

Hunger Relief Update – Week of October 20, 2020

General

- **Hunger Relief Annual Report 2020** is final and available in printed form and on the United Way of Palm Beach County website, Hunger Relief page.
- **United Way of Palm Beach County Food Finder Map**
An interactive tool using Google Maps to help people easily locate free food and hot meals in Palm Beach County. This online tool was created to connect individuals seeking food resources to sites near them. Information is English, Spanish, and Creole. United Way updates the information listed on this map weekly. However, locations and hours of distribution may change. Please consider calling the site prior to visiting to verify information listed. Please note that sites may have specific requirements such as ID. Please visit <https://unitedwaypbc.org/hunger/> to view the map. As of this week, there have been more than 58,700 visits to the Food Finder Map.

The Food Finder Map is located on United Way of Palm Beach County's website.

- **Description for Layers and Titles:**
 - **Meals for Children 18 and Under** – These sites offer meals for children ages 18 and under.
 - **Food Pantries** – These sites offer groceries such as canned goods, produce, and protein products.
 - **Soup Kitchens** – These sites offer hot meals to individuals to go.
 - **Family Take Out Meals** – These sites offer drive through hot meals to-go for everyone impacted by the Corona virus pandemic in the car. Donations or tips accepted.
 - **Affordable Produce** – Farms offering affordable produce in boxes.
 - **Meals for Seniors** – Congregate meal sites offering food in to go.
- **COVID-19 PSAs**
 - United Way of Palm Beach County, in partnership with Palm Beach County, Florida Department of Health, and 2-1-1, developed a Public Service Announcement (PSA) tool to educate the community about key information regarding COVID-19 and connect them with resources offered in the County. The PSA is available in English, Spanish, and Creole and can be used widely by organizations such as businesses, food distribution sites, and social service agencies.
- **Additional Partnerships**
 - Hunger Relief is partnering with community partners within and outside our network to address short term, midterm, and long-term needs of the Palm Beach County communities. We are staying nimble so we can proactively identify needs, address needs as they arise, prepare for expected and unexpected needs and find and/or create solutions. We are also tracking information available through our networks, data, and WebEOC.
 - Hunger Relief for United Way of Palm Beach County continues to coordinate food distribution with PBC Food Bank, Feeding South Florida, Area Agency on Aging and approximately 91 food pantries that are still operating throughout the county.
 - Hunger Relief is working with United Farmers Alliance (UFA), a group of Palm Beach County farmers, working on solutions to get product from the farms to the at-risk communities in Palm

Beach County. UFA is working with Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and helping farmers register on myflorida.com so their products can be sold to FDACS and other entities. UFA is also partnering with Feed the Hungry, Boca Helping Hands, Feeding Palm Beach County (Feeding South Florida) and Palm Beach Harvest, and others to help get food into our community. To date, UFA has distributed more than 70,000 pounds of recovered/donated food. UFA/Farmers Helping Families is now approved to accept SNAP/EBT.

- There is much information on what the farmers in the Glades have been contributing to the County, School District of Palm Beach County, and food banks (Feeding South Florida, Palm Beach County Food Bank, etc.) for distribution. Their information is available on their social media and EAA Farmers information.
- Palm Beach Harvest and Boys and Girls Clubs have been doing weekly produce distributions in The Glades.
- Florida Crystals continues to donate rice and sugar to local organizations.
- **Farm to Families Food Box Program** - Palm Beach County Food Bank, Feeding South Florida, Palm Beach Harvest, City of West Palm Beach, FarmShare, and others are working with growers, processors and distribution partners to secure 30 to 40 pound each food boxes consisting of protein, dairy, fresh fruits, and vegetables that will be distributed through food pantries and other channels in Palm Beach County. This is part of the third round of the USDA reimbursable food box program for nonprofit organizations. For profit organizations can purchase the food boxes.

On August 25, 2020, the Trump Administration announced an additional \$1 billion for the Farmers to Families Food Box Program. The third round will put more emphasis on food insecurity by seeking entities that provide combination boxes and requiring distributors to illustrate how they will provide coverage to areas identified as opportunity zones, detail subcontracting agreements, and address the “last mile” delivery of product into the hands of the food insecure population.

As a part of the third round, USDA continues to review proposals and make announcements of Basic Ordering Agreements (BOA). A list of current BOA holders and more information about the third round of Farmers to Families Food Box Program purchases is available at www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food-to-usda/farmers-to-families-food-box. This program is slated to end on October 31, 2020.

Children and Families

- Children and families can access free meals for kids 18 and under at nearly 100 BreakSpot Grab ‘n Go sites around the County.
- Hunger Relief is working with the School District of Palm Beach County, FLIPANY, Feeding South Florida, and Boys and Girls Clubs of Palm Beach County sites. Links to the site schedules can be found on 2-1-1’s website: 211palmbeach.org.
- **For more information about site locations:** <https://summerbreakspot.freshfromflorida.com/>. Meals are FREE to anyone under 18 years of age (under 22 for ESE students), regardless of financial need. To find a Grab ‘n Go site near you, please visit the website, Text FLKIDSMEALS to [211-211](tel:211-211) or call 2-1-1.

- **Food for Kids Survey**

- Developed a short, online survey for parents to help us identify the best ways to improve food resources delivery in PBC based upon parent input. We want to ensure that children and families have access to food as the pandemic continues and schools are not open and beyond. Link to survey: <http://survey.pbcgov.com/s3/PBC-FOOD-FOR-KIDS>
 - i. Information will not be used for any other purpose and is strictly confidential.
 - ii. There are drop downs in the survey questions that provide the opportunity for the responder to share additional information.
 - iii. After the survey is completed there is a landing page that provides additional information for food resources.
 - iv. Survey is included with the Food Finder Map.
 - v. Survey will be online for at least four weeks, through mid-September.
- Print survey planned for the coming weeks to capture information from those who don't have phones or internet access.

School District of Palm Beach County

- From school meals in schools to Grab 'n Go Meals at select schools - over 4.87 million meals since March 16, 2020
- Food boxes from Feeding South Florida - 148,096 boxes of food
- Food box partnership with Palm Beach County - 14,700 boxes of food
- Food box partnership with Pan Florida Challenge - 9,485
- Food box partnership with other organizations - 3,454

School District of Palm Beach County feeding sites are open as follows:

- In an effort to better streamline the distribution of free grab-and-go meals, the School District of Palm Beach County School Food Service department has consolidated the number of [food distribution sites in the county to 97](#) beginning Tuesday, October 20. Meal distribution will continue on Tuesdays and Thursdays until further notice.
- In addition to the location changes, as of Thursday, October 22, and each Thursday thereafter, School Food Service will also be providing a 10 to 12-pound box of fresh fruits and vegetables in addition to the grab-and-go meals. Boxes will be provided while supplies last.
- All children 18 years of age and younger (22 and younger for ESE) are eligible for the free meals.
- The curbside pickup will contain at least three (3) breakfasts and three (3) lunches per kit. Schools eligible for the supper and snack programs will also be providing three (3) supper meals and three (3) snacks per kit.
- Check the [list of locations](#) to find what meals are offered, and the times and locations near you. You do not need to visit your child's school for food distribution and may visit any location of your choice. Distribution times and locations are subject to change.

- A child does not have to be present to pick up meals. However, one of the following forms of identification is required to receive meals at the food distribution sites: Student ID Badge, Student Barcode Letter (that can be found in your [child's student portal](#)), Passport, Birth Certificate, or Library Card. The adult picking up the meals can also bring a picture that has themselves and the children for whom they are picking up food, in the photo.
Meals may contain allergens. Adults picking up the food are asked to be vigilant and ensure they do not take food if allergies may be a concern. Food should be refrigerated or discarded if not consumed upon receipt.
- For everyone's health and safety, a **facial covering or mask is required** when picking up meals at any school food distribution site.

All other individuals who need of food should contact 211. 211 receives frequent updates of pantries that remain open and have food. 211 also has information on how to find Grab 'n Go sites around the County that are open for families with children 18 and under. (Please note: Meals are FREE to anyone under 18 years of age (under 22 for ESE students), regardless of financial need. Children do not need to be school age – the program is for those 18 and under.

Seniors

- The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and their providers at The Volen Center and Palm Beach County Division of Senior Services routinely provide a full complement of services such as senior centers, adult day care, congregate food sites, social support, transportation, telephone reassurance, counseling and in-home services. During COVID-19, the Aging Network Providers throughout Palm Beach and Treasure Coast are solving many challenges being experienced by seniors including food. The full wait list has been fully released and existing clients as well as new clients for emergency meals at this difficult time.
 - Helpline managed increased call volume – many of which were for food assistance
 - Helpline released 1200 clients from the home-delivered meals waitlist
 - Adapted to changes to service delivery requirements
 - Assessments
 - Nutrition requirements
 - Meal packaging
 - Recordkeeping
 - New Nutrition Services
 - Shopping Assistance
 - Telephone Reassurance
 - Ruth and Norman Rales Jewish Family Services Expanding Kosher Home-Delivered Meals
- The partnership between Area Agency on Aging, The Volen Center, Palm Beach County Division of Senior Services, TooJay's, and Jack Scalisi Wholesale Food and Produce delivered over 36,275 meals during the week of September 20, 2020 – September 26, 2020 in Palm Beach County through the Department of Senior Services, The Volen Center, and Ruth and Norman

Rales Jewish Family Services. 48,022 meals were served in the five-county region from September 20, 2020 – September 26, 2020. In Palm Beach County, the drop-and-go meals from TooJays are being served at three locations twice weekly.

- Seniors who need food should contact the Elder Helpline at 866-684-5885. The PBC Senior Centers are still being used as distribution sites and Palm Tran continues to deliver food to the homes of seniors. *For seniors who are confused or don't remember that number, they can call 2-1-1 who will direct them.*
- AAA is in the process of securing additional funding for their Agency Pandemic Response Plan.
- Meals on Wheels of the Palm Beaches, Inc. (MOWPB)
 - During COVID-19, MOWPB has temporarily adjusted their meal operations to provide seven frozen dinner meals along with three breakfast meals each week with deliveries once a week. In addition, seniors who are normally mobile but are unable to shop due to COVID-19 are being served on a short-term basis with the 10 meals delivered weekly at no cost. To setup service please call (561) 802-6979 extension 6.
 - MOWPB serves those individuals age 65 and over who are home bound due to age, infirmity or debilitating illness and are unable or struggling to food shop and prepare nutritious meals. Their clients are either living alone, or with their spouse/partner who may also be home bound or who may be the fulltime caregiver.
 - MOWPB has been serving 2,500 meals a week to 300 people.
 - PBSO has established a new program to assist our Palm Beach County elderly residents who are unable to leave their homes to go to the grocery store or the pharmacy. Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Volunteers are ready to deliver orders directly to their doors.
 - **This program is AVAILABLE ONLY IN AREAS WHERE PBSO HAS JURISDICTION.** If PBSO doesn't have a presence in your area they WILL NOT DELIVER.

Farris Foundation Cold Storage Grant

Year Two:

- 27,959 individuals served monthly. The delayed delivery of the units, due to Hurricane Dorian and COVID-19, resulted in the delay of the post-survey. We are unable to estimate the percentage increase of individuals served for year two of the grant at this time.
- Hurricane Dorian created a high demand for cold-storage units in the Bahamas, creating a backlog of cold storage units in the area. In addition to the high demand, COVID-19 left producers with limited staff capacity, thereby shifting the units' availability further into the summer. United Way of Palm Beach County has researched distinct suppliers. Most suppliers are experiencing a backlog or have units that are out of our price range. Units are delivered as soon as they become available. The expected availability for most appliances is August 2020.

- 2/4 commercial refrigerators delivered (49 cu. ft)
- 1/6 freezers delivered (20 cu. ft)
- 1/3 commercial reach-in refrigerators delivered (72 cu. ft)
- 1/1 commercial glass door display reach-in refrigerator delivered (47 cu. ft)
- Expected installation of the walk-in freezer and walk-in refrigerator is September 2020 (3,168 cu. ft)
- The third-year cold-storage RFP is expected to be released in early November 2020.
- Many food pantries closed due to COVID-19. United Way of Palm Beach County is keeping abreast of their needs and connecting them with food, PPE, and other needed resources to help them reopen or prevent them from closing. We are fortunate to be part of a vast network of partners that make this possible.

Healthy Corner Stores Initiative

- The initiative continues to work with two corner stores in The Glades to increase their capacity. One corner store, Sam’s Food Store, is offering fresh produce to its customers. The implementation at the other store was delayed due to the impact of COVID-19. We are working closely with the corner store owner so that they can begin introducing fresh produce as soon as possible.

SNAP Outreach/Advocacy

- **Maximum Monthly Allotment**

The Department of Children and Families worked with our federal partners to temporarily increase all Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients’ benefit amounts to the maximum monthly allotment based on household size for the months of March, April, May, June, July, August, September, and October (pending federal approval). Additionally, DCF will request an extension from our federal partners for the month of October.

Clients can expect additional benefits to be included as a part of their regularly scheduled benefit allotment. Additionally, any new households approved for food assistance will receive additional benefits within a week of being approved for benefits. Please note, customers who are already receiving the maximum allotment will not receive an increase. A chart illustrating maximum benefit for household size is provided below for your reference.

People in Household	Maximum Benefit Amount
1	\$194
2	\$355
3	\$509
4	\$646
5	\$768
6	\$921
7	\$1,018
8	\$1,164
For Each Additional Person	+\$146

Please contact DCF’s Customer Call Center at 850-300-4323 or 1-866-762-2237 or visit www.myflfamilies.com/covid19/access.shtml for more information.

- **Recertification Extension**

Recertifications are required for existing food (SNAP), cash (TANF) or medical (Medicaid) benefit recipients to determine continue benefit eligibility. Households are required to complete the recertification process every four, six or twelve months to evaluate the household's current situation and to provide information on household composition, income, assets, and expenses in order to continue to receive benefits.

After waiving recertifications since April, the Florida Department of Children and Families will begin to reinstate recertifications in September.

All clients required to recertify in September and subsequent months will receive notification and a timeline to comply. The department stands ready to assist Florida's benefit clients if needed through the recertification process which can be done virtually and through the self-service portal.

Medicaid recipients will remain eligible for the duration of the public health emergency as declared by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

If you have questions regarding the recertification process, please visit: <https://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida/>.

Additionally, DCF's virtual agent or chatbot stands ready to assist clients by providing case information and answering benefit questions.

- **Work Requirements Waiver**

- In Florida, Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) are individuals who received SNAP food assistance benefits and are subject to the work requirements. ABAWDs must meet monthly work requirements.
- Recipients of TANF cash assistance must participate in work activities.
- Under the leadership of Governor DeSantis, the Department of Children and Families applied good cause and suspended work requirements for the months of March, April, May, June, August, September and October, allowing Floridians to focus on caring for themselves and their loved ones at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This flexibility is intended to support individuals and families during this transitional period, while also providing them with the resources they need to pursue job opportunities and eventually attain their own version of economic independence.
- In fact, Local Workforce Development Boards (CareerSource Boards) have reopened – they are on standby to assist with these efforts, and they are also working to offer safe, virtual options.
- At this time, the state is at varying levels of recovery, and therefore, the Governor has directed DCF to postpone the reinstatement of work requirements through the end of October.
- To be clear, if you have received a notification stating you are subject to work requirements or that you may be penalized due to failure to meet work requirements, please disregard. No action is needed by those clients and no penalties will be applied.

- **Maintain Medicaid Eligibility**

We will maintain Medicaid eligibility for current recipients through the end of the state of emergency. This means no Medicaid recipient will lose Medicaid eligibility during the state of emergency. We are working on notifying recipients who may have received a termination notice in the month of March that their benefits will continue.

- **Extend Time to Complete Medicaid Application**

During this state of emergency, individuals applying for Medicaid may be unable to submit all the documentation required to process their application. Beginning with applications received in February 2020, we are extending the timeframe for individuals to submit any necessary paperwork to 120 days from the date the application was received. If the Medicaid application is approved, the individual’s Medicaid eligibility effective date will still be the first day of the month that the initial application was received.

- **Pandemic EBT or P-EBT:**

- Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) is a supplemental benefit for households with children who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to pandemic-related school closures.
- Please see P-EBT Frequently Asked Questions document at this link:
- <https://www.myflfamilies.com/covid19/docs/PEBT%20FAQ.pdf>.
- Florida’s implementation is specific to our state and our schools. There are additional questions on the updated FAQs to clarify the process.
- The update above and other updates regarding public benefits can be found on DCF’s COVID-19 web pages: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/covid19/access.shtml>.

- **SNAP - The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has expanded the benefit sign-ups to seven Library locations.**

Mondays & Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Hagen Ranch Road Branch

Mondays, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Jupiter Branch

Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Main Library

Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Glades Road Branch

Thursdays, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
***PBC Okeechobee Boulevard Branch and
Royal Palm Beach Branch***

Fridays, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Lantana Road Branch

- **Apply for Benefits:** The Department of Children and Families has worked diligently to ensure our clients have easy access to apply for benefits during this public health emergency. DCF’s Statewide Customer Call Center is available for customer questions and application assistance

with agents available for extended hours, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m. to noon; and Sunday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The fastest way to get information and apply for benefits is online at: <https://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida>. Customers can report changes, upload documents, and check the status of their application and benefits through their [MyACCESS Self-Service Portal](#). DCF continues to work quickly to process the growing number of applications as a result of COVID-19.

- **Online Grocery Purchase Program:** Florida's Online Purchasing Pilot program successfully launched initially on April 16 and expanded statewide on April 21 with Amazon and Walmart. Between April 17 and May 12, 2020, more than 132,000 online SNAP transactions occurred through Florida's new Online Purchasing Program. DCF continues to coordinate with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Florida Retail Federation and other state and local partners to expand the network of retailers participating in the pilot program and encourages all interested retailers to visit USDA's Food and Nutrition Service website (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/online-purchasing-pilot>) and its online resource site for retailers to learn more about becoming a SNAP internet retailer at <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/online-SNAP-for-retailers-requirements.pdf>.

- **Unlimited SNAP Benefits Match at Florida's Fresh Access Bucks Markets extended to December 31, 2020:**

Fresh Access Bucks (FAB) is extending unlimited dollar-for-dollar matches for all SNAP purchased on Florida grown fruits and vegetables at participating markets through December 31, 2020. For a complete list of participating markets, please visit feedingflorida.org/promotional-materials/Covid19

- **COVID-19 School Food Services losses:** An email was drafted and sent to Congressional Representatives about COVID-19 help for school food service to address the losses of our school district food service/nutrition departments to recoup losses, continue programs for summer meals and be ready to feed children when they return to school.