



HELP FEED OUR COMMUNITY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Indianapolis has a chronic food insecurity problem. One in five Marion County residents has a need for food assistance, and in any given week, 47,000 people miss meals because they can't afford food. That is the norm, and with COVID-19, we're now facing a new normal. As service workers and others lose their jobs and students go without school meals, **the need for food has sharply increased.**

At the same time, the vast majority of people who run Marion County's 190 food pantries are volunteers over the age of 60. They are particularly vulnerable to the virus, and many are wisely staying home to avoid illness. As a result, several food pantries have already closed in the Greater Indianapolis area.

We need your help. People facing poverty and food insecurity are vulnerable to this virus due to having higher rates of chronic disease and a lack of access to preventative health care. Our community needs assistance as much as it ever has, and the emergency food system needs your help to keep running.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

1. Donate money to food pantries.

Pantries are able to access less expensive foods by purchasing in bulk and sourcing food from food banks. As a result, pantries are able to stretch money further than a typical retail buyer can. If you want to make an immediate impact on the community, consider financially supporting a local food pantry. To find a list of food pantries that are currently open during this crisis, see www.indyhunger.org/find-help. Many pantries have online giving options.

2. Volunteer to pack or deliver food boxes.

Food pantries need a lot of volunteer help right now, and they have shifted operations to minimize social contact. If you are in good health and not vulnerable to the virus, please consider volunteering your time. Most food pantries have temporarily switched from a client choice or shopping model to a more hands-off approach of distributing pre-packed boxes of food. Pantries need help packing these boxes for clients to pick up at the pantry. To see a list of local food pantries that need volunteer help right now, visit www.indyhunger.org/volunteer-with-our-partners. There is also a need for volunteers to deliver pantry boxes to folks who are too vulnerable to leave the house (e.g. elderly, immunocompromised, or pregnant people). To learn more about delivering pantry boxes, email msonger@indhunger.org.

3. Connect people in need to available resources.

Many food assistance programs have temporarily changed their hours or operations, and it can be hard to keep track of what's available. Indy Hunger Network is keeping an updated list of food pantry and meal sites as well as links to other resources at <https://www.indyhunger.org/find-help>.

If you need help finding the pantry nearest you or if you have any questions, please contact Indy Hunger Network at pantrysummit@indhunger.org.

