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For Immediate Release

HIGH PLAINS FOOD BANK DISTRIBUTES 1.1 MILLION POUNDS OF FOOD DURING JUNE COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Record-breaking Numbers of Pounds and Families Served

AMARILLO, Texas – July 1, 2020 – High Plains Food Bank distributed 1.1 million pounds of food, serving over 11,000 households in June, making it the largest one-month total in the food bank's history.

"We've seen the need increase across every county in our service area," said Zack Wilson, executive director for High Plains Food Bank. "Thanks to donors, grants and other sources, we were able to send out the equivalent of about 27 ½ truckloads of food last month in immediate response. But, we know we have a long road ahead of us."

In conjunction with the annual *Map the Meal Gap* study, which uses the most recent data from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Census Bureau, Feeding America has released an [interactive map](#) based on its recently released study, [The Impact of the Coronavirus on Local Food Insecurity](#), which used the *Map the Meal Gap* model to predict changes to food insecurity rates for the overall population and children in response to projected changes to poverty and unemployment in the wake of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. That analysis shows that progress made to food insecurity in the U.S. this past decade will likely be wiped out and food insecurity rates will climb higher than the peak of the Great Recession, potentially going from more than 37 million people facing hunger in 2018 up to more than 54 million in 2020.

"Locally, we estimate that an additional 26,440 people could become food insecure in the wake of the pandemic," Wilson said. "That's 1 in 5 neighbors, including 1 in 3 kids struggling to have enough to eat."

Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization with a network of 200 member food banks, including High Plains Food Bank, has released a *Map the Meal Gap* report for ten consecutive years to offer insights on how food insecurity varies at the local level. Food insecurity is a measure defined by the USDA as lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members.

According to the COVID-19 impact analysis and *Map the Meal Gap*, all counties across the country will likely see increased rates of food insecurity.

Key findings include:

- Overall food insecurity could reach 20.3% across the Texas Panhandle, or 1 in 5 individuals
- Local childhood food insecurity could reach 30.3%, or 1 in 3 children
- 23 counties in the HPFB service area are projected to have 17% or higher rates of food insecurity
- *Map the Meal Gap* also reports on food price variation across counties. Using data from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS), the study finds that, on average, food-secure individuals report spending \$3.09 per person, per meal as of 2018. In the Texas Panhandle the average cost per meal is \$2.98

Map the Meal Gap 2020 uses data from USDA, the Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics and food price data and analysis provided by Nielsen, a global measurement and data analytics company. The study is supported by [Conagra Brands Foundation](#) and [Nielsen](#).

Dr. Craig Gundersen, Professor of Agricultural and Consumer Economics at the University of Illinois, Executive Director of the National Soybean Research Laboratory and a member of Feeding America's Technical Advisory Group is the lead researcher of *Map the Meal Gap 2020* and the food insecurity projection analysis.

The *Map the Meal Gap 2020* [map](#) allows policymakers, state agencies, corporate partners, food banks and advocates to develop integrated strategies to fight hunger on a community level.

Separately, a new [interactive map](#) shows the 2020 food insecurity projections compared to the most recent *Map the Meal Gap* data. To account for local unemployment variation, this new analysis adjusts the national annual unemployment projection due to COVID-19 using projected changes in the unemployment rate by industry and occupation from [Goldman Sachs Investment Research](#) and actual percentages of workers by industry from the American Community Survey.

Along with the interactive map and visualizations, Feeding America has also [published](#) a series of report briefs, including a summary of key findings as well as analyses on child food insecurity, food price variation and health, disability and food insecurity.

“In order to continue alleviating hunger for the growing numbers of individuals and families thrust into food insecurity from COVID-19, we’re going to need ongoing support for the long-term recovery,” Wilson said. “With every \$1 that comes in, we can provide 5 meals to neighbors in need.”

One-time or recurring donations can be made at www.hpfb.org/donate.

About High Plains Food Bank

High Plains Food Bank’s mission is to alleviate hunger in the Texas Panhandle. HPFB secures, sorts, stores, and distributes food to about 195 feeding partners, across the top 29 counties in Texas. These food pantries provide a safety net that provides food assistance directly to the 1 in 7 neighbors, including 1 in 5 children, who struggle with food insecurity. In 2019, HPFB distributed a record-breaking 9.03 million pounds of food.

To combat food insecurity and improve the overall health of people we serve, HPFB provides a variety of community programs, including: Kids Cafe, Direct Mobile Distribution, a senior adult food box program (CSFP), Mobile Harvest produce distribution, and nutrition education through The Garden at High Plains Food Bank. HPFB can also help individuals apply for SNAP, CHIP, and Medicaid and refer them to other organizations and programs that can help them establish food security, improved health, and self-sufficiency.

In addition to fighting hunger and supporting better health, food banking decreases waste by distributing food that would otherwise go uneaten to people who need it. Visit www.hpfb.org, and engage with HPFB on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

*High Plains Food Bank is an equal opportunity provider.

About Feeding America

Feeding America® is the largest hunger-relief organization in the United States. Through a network of 200 food banks and 60,000 food pantries and meal programs, we provide meals to more than 40 million people each year. Feeding America also supports programs that prevent food waste and improve food security among the people we serve; educates the public about the problem of hunger; and advocates for legislation that protects people from going hungry. Visit www.feedingamerica.org, find us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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