

2020

report to the
community



Thurston County Food Bank

Working to eliminate hunger in our community for nearly 50 years

From the Executive Director

Reflections on 2020

It is my practice to provide a narrative review of the past year's operations – my perspective of our work and accomplishments over the year. I would share that 2020 was the year of COVID. Organizationally, I broke it into three areas, touched upon here, and discussed further in this report:

Continuity of Operations was clearly our focus in 2020, with the plan implemented in early March. We lost many long-time volunteers. We had to time-travel back to pre-boxed food bags and a reliance on shelf-stable foods. We learned to operate differently – including the transition to outdoor drive-up and walk-up service – to increase the health and safety of our staff and clients, and to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. Further, we had key positions turn over, resulting in reorganized operations.

Product, supply, and government programs were challenging. A three-month inventory of staples lasted about a month. We scrambled to source non-perishable food for sale, only to discover it was bought out and would take months, not weeks, to get product. Local sources helped stretch inventory, but it was touch and go for a bit. PPE was unavailable, insufficient, or poor quality. Information was confusing and consistent guidance rare. Government support arrived by the end of April, first with the State of Washington Emergency Response Food boxes, and by August we were locally managing four new State and Federal programs (Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, Charlie's Produce Program, Emergency Response Food Program). In June and July we received 11 to 13 semi-trucks a week, where the WDC is designed to handle one to two. Further, we gave up 20% of storage space to create multiple volunteer work stations for maintaining safe social distancing.

Funding and financial support was strong. By the end of summer, I was managing 26 funding streams with a spectrum of deadlines and rules. Local community members and businesses stepped up. Work to raise our social media profile was propelled to new heights. The work of Food Banks has never had a higher profile. It was a strong, unprecedented financial year. Yes, we purchased previously unimagined amounts of food, equipment and supplies, but we had the financial support.

“ I would close with lifting up the importance of long-standing partnerships, professional relationships, and the power of community. We used every resource, every connection, and every opportunity to get through 2020 successfully. ”

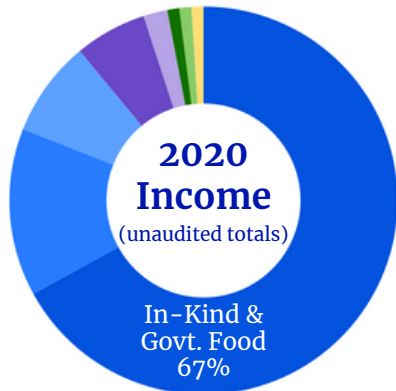
“Mask Monster” and the Executive Director of
the Thurston County Food Bank,

Robert Coit

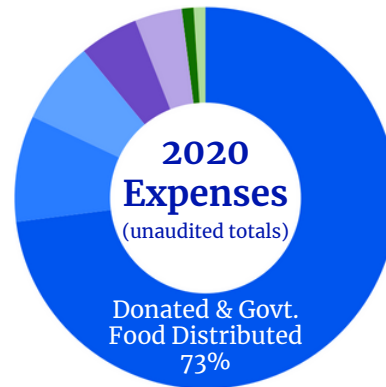


2020 Benchmarks

Income & Expenses



- In-Kind & Govt. Food, 67%
- Private & Fundraising, 14%
- Grants, 8%
- Govt. Contracts, 6%
- Organizations & Misc., 2%
- Businesses, 1%
- Investments, 1%
- Govt. Employee Campaigns, 1%

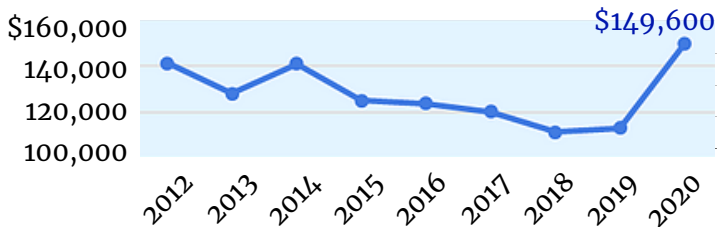


- Donated & Govt. Food Distributed, 73%
- Operations, 9%
- Program Staff Salaries & Benefits, 7%
- Purchased Food, 5%
- Value of Volunteer Hours, 4%
- In-Kind Non-Food Used & Distributed, 1%
- Admin. Staff & Benefits, 1%

Combined Fund Drive

Donations from the State of Washington’s workplace campaign increased 31.9% from 2019, reflecting the generous spirit of community giving during the pandemic. WA State employees have contributed in excess of \$1,000,000 over the last eight years!

Donated Dollars



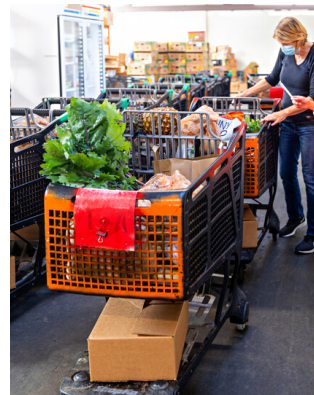
FORKids & Summer Lunch

Our food programs for children were adapted to the challenges brought with COVID, including kids being home from school. In 2020, we reached 5,515 children, distributing a total of 74,438 food bags with the FORKids Backpack program and serving 9,820 lunches through the Summer Lunch Program.

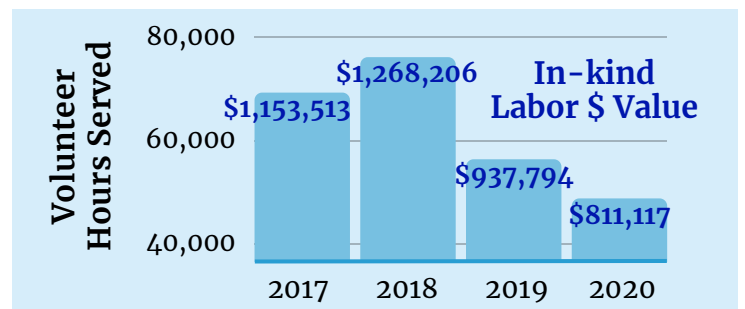
FORKids Statistics	2019	2020
# of children served	2,404	5,515
# of regular bags	61,399	59,590
# of large weekend bags	981	13,245
# of summer weekend bags	1,016	560
# of summer meals	7,354	9,820
# of fresh produce bags	195	1,043
# of volunteer hours	4,861	3,634
Total costs to provide food:	\$297,402	\$486,424

Volunteers

With a community-wide effort, volunteers made it happen! We lost much of our volunteer workforce and moved to a stream of just-in-time volunteers, National Guard, Red Cross and a dozen hardy individuals. While our volunteer demographic evolved with the pandemic, they remained resilient, adapting to shifting safety protocols and service models.



We **thank you** for your continual support. You are invaluable assets in fulfilling our mission to end hunger in our community!



2020 Benchmarks, continued

Client Distribution & Services

The Food Bank served approximately 21,081 households (68,882 individuals) in 2020, an increase of about 20% over 2019, and visits were up by at least 43%. About 21% of our clients were seniors and 49% were children.

Total Operations	Benchmark Year 2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% Change 2019–2020
Households	15,571	15,851	16,325	17,937	21,081	18%
Individuals	52,222	55,626	57,251	57,441	68,882	20%
Visits	305,022	327,888	365,005	423,037	605,062	43%
Other Visits	17,210	17,414	17,521	17,351	19,444	12%



With the onset of COVID-19, modified client services and distributions were driven by the need to follow safety protocols, WA state guidelines, local health department information, and directives from our Food Bank Board of Directors.

Olympia's Client Service Center shifted to drive-up and walk-up service three days a week to meet the needs of vulnerable populations and those with special needs. Pop-up or drive-through operations were established with the partners listed (at right), providing a safe and efficient way to reach our clients closer to their homes.

Pop-Up Distribution Partners:

- Saint Martin's University, Lacey
- Evergreen Christian Community, Olympia
- Mountain View Church, Tumwater
- The Evergreen State College, unincorporated Thurston County
- South Puget Sound Community College, Tumwater

Home Delivery Services were established with the coordination of staff and committed volunteers delivering food boxes, and later fresh and frozen foods, to older adults in a limited area. A partnership with Senior Services for South Sound Meals on Wheels program expanded our reach. Most of our existing Satellite Food Bank partners remained open, shifting to drive-through models, and our Mobile Food Bank system transitioned to door-to-door deliveries.

Home Delivery Program

Home Delivery is another COVID mitigation program implemented in 2020, but here to stay. Regardless of the pandemic, transportation and physical limitations make it difficult for some to access the Food Bank. This was exacerbated during COVID, when many vulnerable clients could no longer take public transport, go shopping, or have family members in public. To remove these barriers, TCFB staff developed the Home Delivery Program, in which volunteers deliver a full visit's worth of groceries to CSFP-eligible clients' homes, across Thurston County. (CSFP, or Commodity Supplemental Food Program, refers to federally funded food for seniors).

Each visit consists of a box of nonperishables, a produce box, dairy and meat, and a senior box for qualified clients. Volunteers use their own vehicles, making up to six deliveries in one route, and place the groceries on the client's doorstep.

From April through December of 2020, the Home Delivery Program served **1,464 households** with **5,428 deliveries**.



COVID-19 Pandemic Response

The Warehouse & Distribution Center

Our Warehouse & Distribution Center (WDC) in Tumwater, the primary facility for receiving product, building boxes, and delivering to partnering organizations, saw a huge increase in demand as a result of COVID-19. In 2020, we expanded our current capacity to increase the number of COVID relief boxes built each week, which comprised shelf-stable food, fresh produce, and deli and bread boxes. The WDC transitioned to facilitate additional food deliveries with designated space to store adequate supplies of pre-made food boxes in response to the pandemic. This effort was necessary to support our pandemic-era distribution plan, which suspended visit limits, allowing clients unlimited access to food on a weekly basis.



State Food Programs



The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) provides access to federal foods locally, usually only available to those in Thurston County by income validation with a signature. With the onset of COVID-19 there has been a loosening of the service rules, allowing us to serve anyone in the entire county without signature verification. The state's EFAP program was able to provide a new grant to those distributing food, which provided us funding to add vehicles to our fleet, warehouse racking, and a freezer/cooler unit for our Lacey Food Pantry.



Other Bank

With lock-down mandates came a frenzy of buying to stock up on hygiene items. With the high demand for body soap, laundry soap, and toilet paper, the Other Bank Program became even more of a necessity for the households we serve. By summer, we provided cleaning supplies at our pop-up locations weekly and hygiene bags monthly.



As with our food distributions, the Other Bank quickly switched gears to a pre-packed model in order to provide safer services during COVID. Each type of bag has about

5 different items: the key items include toilet paper, reusable face masks (many handmade by volunteers), and laundry soap; and rotating items include tooth brush and toothpaste, razors and shaving cream, deodorant, shampoo, bar soap, and cleaning supplies.



COVID-19 Pandemic Response, continued

CPODs/Pop-Ups

Responding to challenges brought by the pandemic, TCFB sought alternative distribution models to continue serving the community as safely as possible. One model is the Community Point of Distribution (CPODs, also known as Pop-Ups) – drive-through style pop-up food banks which provide portability and flexibility in food distribution, as well as speed, ease of access, and social distancing for clients. CPOD locations at their peak included five sites; 2 partnered with Faith-based Communities and 3 with Colleges/Universities. We provided every household with shelf-stable food boxes, a produce box, a box of bread, a fresh first box, frozen protein, and a box of Starbucks items when available.

Between April and December of 2020, we held **52 Pop-Up food distributions** which served **8,094 households**.



Through community partnerships, we provided other important services at CPODs along with nutritious foods. We partnered with Thurston County Emergency Management to distribute

masks, with Dry Tikes & Wet Wipes to provide diapers and other baby items, and with South Sound Reading Foundation to give out books for kids and adults.



The CPOD/Pop-Up system is an example of a COVID mitigation program that was so successful it is here to stay in some capacity, even beyond the pandemic.

Federal Foods

The Thurston County Food Bank distributed 1,469,848 pounds of Federal Commodities (TEFAP and CSFP) in 2020, an increase of 52.1% from 2019. On average, families received over 66 pounds of federal food each month, in addition to purchased and donated fresh, frozen and shelf-stable food.

With COVID-19, our distribution work increased, supporting more agencies through new partnerships. This growth, especially into other counties, positively impacted the agencies we support and ultimately reduced the incidence of food insecurity in previously underserved areas.

Pounds of Federal Foods per Household

	Lbs. distributed	Household visits (1/mo.)	Lbs./home/month
2020	1,469,848	22,198	66.22
2019	966,575	24,270	39.83

In order to reduce barriers to food access for our vulnerable clients during the pandemic, TCFB implemented changes to federal foods distributions. We distributed CSFP directly to seniors via our new Home Delivery program, increasing the reach of our existing Satellite program. Additionally, TEFAP eligibility rules loosened, allowing us to serve anyone in Thurston County, not just the defined service areas of Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, Littlerock and Rainier.



Federal foods distribution increased 52.1% from 2019 levels



Program Highlights

Holiday Distributions

The annual Thanksgiving logistical challenge was further complicated by COVID. Primarily to avoid households having to visit the Food Bank twice, we distributed

Location	T-Day	Xmas
Satellites	905	912
Home Delivery	482	482
Mobiles	109	109
Outside Agencies	362	89
Olympia CSC	1,400	50
Lacey Pop-Up	400	375
5,675 Total Holiday Boxes:	3,658	2,017

a larger basic food box (built in June/July) along with the Thanksgiving boxes (built in August) – plus a box of bread, produce, Starbucks, and a turkey (a whole chicken to small households). During the Christmas holiday, we followed the same system, but distributed holiday boxes at the Olympia CSC only by special request. We did however distribute turkeys.



Fresh, Local Produce in a Pandemic

Olympia Kiwanis Food Bank Gardens



The COVID pandemic affected many areas of our lives and the gardens were no exception. In March, we decided to proceed with our crop plan and grow food for what was to be a financially devastating year for many. Fresh produce from the gardens was especially critical to increase the health and immunity of our community. The importance of local sources of food was highlighted by shortages on grocery store shelves in the spring. Food from local farms, including our gardens, became a safety net to ensure community resilience. Volunteers and Kiwanis members donated **2,542 hours** of their time to grow **33 crop varieties** – a total of **25,400 pounds** of high-nutrient produce to bolster our community in 2020.



Gleaning Program

TCFB gleaning volunteers are committed to reducing food waste by rescuing, fresh, nutritious, local produce to help our neighbors facing food insecurity. We had a successful 2020 season, as they embraced a COVID-safe outdoor opportunity. Abundant crops were potatoes, cabbage, beets, cucumbers, turnips, carrots, onions, summer squash, and kale. In addition to our three consistent gleaning donors (Calliope, Kirsop, & Helsing Junction Farms), we had a welcome increase in donations from the Washington Corrections Center's Hope Garden in Shelton.



2020 Totals

- 29,797 lbs. gleaned (2,784 more than in 2019)
- >51 crop types
- \$54,231 value; 119,188 4-ounce servings
- 67 gleans at 8 sites (4 regular donor farms)
- 23 unique volunteers, 262 volunteer hours



Thank You to our 2020 Board of Directors

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