

THE ROADRUNNER ROUNDUP

Fall 2021



MEMBER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**

Drive-Through Food Distributions — A Reality Still Today During the Pandemic



Who knew that parking lots would be in such high demand throughout the pandemic? From large scale testing sites to vaccination events, we too required large parking lots to facilitate safe and socially distanced food distributions. We've held our drive-through food distributions in communities across the state and on and off in areas where the need was surging. Since March 2020, people in Los Lunas, Socorro, Las Cruces, Alamogordo,

Torreon, and multiple locations right here in Albuquerque have benefitted from these unique food distributions.

Our food distributions partners continue to hold them too. Parking lots have been the primary way we can continue to distribute food safely for everyone — people who visit and need the food assistance, the loved ones who come with them just to “leave the house” even for just a short while, wonderful volunteers who raised their hand to serve the community, and yes, our food bank team members too. We've held these in bitter cold temperatures and the heat of summer. We've partnered with groups to bring in other services like rental assistance for those who haven't been able to pay their rent or mortgage during the pandemic.

These unique distribution methods have resulted in reaching hundreds of thousands of people in the last year and a half. Here's a snapshot of new locations we started during the pandemic which provided food bi-weekly or weekly at each of these locations since late March 2020. This is on top of the food we provide to our network of nearly 500 partners across the state.

Below is a list of areas where new food distributions were added by the food bank during the pandemic.

County	# of Sites	Pounds Provided	Converted to Meals
Bernalillo	38	3,314,330	2,761,942
Dona Ana	4	62,202	51,835
Luna	1	401,732	334,777
Otero	1	20,350	16,958
Otero / Dona Ana	1	34,919	29,099
Sandoval (Native American Communities)	2	46,575	38,813
Socorro	1	9,475	7,896
Valencia	1	207,758	173,132
Total	49	4,097,341	3,414,452

The community's investment in our work made this possible. It helped us locate and source food from across the country when grocery store shelves were bare. And, it allowed us to significantly expand our services at a time when we were seeing huge numbers of people count on us — often for the very first time in their lives. Thank you for continuing to be our partner. We aren't out of this yet and the need is still very much there!

To see one of the largest drive-through food distributions we held, visit www.rrfb.org/drone-footage.

Special Thanks

We wish to send out a special thank you and acknowledgement to our SeedCorps AmeriCorps Response Team. The SeedCorps team was absolutely vital in ensuring these additional distributions were possible throughout the year. They ran over 200 food distributions at the 49 sites to ensure people in New Mexico had access to food during the pandemic. **To learn more about the program, visit www.rrfb.org/seedcorps.**

HFC Creates Nutrition Access for Individuals Facing Food Insecurity and Chronic Illness

In 2020, Roadrunner Food Bank's Healthy Foods Center (HFC) provided health-focused food items including fruits and vegetables to 862 unique clients in 354 households. The HFC assists patients in accessing healthier food items as well as nutrition education that includes recipes, online cooking classes as well as grocery store shopping simulation. There are currently six participating health care clinics and one healthcare plan that refer their patients to the HFC.

The healthcare organization screens their patients for food insecurity and nutrition-related chronic health conditions. When referred to the HFC, patients have additional opportunities to



stabilize their medical condition through healthier food access and achieve better health outcomes. Often, this support helps offset the burden of other financial costs.

"The biggest help is getting things that I can't. It frees up money for other healthcare needs such as co-pays. It really saves money with groceries," remarked an HFC client.

According to Feeding America's 2019 national study through the Research and Health and Nutrition Teams, 79 percent of households that the network serves purchase inexpensive, unhealthy foods. Additionally, 58 percent report a member in the household managing high blood pressure and 33 percent report a household member managing diabetes.

These food insecure adults have the additional burden of healthcare expenses. Nationally, this equates to \$52.9 billion in health care costs associated with food insecurity. In the state of New Mexico, that is an added \$1,452 annually for a low-income food insecure adult. When factoring in medications and living expenses, often not enough money is left to acquire healthy food. In providing services through the HFC, the goal is to support vulnerable, food insecure patients and create access to basic nutritious food products such as apples, oranges, kale, and spinach.

For more information about the Health and Wellness Initiative and the Healthy Foods Center contact jessica.osenbrugge@rrfb.org or 505-349-5342.

Starbucks Grant Helps Food Banks to Focus on Equity in High Need Communities

In many ways, the pandemic has highlighted where systemic inequities have impacted and continue to impact food insecurity and hunger in communities across the country. That is no different in New Mexico, where food insecurity rates remain high and many of those who were struggling before the pandemic have not recovered and may not for many years to come. Though great strides have been made in ensuring that all communities have access to nutritious food, there is more to be done.

Roadrunner recently learned of a new and exciting funding opportunity through Starbucks that will help us better understand the needs of and better serve those traditionally underserved communities. This funding will allow us to undertake a community needs and asset assessment in two highly diverse Albuquerque neighborhoods that have long faced food security challenges. These neighborhood-level assessments will pave the way for deeper and more meaningful partnerships and a greater understanding of the foods needed and desired by those communities.

The Starbucks grant will also allow us to "pilot" the ability to provide a range of culturally appropriate foods to partners in these high need areas. Food has the ability to feed us: not only our bodies, but our minds and souls as well. Easier access to foods that have cultural meaning speaks to the deep connection

that food has to memories, family, friends, and those things that make us who we are. Interestingly enough, there are some food items that loom large in many cultures, such as rice, potatoes, tomatoes, coconut milk, beans or legumes, cabbage, and more. Ensuring some of these staple items are available consistently to our partners will allow them, in turn, to quickly respond to the needs of the communities they serve.

Sixteen Feeding America member food banks secured a \$100,000 grant to help us focus on equity in two high need communities.

We look forward to what will be learned hand-in-hand with partners and community members, and how those learnings can be used in other communities across the state. We are tremendously grateful for Starbucks' support in this important and timely effort.

To learn more about the special grant, visit www.rrfb.org/starbucks.



Meet Gregory



Gregory shared with us, "I never imagined I'd be in a food line like this."

At various times throughout the pandemic, Gregory needed help with food. For many years, he worked at a company that provided parking solutions for the Albuquerque

International Airport. COVID impacted the travel and the hospitality industry everywhere and the company he worked for was not immune to it either. It meant a layoff for him, and the team he worked with.

He began attending one of Roadrunner Food Bank's drive-through distributions this year. It was the first time he needed this kind of help ... ever. The weekly distribution was held at a local high school and allowed him to pick up food for himself, his elderly

mom and his sister. All are on a very tight income, and none have the additional resources they need to buy food.

Gregory shared, "I've always believed growing up — family first. These are unprecedented times in our nation right now and hats off to the team who is here right now and the people behind the scenes at the food bank."

For people like Gregory, lost jobs, lost wages and the increased financial hardships have meant less food and fewer meals for families struggling to afford basic necessities. Because of community members like you, we can continue providing emergency food and drive-through distributions across our state. Your support has been a lifeline to Gregory, his family, and the tens of thousands of people we reach every week. Thank you for continuing to make a difference and investing in our mission!

To see Gregory's story, visit www.rrfb.org/gregorystory.

Whole Foods Selects Roadrunner for "Nourishing our Neighborhoods" Program

Whole Foods Market generously donated a refrigerated van to Roadrunner Food Bank through their "Nourishing our Neighborhoods" program in 2021. The goal of this program is to show commitment to local grocery partners and help them increase capacity to get donated food items out to the people they serve. This van will provide us the opportunity to get food into even more communities, especially those in rural areas that may be difficult to reach with box trucks or semi's.

"This van is going to allow Roadrunner Food Bank, the Community Initiatives Department, and SeedCorps AmeriCorps to access more communities in and around the Albuquerque area, but especially in rural areas such as indigenous and tribal lands," said SeedCorps Program Coordinator, Savannah Scott. "We are just really thankful that we are the recipients of this gift and this opportunity to serve our community better."

Roadrunner wholeheartedly thanks Whole Foods for their support of the food bank and other grocery rescue partners nationwide.

To learn more about this amazing donation, visit www.rrfb.org/wholefoodsdonation.

Be sure to subscribe to our YouTube channel for more stories like this at www.youtube.com/roadrunnerfoodbank.



Roadrunner Hosts Virtual Conference for Hunger-Relief Partners

Every other year, Roadrunner Food Bank hosts an educational session called SEED Conference for our various partner agencies across New Mexico. **Roadrunner has hundreds of partners throughout the state we serve.** These organizations include food pantries, shelters, low-income senior housing, senior centers, group homes, soup kitchens, schools and also healthcare clinics.

With the unique challenges of COVID-19 still in play, this year's event switched gears to its first virtual experience. Led by our Community Initiatives Department, participants had the opportunity to learn more about how to improve capacity building, expand the connection between health and hunger, and ideas to streamline their operations.

"Our hunger relief partners pay an integral role in serving various communities across the land of enchantment. For many of our partners, operations have been challenging through the pandemic, especially those serving rural areas of our state. The SEED Conference is an opportunity for our agency partners of all types and varieties to come together around best practices and strategies to better serve our neighbors," said Marcus Porter, Community Initiative Manager of Network Services.

To learn more about food assistance resources in your area, we invite you to visit www.rrfb.org/find-help.

For information about becoming a Roadrunner Food Bank Member Partner, visit www.rrfb.org/member.

Feeding America Chief Executive Officer, Claire Babineaux-Fontenot Visits New Mexico

In July this year, **we were honored and thrilled to receive a special visit from Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, Chief Executive Officer of our national organization Feeding America.** Claire has made it a point to visit food banks across the country as they strive to meet the increase in food insecurity our country has experienced during the pandemic, including right here in New Mexico.

Her visit to Roadrunner Food Bank was to honor and thank the tremendous work that our front-line staff have provided and continue to provide during the pandemic. Our warehouse staff, drivers and food distribution staff are truly front-line responders. They do this work with the people and communities we serve top of mind every single day. Each has taken their duties seriously with care, concern and with passion to improve lives. In fact, **this special group of food bank staff received and distributed a record amount of food this fiscal year — nearly 60 million pounds.** Never before in our 40-year history have we received and distributed this amount of food or provided this level of increased support to communities and people receiving our services throughout the state.

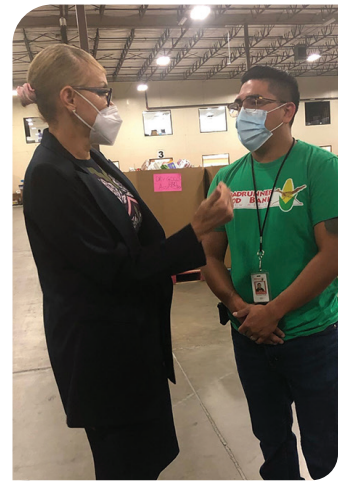
Claire shared with the food bank team during her visit, “There is a special kind of contribution that has been made ... always, but that

has been especially highlighted during this pandemic. It has been made by the remarkable men and women that serve us in the warehouse.”

Feeding America provided a wonderful banner to hang in the warehouse to thank our front-line staff for their service during this ongoing pandemic. Claire said, “You see that big banner over there? That is my way of memorializing my deep respect for what you do and my attempt to honor what you do.”

Thank you, Claire and Feeding America for spending time with us earlier this year. And, a very special thank you to our front line food bank staff who continue to dedicate their talents and commitment in service to our community and people experiencing hunger.

Visit www.rrfb.org/claire and view a short video featuring Claire’s visit to Roadrunner Food Bank.



Give Back This Holiday Season

Are you looking for ways to take action against hunger and give back this holiday season? Take action and help your fellow New Mexicans facing hunger. Here are a few ways to get involved:

Host a food or fund drive: Be sure to organize your food drive and prepare the tools you will need in advance of the start date. Involve friends, family and colleagues too. Hold a food drive at your place of employment, faith community, school or

organization. If you are outside the Albuquerque area, we’ll connect you to one of our partners in your community.

And adding an online fund drive to your group efforts is an easy and cost-effective way to help us provide food for our neighbors in need. Every \$1 your group raises can provide up to 5 meals in communities across the state. Learn more at www.rrfb.org/ofd to get started.

Volunteer: Roadrunner Food Bank has many opportunities to volunteer including at our warehouse, community-based food distributions or virtually. Whether you are looking to volunteer as an individual or with a group, we are sure we can find the perfect fit for you. If you live outside the Albuquerque area and want to give your time to help feed New Mexico, we can connect you to a partner food distribution site in your area.

To learn more about giving time, visit www.rrfb.org/givetime.

Donate your vehicle: When you donate a new or used vehicle, we are able to turn it into funds to help us in our work. We partner with a nonprofit called CARS to facilitate this program. Vehicles including cars, trucks, motorcycles, tractors, off-road vehicles, RVs, even boats and trailers can be donated through the CARS program. It does not matter whether the vehicle runs or not and your donation may be tax deductible! Visit www.rrfb.org/give to learn more.

Thank you for giving back and making a difference in the lives of our neighbors who are experiencing hunger!

What is One of the Top Five Questions We Get here at the Food Bank?

The answer? *How can I help?* There are many ways for someone to help Roadrunner – giving time, giving food, but also giving funds! Many people make one-time donations, for which we are extremely grateful, but we also encourage donors to join one of our giving societies. Every dollar we raise provides much needed food across New Mexico. As a member of our giving societies, you help sustain our mission through reliable, ongoing gifts that we count on from month to month or year to year.

Donors who contribute at least \$10 each month are members of our **Roadrunner Club**. Another way to support us is by joining our **Full Plate Society**. Full Plate Society are donors who pledge to give \$1,000 or more a year for five years. Friends of the food bank who have communicated to us that they are leaving a gift to the food bank in their will, estate, trust, or other type of deferred gift are part of our **Cornucopia Society**.

We would be honored to speak with you about your giving intentions and which giving society might be right for you. While your support can be made online or through a check in the mail, often a conversation about your contributions will help us understand your gift intentions. Connect with us at 505-348-8909 or info@rrfb.org.