



Food Banks vs the Coronavirus: Who will come out on top?

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Food banks, once a saving grace for many, have now become overcrowded and several have shut down. Feeding America, the largest Food Bank in the US, recently added to their website a list of ways people can continue to help and donate during this time. Along with food items, this hunger-relief organization is also providing non-food items to families in need, especially diapers and cleaning supplies. Despite their best efforts, they are still unable to help everyone who comes to their doors and have to turn many families away.

Several food organizations have already stated that they will need to go millions of dollars over budget in order to do their best to feed most of the people that come to them for help. Non-perishable staples such as peanut butter, rice, and pasta are just as hard to find in some places as toilet paper. This shortage especially affects families hit by unemployment as they now must rely on the kindness of strangers to help them get by. Even more astonishing is that before the global pandemic, Americans wasted 40% of food in the nation. As the virus continues to spread, there

has also been an uptake in a lack of consideration as people are using disposable gloves and instead of throwing them into the proper receptacles, they are throwing them out of their cars.

“It’s heartbreaking to see disposable gloves on the side of the road, even in front of houses, and not be able to pick them up because I don’t know where they have been,” says Joseph M., a local good Samaritan who, before the pandemic, would regularly pick up trash in his neighborhood and the surrounding area.

“For the first time in my life, I am afraid to help people. You have to become selfish and take care of yourself before you even think of someone else,” he also noted.

Alongside food bank shortages, one of the graver consequences of this pandemic is that children who relied on school lunches for meals are now growing hungry. Feeding America has been working with state officials to ensure that those in need continue to receive aid. Unfortunately, there is no universal system in place, and several states have abandoned their students. Since the school buses in Pennsylvania are under federal jurisdiction, they have stopped running. But in Georgia, where the buses are owned by the counties, school buses are still traveling to student’s homes and giving them lunches. These lunches are not only given to the children in the free and reduced lunch program, but to any child that would like it.

As the coronavirus runs rampant, the homeless, society’s weakest, are receiving the brunt of the suffering as several soup kitchens across the nation have closed due to social distancing efforts. It appears that the longer the pandemic sticks around, the longer it will take for food banks and cleaning supply companies to catch up to the growing demand for necessities.

Resources:

<https://www.feedingamerica.org/take-action/coronavirus>

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/apr/17/us-food-banks-over-budget-demand-coronavirus>

<https://www.11alive.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/marietta-city-schools-bus-drivers-deliver-meals-kids-during-school-closure/85-8812b85f-94b9-4234-9bf8-f122972d6f83>

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/columnists/2020/3/31/21202114/homeless-coronavirus-crisis-food-catholic-charities-shelter>