

HOPE MINISTRIES PROVIDING MORE THAN JUST FOOD FOR FAMILIES



With summer break now coming to an end, many children will be returning to school. And for families struggling with food insecurity, it couldn't come soon enough. Summer means higher food costs for families because kids can't access meals while not in school.

Despite the challenges the summer brings, one local pantry is taking steps to meet families where they are - providing both food for today and hope for a better tomorrow.

For two decades, HOPE Ministries has served the families of Baton Rouge. Cristy Davidson, Vice President of Volunteers and Food Programs at HOPE Ministries, leads its client-choice food pantry. The pantry, like a miniature grocery store, lets clients make choices based on their food preferences or dietary restrictions.

The food pantry typically serves around 200 families a month, many of which include children. However, the pantry is seeing more and more parents and grandparents struggling to keep their little ones fed this summer.

"We're seeing the same families that we've always seen, but we're also having a lot of new people come in. I think the economy has a huge impact on it," said Davidson. "Clients are paying more at the grocery store, so they're coming to us to supplement their

grocery bill. Not to mention during the summer children aren't receiving the meals they would from school."

HOPE Ministries is working to keep children fed during this difficult summer. However, it's also giving parents the tools to provide for the many summers down the road. Through HOPE's The Way to Work program, job-insecure people are provided with the mentorship and resources needed to become more self-sustainable in their professional lives.

"Many times, when our intake coordinator is working with new clients and interviewing them, they'll mention that they are between jobs or maybe a family member needs a job. We refer them to The Way to Work program and help get them a job or maybe even a higher paying one."

Despite the challenges facing our community, the spirit of HOPE is far from lost on those visiting the pantry.

"It's a great atmosphere. People are always surprised when they come that it's not a sad or depressing place," said Davidson. "A lot of the clients know each other. They've been coming and so they know us and the staff and the volunteers. The volunteers will say hello to them and know them by name. I love being here, I love running the pantry."

ALBERTSONS DONATION TO EXPAND FOOD BANK FLEET AND DISTRIBUTIONS



Last year alone, the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank distributed 10.4 million meals across an 11-parish service area utilizing an efficient fleet of trucks and drivers who logged thousands of miles to feed those who are food insecure. Being able to add a truck to that fleet means being able to distribute more meals to thousands of families – a goal that one local grocer sees as a vital commitment to the social well-being of their community.

On June 28, 2023, representatives from the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank and Albertsons Companies unveiled the newest truck in the Food Bank's fleet: a 27-foot refrigerated truck. The completed truck was revealed at St. Alphonsus Catholic Church followed by a mobile distribution.

Through Albertsons Companies' Recipe for Change, the company works to promote sustainable ingredients, diverse representation, zero food waste, and breaking the cycle of hunger. Albertsons Companies is a longtime supporter of the Food Bank through their Fresh Rescue program. This program allows the Food Bank

to provide fresh, healthy produce to more than 110 agencies across its 11-parish service area, and Albertsons Companies has always played an integral role in that program.

"Albertsons has been a tremendous partner for many years to help us feed those in need in our community with healthy, nutritious food options," says Mike Manning, President and CEO of the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank. "Adding a new refrigerated truck to our fleet will serve as a force-multiplier for our operation and expand our capacity to serve more agencies and distribute more meals to families who need assistance."

"Albertsons Companies is committed to do our part to break the cycle of hunger in the areas where we operate", said Christy Lara, Director of Public Relations & Community Relations. "It is through partnerships like the one we have with Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank that we can accomplish this work in our shared Baton Rouge communities, and we are so proud of our continuing work with Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank."

LOUISIANA #1 IN CHILD & SENIOR HUNGER 97k+ FOOD INSECURE IN OUR AREA

Map the Meal Gap 2023 is the latest Feeding America report on food insecurity at the state and parish level from 2021 data.

While the pandemic continued to have impact on many families in 2021, a slowing economy with higher food and gas prices served as a second big blow to children and individuals struggling to find adequate meals. Our food bank member agencies continued to see an increase in families needing assistance.

In this most recent study, Louisiana leads the country in hunger among both children and seniors in our area.

Below are hunger statistics for our 11-parish service area.

11-PARISH DATA



17.2

MILLION MEAL GAP
IN OUR SERVICE AREA



1 IN 6

CHILDREN IN OUR AREA
ARE FOOD INSECURE



1 IN 9

INDIVIDUALS IN OUR AREA
ARE FOOD INSECURE



97,660

INDIVIDUALS IN OUR
AREA ARE FOOD INSECURE



35,750

CHILDREN IN OUR AREA
ARE FOOD INSECURE

POPULATION IMPACT

11%

FOOD INSECURITY
RATE LOCALLY



IS #1

IN THE COUNTRY WITH
THE HIGHEST FOOD
INSECURITY RATES
AMONG CHILDREN
AND SENIORS



Just \$1 can help provide up to to 3 meals. Donate at brfoodbank.org.

2023 MEAL GAP STATS BY PARISH

What does hunger look like in your local area? The Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank serves food insecure individuals, children, families, and seniors across 11 parishes. Every summer, new hunger statistics are released by Feeding America that aim to quantify the meal gap – meaning how many meals would still be needed to ensure every individual could access three meals a day, after all feeding programs and food distributions are factored into the calculation.

In our 11-parish service area alone, statistics show there is a **17.2 million meal gap** based on parish level data. The state of Louisiana cumulatively has a **120 million meal gap** and unfortunately ranks **#1 in both child and senior hunger**.

There is much work to be done when it comes to fighting hunger locally, and we are very thankful for all our supporters who continue to help us fulfill our mission of feeding those in need.

Below are key hunger statistics for each parish we serve.

ASCENSION PARISH

1.9 Million Meal Gap
8.8% Food Insecurity Rate
11,010 Food Insecure Individuals
1 in 9 Children are Food Insecure

ASSUMPTION PARISH

494k Meal Gap
13.1% Food Insecurity Rate
2,800 Food Insecure Individuals
1 in 5 Children are Food Insecure

EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH

9.2 Million Meal Gap
11.5% Food Insecurity Rate
52,200 Food Insecure Individuals
1 in 5 Children are Food Insecure

EAST FELICIANA PARISH

339k Meal Gap
9.8% Food Insecurity Rate
1,920 Food Insecure Individuals
1 in 7 Children are Food Insecure

IBERVILLE PARISH

696k Meal Gap
12.9% Food Insecurity Rate
3,940 Food Insecure Individuals
1 in 4 Children are Food Insecure

LIVINGSTON PARISH

2.5 Million Meal Gap
10.4% Food Insecurity Rate
14,630 Food Insecure Individuals
1 in 11 Children are Food Insecure

POINTE COUPEE PARISH

568k Meal Gap
15.4% Food Insecurity Rate
3,220 Food Insecure Individuals
1 in 4 Children are Food Insecure

ST. HELENA PARISH

348k Meal Gap
18.1% Food Insecurity Rate
1,970 Food Insecure Individuals
1 in 3 Children are Food Insecure

ST. JAMES PARISH

333k Meal Gap
9.3% Food Insecurity Rate
1,890 Food Insecure Individuals
1 in 5 Children are Food Insecure

WEST BATON ROUGE PARISH

480k Meal Gap
10.0% Food Insecurity Rate
2,720 Food Insecure Individuals
1 in 6 Children are Food Insecure

WEST FELICIANA PARISH

240k Meal Gap
8.9% Food Insecurity Rate
1,360 Food Insecure Individuals
1 in 6 Children are Food Insecure



WAREHOUSE OFFICE EXPANSION SETS STAGE FOR GROWTH OF FOOD PROGRAMS



This summer the Food Bank underwent some major changes to its office space. The office was recently expanded to allow for the growth of departments and create opportunities for additions to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank staff. The expansion included the addition of 12 cubicles, two offices, and a conference room. This new office space houses employees that make up the operations team.

Our operations team is made up of many moving pieces. Many people work in the warehouse and on the transportation team to take in, move, and distribute the food that comes through the Food Bank. These employees work in conjunction with other operations departments to ensure that the Food Bank runs smoothly.

While the expansion creates an opportunity for growth in every department, it especially allows our procurement, nutrition, and agency relations departments to expand.

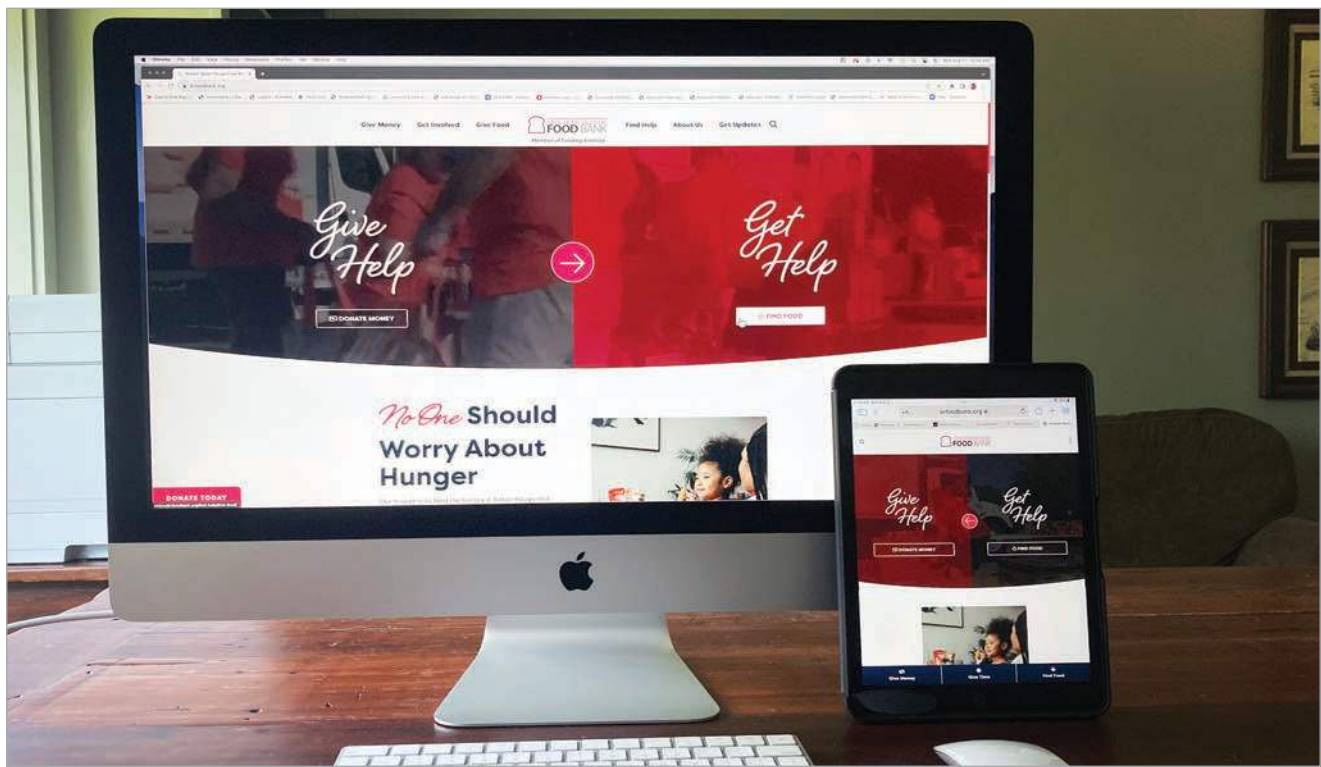
Those working in our procurement department focus on bringing food into the Food Bank. These employees purchase wholesale food, assist with organizing food drives, and create and maintain relationships with retailers and manufacturers to donate their extra food in our area.

Our agencies are the link between the Food Bank and those in the community that we serve. Employees in the agency relations department work with our agencies to create strong relationships and provide support.

In addition to our agencies, the Food Bank has programs for distribution. These programs range from distributing food to seniors to distributing food to school-aged children who are at risk of missing meals when they are out of school.

The nutrition department has employees that aid individuals in filling out Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applications as well as employees that focus on outreach programs such as Pick a Better Snack™ and Pick It! Try It! Like It!. These programs are meant to introduce and familiarize individuals with food that the Food Bank distributes as well as educate them on food and nutrition.

All these departments work closely together to ensure that operations at the Food Bank run smoothly and get food into the hands of the people that need it. Expanding the office space of the Food Bank allows for more employees, which in turn enables the Food Bank to reach more people in need across our 11-parish service area.



NEW WEBSITE ENHANCEMENTS EASES THE WAY FOR PEOPLE TO FIND HELP

The Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank is proud to announce the launch of a completely new website at brfoodbank.org. With a whole new look and interface designed specifically with you in mind, you can choose your experience on accessing information to find food, volunteering, and becoming a donor.

Our new website is not only a resource for clients, volunteers, and donors, but is also a visual representation of all the components that take place inside and outside our warehouse. Website visitors can learn about our warehouse operations, logistics, what we do with donated food, and how we work with more than 110 partnered agencies throughout our 11-parish service area.

With an updated look and feel, we hope to add much more to the online experience than just aesthetics. We have revamped menu navigation to provide a more intuitive experience making it as simple as possible for website visitors to find information they need within a few clicks. New features have been included to create a more interactive website making it easier than ever

before to find the information you are looking for, whether it be about how to find a mobile distribution, how to volunteer, how to donate food or funds, or to learn about how the Food Bank operates to serve our 11-parish service area.

“Our new website takes into account the user experience for all of our key stakeholders,” says Mike Manning, President and CEO of the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank. “We are continuously looking to improve our communications, web connectivity, and other critical infrastructure to make accessing information much easier for clients, donors, agencies, volunteers and community supporters.” says Mike Manning, President and CEO of the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank.

Visit brfoodbank.org or scan to QR code to experience the all-new Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank website.



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