



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Second Harvest Food Bank has witnessed a significant increase in demand. As a non-profit organization, we work to fight food insecurity in three counties here in Ohio- Clark, Champaign, and Logan counties. When the pandemic hit, many Ohioans lost their job and relied on our resources here at SHFB. We have an array of programs to reach as many people as possible, including drive-thru distribution pantries, Commodity Boxes for seniors over the age of 60 and at 130% under the poverty guideline, continuing our Summer Feeding program for children in the summer when free breakfast and lunch isn't available due to school being out. In addition to all these programs, we also launched our emergency box distribution program for those who need assistance but do not have the transportation to pick up food at pantries or distribution sites.

While sustaining and creating new programs to meet the new demand, SHFB saw a 200% increase in budget expenses. It is critical to our community members that there is an increase in state funding to support their needs as the pandemic continues to impact families. From 2019 to 2020, we saw a 76% increase in individuals served, 93% increase in children served, 96% increase in seniors served, and 116% increase in meals served. In 2019, we distributed almost 5 million meals; however, in 2020, this more than doubled, serving over 10 million meals to over 65,000 people.

In addition to the pandemic, our Clark County community faced a devastating loss in 2020 when the south side Kroger grocery store closed. The closing of this store affected nearly 30,000 people as it was their only source of nutritious food. This store closing caused the South Side of Springfield to become a larger food desert, leaving the closest grocery store option to be an hour and fifteen-minute walk one way. As if the pandemic wasn't enough, losing this store drastically affected the Clark County community and ultimately Ohioans as a whole.

Hunger is an urgent problem in Ohio and needs to be addressed. Feeding America estimates that nearly 1 in 5 Ohioans experienced food insecurity in 2020. Here in our service area of Clark, Champaign, and



Logan Counties, we see 1 in 7 of our neighbors facing food insecurity. As we continue with our programs, we need to expand our offerings to reach more people, especially those without transportation or accessibility. Second Harvest Food Bank is looking to start a SNAP Application program, being a hub for applicants here at the food bank. Hopefully, this will help rebuild households as they find confidence in their access to food rather than relying on a safety-net such as SHFB. However, as we know, Feeding America estimates that over half of the people served by Ohio's foodbanks are not eligible for SNAP. Additional state funding can help SHFB continue with new programs like SNAP while still serving those who are not eligible but still food insecure.

The pandemic has severely affected our community members and how we provide services to them. Not only due to higher unemployment rates but also the idea that due to the pandemic, we have been unable to accept outside food donations for several reasons. This includes spreading the virus and leaving food on the shelves at the grocery store where there was a demand increase. Our due diligence to reduce the virus by not accepting outside donations is a necessary safety precaution. Still, it has affected the way we serve as we do not have this additional food supply source.

We here at Second Harvest Food Bank are requesting an increase in state funding to continue to support our community members. The COVID-19 pandemic is still affecting many families. By being able to provide services- the basic needs like food, and essential non-food items, we can free some of their limited incomes for utilities, housing, health care, etc., not to mention relieve some stress on those who are being affected.

Thank you for your time and consideration as we request the state of Ohio to invest \$12 million in pass-through federal CARES act funding and \$45 million per year in the 2022-23 biennial budget. No one should have to worry about where their next meal is coming from. Help us, help our community.



Best,

Audrey Vanzant

Development Associate

Second Harvest Food Bank of Clark, Champaign and Logan Counties