



Why an investment in Ohio's basic needs infrastructure is urgent and well-aligned with the State of Ohio's vision for our communities

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks represents a statewide network of 12 regional foodbanks and 3,600 food pantries, soup kitchens, and hunger relief programs. On behalf of our statewide network, we are respectfully requesting a \$90 million investment to increase the long-term capacity of our network to ensure it is well-equipped for current and future food and economic crises and to purchase desperately needed food and personal care items during a sustained period of high prices for food and fuel, declines in donated food, historic levels of hardship and need, and expiration of other pandemic-related relief measures.

How exactly will this investment be used?



\$76,837,500, or 85.5%, to be used to: build, renovate, and expand foodbank warehouses and facilities to store and distribute more wholesome food and to replace deteriorating infrastructure; make spaces more versatile for wraparound services; expand workforce development and job training programs; support the capacity of local faith-based and nonprofit organizations to distribute fresh foods in rural areas of Ohio by purchasing and providing refrigerators, freezers, trucks, and other equipment; establishing hubs in hard-to-serve, rural counties to improve access to healthy foods and other services; and maintain staffing capacity for transporting and distributing food.



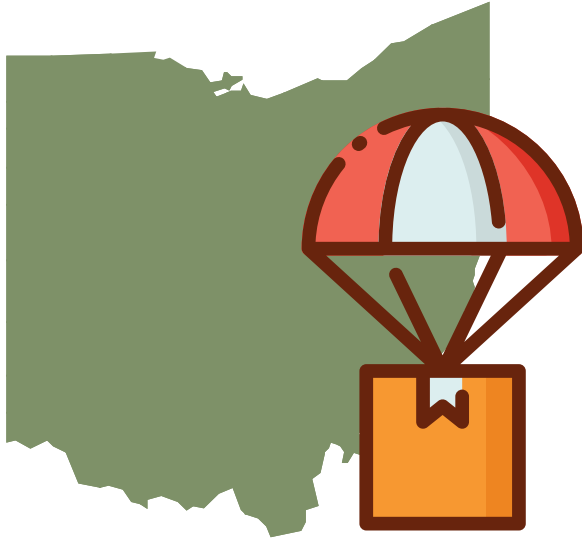
\$12,712,500, or 14%, to be used to procure urgently needed food and personal care items, in order to continue pandemic recovery response, respond to record levels of food hardship during persistently high food, fuel, shelter, and utility costs, and prepare for the end of pandemic-era federal nutrition enhancements.

Why has the original request changed since a year ago?

Thanks to the generosity of Ohioans, the leadership of our public partners in responding to the immediate impacts of the pandemic, and the commitment to go above and beyond from our staff and volunteers, our network was able to sustain a surge in our service capacity for many months. However, as we transitioned away from support from the Ohio National Guard, after pandemic-era aid ended, and as inflation and supply chain pressure began to accelerate, we recognized that we could not sustain our response on our own to match the prolonged and entrenched hardship facing Ohio families. We originally identified \$183 million in needed investments in food and other basic needs and in the community-based infrastructure that millions of Ohioans count on.

Since that time, we are grateful to have received a \$15 million investment from Governor DeWine and the State of Ohio to purchase protein items from Ohio farmers; we have received a commitment from USDA to procure an additional \$30 million in federal commodities; and we have leveraged \$20 million in local city/county ARPA dollars, \$6 million in Congressional infrastructure investments (pending), \$3 million in Community Development Block Grant funds, and an estimated \$19 million over the next three years in Local Food Purchase Assistance dollars from USDA. Therefore, we are respectfully requesting a \$90 million investment to meet our most pressing and emergent needs.

Why is this investment needed?



Ohio's hunger relief network provides take-home groceries, meals, and personal care items to 1 million Ohioans each month. Not only have foodbanks and their local partners become the de facto grocery stores in many communities, but they were also one of few social service providers to remain open and working harder than ever from day one of the pandemic. Everything from food to fuel to labor is more expensive due to supply chain pressure, public health mitigation strategies, and increased volume.

Ohio communities are counting on their foodbanks to be resilient to help them weather whatever current or future crises occur and regain and maintain basic food and economic security. To do so in the short- and long-term, Ohio's foodbanks and hunger relief organizations need investments in their physical and human infrastructure.

How will I know the results of this investment?



The Ohio Association of Foodbanks and our statewide network have long been committed to transparency and detailed accounting of the public and private investments that donors, funders, and taxpayers contribute to our missions and the essential services we provide.

Every dollar invested is tracked. Every pound of food purchased, transported, and delivered is reported. Ohioans and stakeholders will know how many people are served, what equipment is purchased, what infrastructure investments are made, what food items are procured, and more. Most importantly, the return on investment will be evident in more food secure and resilient communities.

How can I learn more about this request and others?

Please contact Sarah Kuhns at skuhns@ohiofoodbanks.org or 614-515-7142 to setup a meeting with the Ohio Association of Foodbanks to learn more.

We strongly encourage you to visit your local foodbank to see firsthand the strain they are experiencing on their supply chains, their infrastructure, and their workforce.

We also join Advocates for Ohio's Future in calling for an open, thoughtful, and transparent process for considering future ARPA investments.

For more information about Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks, their 3,600 partner programs, and the breadth of critical and essential services they have provided without pause for decades, please visit ohiofoodbanks.org/arpa.