

Priority Response Area: Food Access

Rationale:

Among the unprecedented economic impacts of coronavirus happening in our state, access to food has emerged as a major need for families across Colorado. Hunger relief organizations have long been an important resource for children, youth and families experiencing the greatest barriers to health and well-being. In just a few short weeks, these organizations have responded to a sharp increase in demand for food while having to significantly shift operations to ensure the timely and safe delivery of food.

- Changes have occurred in how hunger relief organizations procure food. Surplus from grocery stores have typically been a major source of fresh and non-perishable food – that supply has decreased significantly. Because of concerns about potential surface transmission of coronavirus, major food banks have asked the community to not donate food but instead support them through cash donations. Even with funds to purchase food, challenges with the food supply chain has led to unpredictable availability.
- Hunger relief programs have had to quickly shift their procedures and protocols for food distribution, changing to pre-packaged methods and distributing through grab-and-go service, drive-through pick-ups and/or deliveries (particularly for clients without transportation). There is an ongoing need for cleaning and protection supplies to ensure safety.
- As more families experience new and exacerbated economic hardship, organizations predict that the need will continue to increase to double or triple the usual demand; however, it is challenging for organizations to predict how much food will be needed and over what period of time.

Colorado's hunger relief system includes the [Feeding Colorado](#) network of five major food banks. Each distributes to a network of local hunger relief programs operated by community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, schools and government agencies across the state. Food Bank of the Rockies and Care and Share have the largest networks (distributing through 600 and 267 local partners, respectively). Collectively, the efforts of the five major food banks and their local networks reach nearly 900,000 annually.

Funding Recommendation

Feeding Colorado Food Banks: \$150,000

- **Food Bank of the Rockies** (30 counties including Metro Denver, Eastern Colorado, I-70 Corridor and Western Slope), \$65,000
- **Care and Share Food Bank** (31 counties in southern Colorado including El Paso and Pueblo), \$65,000
- **Weld Food Bank** (Weld County), \$10,000
- **Community Food Share** (Boulder and Broomfield Counties), \$5,000
- **Food Bank of Larimer County** (Larimer County), \$5,000

Resources/Articles:

- [At a time when they're needed most, Colorado food banks brace for fewer volunteers, shutdown of smaller pantries amid coronavirus fears](#) (Colorado Sun)
- [Coronavirus in Colorado: Empty store shelves impact Food Bank of the Rockies Donations](#) (CBS4 Colorado)