



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Stephanie Jung Dorfman, Executive Director
608-960-4517; sdorfman@feedingwi.org

Feeding Wisconsin Applauds State Effort to Support Hunger Relief and Wisconsin's Agriculture Industry through COVID-19 Response and Recovery

WISCONSIN STATEWIDE— Feeding Wisconsin, the state association of six Feeding America member food banks and 1,000 local food programs serving all 72 counties in the state, is grateful to receive two grant awards through the Food Security Initiative administered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's (DATCP).

Feeding Wisconsin's network was awarded \$2.2 Million via the COVID-19 Food Security Network Support Grant and just over \$5 Million via the COVID-19 Food Security and Wisconsin Products Grant.

Governor Tony Evers created the Food Security Initiative in May, directing Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act funds to support families experiencing food insecurity as well as food producers and processors facing new challenges as a result of the pandemic.

In Wisconsin alone, it is estimated that over 800,000 people may face hunger this year, many for the first time—an increase of around 300,000 people due to the pandemic. This would increase the rate of food insecurity in Wisconsin from 8.9 percent of the population to 13.9 percent of the population and would mean that about 1 in 4 Wisconsin children are experiencing food insecurity.

Feeding Wisconsin's network will use these funds to support the infrastructure, equipment, and supply needs of food banks and pantries to support food distribution across the state and purchase nearly 3 million pounds of WI food product to meet the growing, and likely sustained, need during COVID-19 response and recovery. A small amount of funding will also support a point-in-time pantry participant survey conducted in partnership with University of Wisconsin—Madison researchers that will provide a better understanding of food insecurity and unique barriers Wisconsin households are facing during COVID-19.

During the grant application process, Feeding Wisconsin worked directly with Wisconsin producers, processors, aggregators, and commodity associations to source WI food products to purchase and distribute through its statewide network of food pantries and programs through the end of the year.

Feeding Wisconsin's Executive Director, Stephanie Jung Dorfman, expressed, "We thank Governor Tony Evers for creating the Food Security Initiative, which will address needs at all points in the emergency food system from farmers, to processors, to food pantry and food bank distribution efforts, to those utilizing food pantries and distribution points.

"Feeding Wisconsin and our network of food banks are grateful for the awarded funding. At a time when we are seeing an increased demand for our services and our food banks are purchasing more

food than ever before, these funds are enabling us to source great Wisconsin products to distribute to our friends and neighbors during this challenging time.”

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Feeding Wisconsin is the state association of the six regional Feeding America food banks that provide food to 1,000 local food programs in all 72 counties of the state. Together, Feeding Wisconsin provides 50 million meals annually to over 550,000 people in every corner of our state. Its mission is to help food banks, partners, and the public fight hunger, improve health, and strengthen local communities.

Its members include: Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin, Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin, Feed My People Food Bank, Second Harvest Heartland, Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank, and Channel-One Regional Food Bank.

Through food banks and food pantries, Feeding Wisconsin works to ensure that everybody has access to the food and benefits they need to work, learn, play and live healthy lives. Together, Feeding Wisconsin is leading the way Forward together toward a healthy and hunger-free Wisconsin.

To learn more about Feeding Wisconsin, visit www.FeedingWI.org. Stay connected with us by following @FeedingWI on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). This release is also available in [PDF Format](#).