severely exacerbated these issues for millions of Ohioans. To respond effectively, we need the public, private, and charitable sectors working together on the same team.

Ohio has a remarkable history of bipartisan support for effective public-private partnerships that alleviate and prevent hunger. State legislators like you can be champions for the hundreds of thousands of Ohio families that rely on foodbanks for help each year. We're proud to have worked with legislators on both sides of the aisle to develop and implement proven, **win-win** programs and sound policies.

This playbook gives you the information you need to use your influence to raise awareness about the issue of hunger, pass legislation that strengthens our response to hunger, and work with state agencies to ensure effective policies are in place.

We look forward to working on your team to promote the nutrition and well-being of all Ohioans as we work to recover from the ill effects of COVID-19 and to refocus resources on vulnerable populations.

Sincerely,

Lisa Hamler-Fugitt  
*Executive Director*  
Ohio Association of Foodbanks  
[lisa@ohiofoodbanks.org](mailto:lisa@ohiofoodbanks.org)



## THE OPPONENT: HUNGER IN OHIO

### Nearly 1.5 Million Ohioans Lived in Poverty in 2019<sup>1</sup>

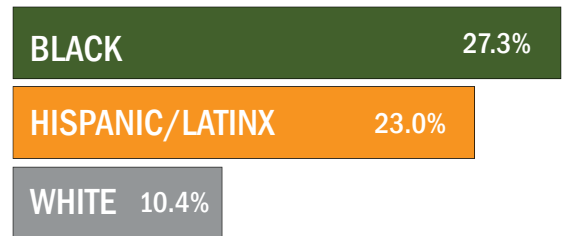
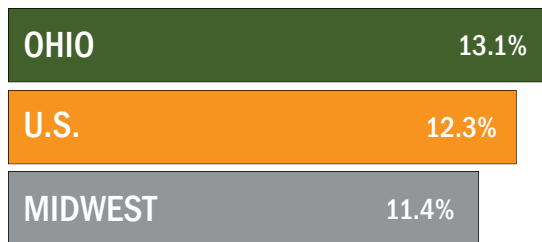
More than ten years after the end of the Great Recession, Ohio's poverty rate remained over 13 percent. Black Ohioans were nearly 2.5 times more likely than white residents to live in poverty.

**Ohio's poverty rate is the highest of any state in the Midwest region.**

Nearly 1 in 5 Ohio kids lived in poverty in 2019, including more than 1 in 4 kids under 5.

**Poverty rates for racial minorities in Ohio demonstrate significant racial inequity.**

Two in five people working full- or part-time, year-round, in Ohio in 2019 still lived in poverty.

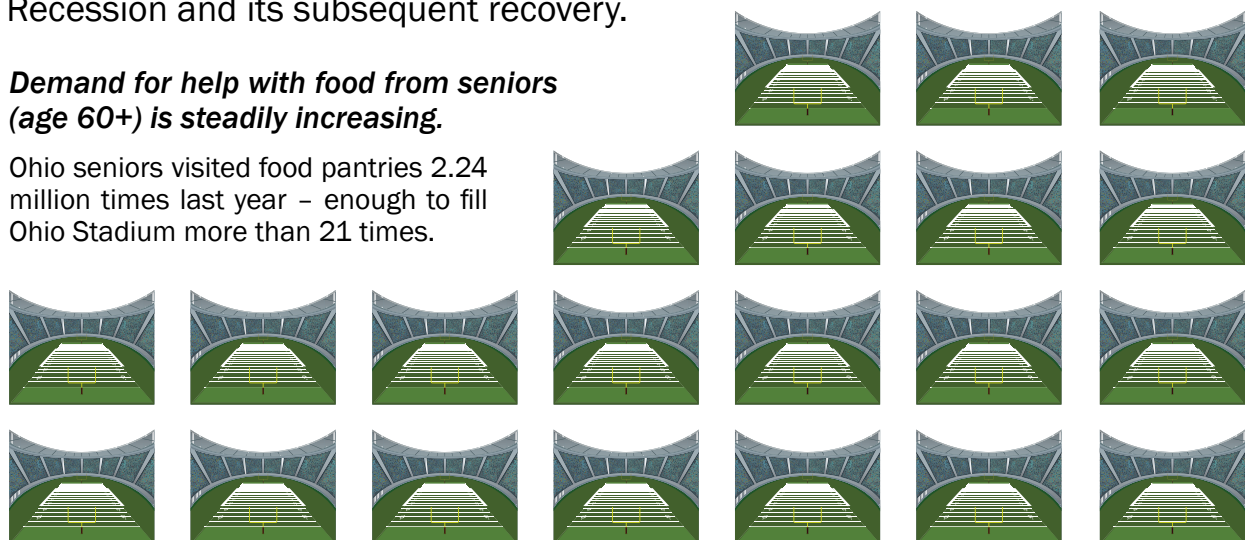


### COVID-19 Has Exacerbated Food and Economic Insecurity<sup>2</sup>

Feeding America estimates that nearly 1 in 5 Ohioans - including more than 1 in 4 Ohio children - were food insecure in 2020. Overall food insecurity in Ohio was higher in 2020 than at any time during the Great Recession and its subsequent recovery.

**Demand for help with food from seniors (age 60+) is steadily increasing.**

Ohio seniors visited food pantries 2.24 million times last year - enough to fill Ohio Stadium more than 21 times.





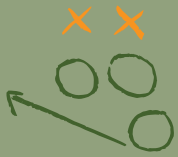


## HOW WE BATTLE HUNGER EACH DAY

### About the Ohio Association of Foodbanks

Our mission is to provide food and other resources to people in need and to pursue areas of common interest for the benefit of people in need. We proudly represent Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks, their nearly 3,600 member food pantries, soup kitchens, and other hunger relief agencies, and the millions of Ohioans they serve each year.

#### ***Securing and distributing emergency food***



Our statewide hunger relief network distributed 270 million pounds of food to Ohioans in need last year. More than 20 percent of that food came from the state-funded Ohio Food Program and Agricultural Clearance Program (OFPACP). For an average of just 38 cents a pound, we distributed 32.7 million pounds of surplus Ohio-grown fruits and vegetables and 18.1 million pounds of protein items and shelf-stable foods through OFPACP. Those products made up some of the most wholesome foods available to Ohioans struggling to afford food on their own.

#### ***Addressing child hunger***



Children are particularly vulnerable to hunger, and several federal programs, including the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program and the Summer Food Service Program, exist to help prevent children from going hungry. However, children experience higher rates of food insecurity during out-of-school time. We partner with the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to implement programs that feed children left underserved by the federal SFSP and most recently worked with Ohio JFS and partners to promote access to Pandemic EBT.

#### ***SNAP outreach***



The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) is our nation's most critical line of defense against hunger. But applying for SNAP can often be intimidating and overwhelming for people in crisis, which is why we have partnered with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to conduct SNAP outreach throughout Ohio for more than 15 years. We believe the best way to feed hungry people is by putting them in grocery store lines, where what they spend circulates back into local economies.

#### ***Public policy advocacy***



We know that elected officials at the state and federal levels can't be experts on every issue, and we're proud to serve as a resource for lawmakers as they create and implement policies that impact Ohioans struggling with hunger and poverty. Our role as advocates is to educate elected representatives and other public officials about issues related to hunger and work collaboratively toward effective policy solutions. With 30 years experience in implementing public-private partnerships, we strongly believe in the critical role that government plays in addressing hunger.



## THE COSTS OF LETTING HUNGER PREVAIL

### Food Insecurity Worsens Health Outcomes<sup>3</sup>

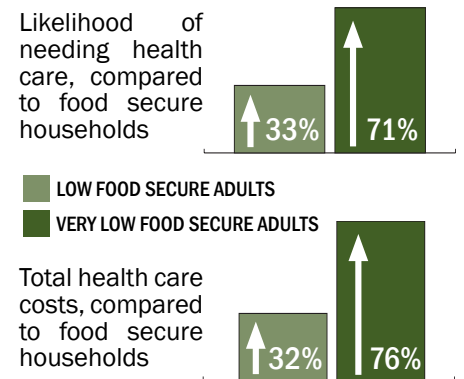
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that health care usage and expenditures increased when SNAP (food stamp) benefits decreased, while a modest increase in SNAP benefits contributed to slower growth in health care usage.

*In counties with high food insecurity<sup>4</sup>:*



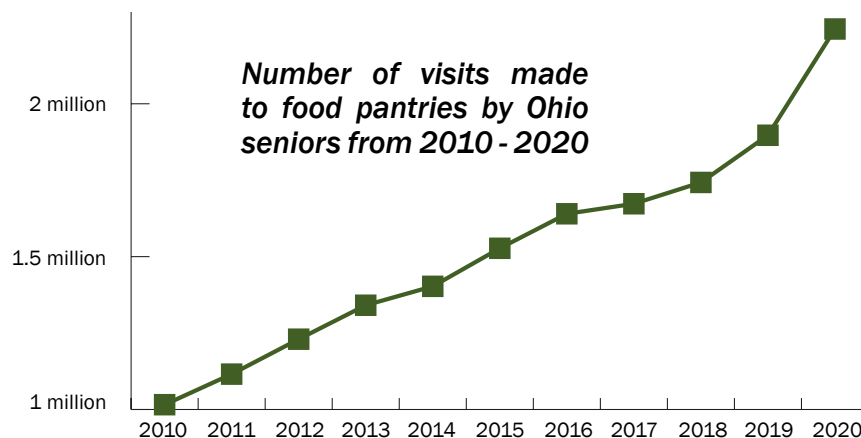
Food insecure households often consume less nutritious foods because they are less expensive. An inadequate diet can lead to toxic stress, poor nutrition, and chronic diet-related diseases.<sup>6</sup>

*Food insecurity is linked to higher health care usage and costs<sup>5</sup>:*



### Older Adults Increasingly Rely on Help from Foodbanks<sup>7</sup>

While the COVID-19 public health and economic crises exacerbated food insecurity for Ohioans of all ages, including displaced workers and families with children, it also worsened an already growing senior hunger crisis in Ohio. The number of seniors seeking help with food continues to increase each year.



*Food insecurity in seniors worsens and exacerbates aging issues<sup>8</sup>*

Rates of high blood pressure, asthma, depression, chest pain, and limits to activity are higher for food insecure seniors.

Chronic conditions and diseases limit employability and increase health care costs.



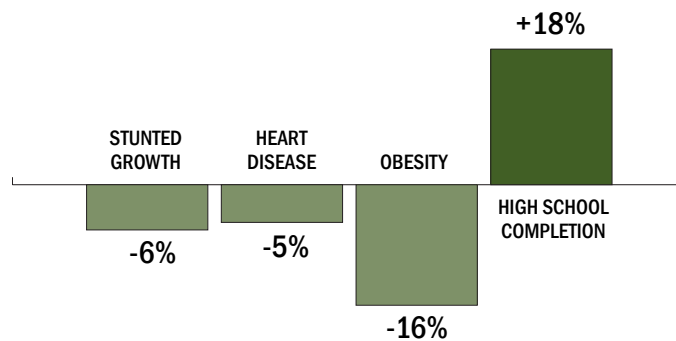
## SNAP: OUR MOST IMPORTANT DEFENSE AGAINST HUNGER

### SNAP Linked to Many Improvements in Health Outcomes, Lower Costs<sup>9</sup>

The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides about 1.4 million Ohioans with an average of \$122 per person, per month to help purchase food.<sup>10</sup> Access to SNAP improves food security in the short-term and contributes to improved health and household stability in the long-term.

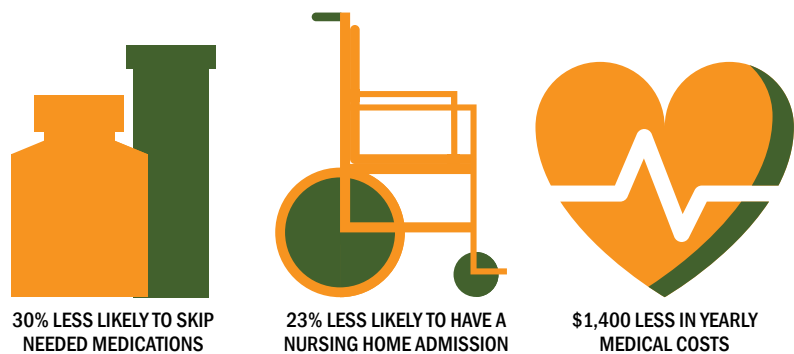
**SNAP improves birth outcomes, lowers risk of chronic conditions, and supports academic achievement.<sup>11</sup>**

Researchers found that SNAP had a profound long-term impact on health and wellbeing. Adults who had access to SNAP as children fared better in many categories when compared with similar children who did not have access to SNAP.



**SNAP provides critical support to low-income elderly individuals.**

When compared to low-income elderly individuals who do not participate in SNAP, elderly SNAP participants have lower health care costs, are more likely to adhere to medication regimens, and spend less time in hospitals and nursing homes.<sup>12</sup>



### SNAP Boosts Local Economies, Supports Workers<sup>13</sup>

SNAP recipients redeem benefits at nearly 10,000 retailers in Ohio - primarily supermarkets and superstores. In 2019, SNAP recipients redeemed about \$2 billion in completely federally-funded food assistance dollars at grocers and other food retailers in their local communities.

In Ohio, 1 in 11 workers (about 496,100 statewide) participate in SNAP.<sup>14</sup> These workers earn low wages, working unpredictable and demanding schedules, and they rely on SNAP to keep food on the table for their families.





## **OHIO FOOD PROGRAM & AGRICULTURAL CLEARANCE PROGRAM**

### **Providing wholesome food to families in need for pennies on the pound**

The Ohio Food Program and Agricultural Clearance Program (OFPACP) has received bipartisan support from 5 governors and 12 Ohio General Assemblies since its creation in the 1998/99 state budget. OFPACP provides more than 20 percent of all of the food distributed statewide by Ohio’s 12 Feeding America foodbanks and their 3,600 member food pantries, soup kitchens, and other hunger relief agencies.

#### ***Ohio Food Program***

- Provided 22 million pounds of food in state fiscal year 2020
- Distributed items include proteins and shelf-stable foods, like eggs, soup, milk, pasta, canned fruits and vegetables, macaroni and cheese, and peanut butter
- Average pound of food cost 71 cents
- Keeps wholesome, staple foods on the shelves of 3,600 hunger relief agencies

#### ***Ohio Agricultural Clearance Program***

- Provided 32.1 million pounds of food in state fiscal year 2020
- Distributed items are all grown by 65+ Ohio farmers; products include apples, onions, potatoes, squash, cabbage, tomatoes, corn, carrots, peppers, and more
- Average pound of food cost 22 cents
- Salvages surplus agriculture products that would otherwise go to waste

### **Making an economic impact while fighting hunger**

Not only does OFPACP and other state-funded food provide nutritious food to Ohio families in need, but it also generates additional direct and indirect economic output, including job creation, right here in Ohio.<sup>15</sup>

SFY 2020	Direct Economic Impact	Indirect Economic Impact	Total Economic Impact
Value of Output	\$18.9 million	\$20.9 million	\$39.2 million
Income Generated			\$11.5 million
Jobs Created in Ohio			401



## **ESSENTIAL NON-FOOD HOUSEHOLD ITEMS**

### **Providing access to basic necessities for low-income Ohioans**

The COVID-19 crisis laid bare many entrenched disparities. The early recommendations to purchase and store a 14-day supply of food in the event of a household quarantine; the rush to purchase toilet paper and hand sanitizer; the rising food prices and lack of access to in-demand products; all of these scenarios shed light on longstanding challenges for low-income households. With little to no remaining income after paying bills, low-wage workers and seniors living on fixed incomes struggle to afford personal care and personal hygiene items like shampoo, toothpaste, baby wipes, and child and adults diapers, household paper products like toilet paper and paper towels, and other essential household items. SNAP does not allow recipients to purchase these items, and no other federal or state funds directly cover or fund these items.

With investment from the State of Ohio, the Ohio Association of Foodbanks will use its statewide purchasing power and emergency distribution network to provide access to these critical items to Ohioans with limited resources. Products will be secured and distributed based on local population needs identified by regional foodbanks.

## **EQUIPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENTS**

### **Modernizing to increase fresh, healthy food access**

Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks are emphasizing healthy, fresh fruits, vegetables, protein items, and dairy items more than ever. But our network of 3,600 hunger relief agencies, serving all of Ohio's 88 counties, need reliable infrastructure to quickly and safely store and distribute large quantities of fresh food.

In 2020, the State of Ohio's \$500,000 initial investment in capacity building provided 116 refrigerators, 94 freezers, and dozens of hand trucks, pallet jacks, and other food handling equipment to 149 local hunger relief agencies in 56 counties. Additional investments will help maximize our network's ability to store, transport, and distribute fresh, healthy foods to hungry Ohioans, especially in areas with limited food access.



## **SUPPORTING AN EQUITABLE RECOVERY FOR ALL OHIOANS**

### **Investing federal dollars in basic needs for low-income households**

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks has partnered with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to conduct SNAP outreach for more than 15 years. Foodbanks invest matching, privately-raised dollars to maximize efforts to connect low-income households to the nation's most critical line of defense against hunger, helping them navigate the benefit application process and maintain access to food assistance dollars.

But access to SNAP is just the first step in leveraging federal dollars to support Ohioans and Ohio's economy. In the short-term, pass-through federal funds like CARES Act dollars should be invested in food assistance, rental and mortgage assistance, local public services, and other efforts to keep more families from economic devastation in the midst of the public health crisis.

Hundreds of millions of dollars remain in the State of Ohio's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) 'Sustainability Fund Balance.' At the same time, more than one in four children in Ohio (27.1 percent) were food insecure in 2020.<sup>16</sup> As of early December 2020, nearly half of children live in households that have trouble covering usual expenses.<sup>17</sup> The annual TANF block grant is already woefully inadequate, providing basic cash assistance to just 25 of every 100 Ohio families in poverty.<sup>18</sup> TANF dollars are federal funds paid for by Ohio taxpayers and should be invested in meeting the basic needs of low-income families.

Additionally, the State of Ohio should use its flexibility and administrative authority to maximize access to federally-funded programs like SNAP for working families. For example, the State of Ohio could raise the gross income limit for SNAP eligibility up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level, so that more low-wage workers with children could access this nutrition lifeline.





## POTENTIAL PITFALLS: WHAT MAKES EFFECTIVE LEGISLATION?

### The two simple litmus tests for any legislation impacting hungry Ohioans

When considering any proposals that would affect programs and policies that serve food insecure Ohio families, we encourage you to ask:

*Will this proposal improve the food security of Ohioans?*

*Will this proposal use taxpayer dollars responsibly?*

	Will this proposal improve the food security of Ohioans?	Will this proposal use taxpayer dollars responsibly?
Proposals to “increase fraud prevention and oversight” of SNAP by means such as increased frequency of eligibility verifications	No, it would put additional barriers in place for vulnerable people	No, it would increase administrative costs exponentially, and likely lead to additional quality control errors by caseworkers
Proposals to require photo identification when shopping with SNAP benefits	No, it would erroneously remove program participants from SNAP using tactics that have been proven unsuccessful in other states	No, it would increase administrative costs exponentially, in addition to placing an added burden on private grocers and retailers
Proposals to make existing work requirements harsher, more punitive in order to receive SNAP benefits	No, it would force many low-wage, contingent workers off of SNAP without improving their employment prospects	No, it would increase administrative costs while forfeiting federal dollars owed to the State of Ohio
Proposals to restrict access to SNAP, such as by eliminating categorical eligibility or mandating child support cooperation	No, it would undermine access to basic federal food assistance through punitive and harmful restrictions	No, it would forfeit federal funds owed to Ohio taxpayers and the State of Ohio and increase administrative costs

Ohio Revised Code requires that members of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks network serve all Ohioans with incomes up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level. In 2019, more than 3.4 million Ohioans lived in households with incomes at or below that threshold. Any proposal that takes SNAP benefits or other income-supporting benefits out of the pockets of low-income Ohioans places more strain on our statewide hunger relief network.



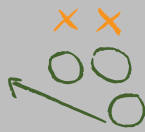
## STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS: OUR BUDGET REQUEST

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks is requesting \$45 million per year over the 2022-2023 biennium (\$90 million total) to fund emergency hunger relief efforts and help Ohioans meet their basic needs throughout the COVID-19 recovery.



### ***Ohio Food Program & Agricultural Clearance Program***

\$32 million per year to secure, transport, store, and distribute at least 71 million pounds of nutritious, wholesome foods at an average of just 38 cents per pound.



### ***Emergency Access to Essential Household Items***

\$12 million per year to secure, transport, store, and distribute basic non-food items that cannot be purchased with SNAP benefits, such as personal care and personal hygiene products.



### ***Capacity Building Resources for Charitable Organizations***

\$1 million per year to provide hunger relief agencies with updated refrigeration and freezer equipment and other tools for safely and efficiently handling and distributing fresh foods.

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks encourages the State of Ohio to invest additional federal pass-through dollars, including Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant funds and CARES Act funds, in meeting the basic needs of low-income Ohioans.



### ***Support an Equitable Recovery for All Ohioans***

Invest more of Ohio's federal TANF block grant in basic needs, including food, homelessness prevention, and basic cash assistance for families with children.

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