



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

COVID-19 Hunger Relief Response

AFDO Conference June, 2021

Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA)
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Big Picture: COVID-19 Hunger Relief Impacts



Leadership: Coordination & Communication & Broad Response

WSDA Director Sandison created new pathways for supporting the emergency food system, worked with the Governor's office to establish the Food Security Coordination Team, worked to offset food supply chain disruptions, and provided increased funding to deal with this crisis.

Key Issues/Solutions:

- Dramatic Increases in **People** needing Food
- Food Supply; Food Safety
- Capacity (volunteers, storage, mass distributions)
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Communications; Reducing Client Access Barriers
- Partnerships; Emergency Management
- Shift in operations from workplace to home

Food Assistance Response & Lessons Learned



Key Responses:

- Increased Food Supply & PPE
 - Fresh Produce Boxes – food pantries/farmers
 - Airline Meals from a devastated industry
 - Pilot Programs – Farm to Freezer
 - Emergency Food Boxes
 - Support Agriculture
- Increased Capacity
 - Volunteer Replace – National Guard
 - Operational funding for hunger relief organizations
 - Infrastructure
 - Reserve Warehouse
- Fill the Gaps
 - Be Nimble
 - Maximize USDA Resources & Disaster Household Distribution Plan

Lessons Learned:

- Anticipate long-term recovery
- Continue to improve food supply/agriculture
 - Fresh Produce Boxes – food pantries/farmers
 - Food Procurement
- Hunger relief organizations need increased foundational funding
- Flexible funding was essential to fill gaps and make system improvements quickly
- Look for ways to provide “advance” funding for capacity improvements at the local level
- Lack of funding and/or at the “right” time from multiple state and federal sources
- Understand the long-term stress impacts on hunger relief organizations, staff, partners and communities
- Reducing Client Access Barriers

Celebrate the Good Things in a Tough Year



Thank YOU!