



MILWAUKEE
JEWISH FEDERATION

ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY DURING THE PANDEMIC

In February 2020 the labor market peaked, and the COVID-19 crisis had just started to appear in the United States. Northwestern University [estimates](#) that 7.9% of households in Wisconsin experienced food insecurity at that time. According to their prediction for April/May, this number more than doubled to 16.9%.

The Milwaukee Jewish Federation has acted quickly and effectively to help address this issue through grants from The Fund for Jewish Milwaukee. This is a centralized source of support to benefit our whole local Jewish community. So far, we have raised \$1.6 million of our \$3 million goal.

JEWISH COMMUNITY PANTRY

As COVID-19 began to spread across the country, the Jewish Community Food Pantry took precautions to protect clients and volunteers, most of whom are elderly. They quickly realized that actions like social distancing and wearing masks were insufficient and made the difficult decision to close their doors. As a result, hundreds of families went without essential sustenance.

Upon learning of this situation, the Milwaukee Jewish Federation made a grant of \$20,000 to the Harry & Rose Samson Family Jewish Community Center, which operates the pantry in collaboration with the Milwaukee Jewish Federation. The funds were used for tents, signage, and other physical adaptations to transition service to curbside pick-up. The grant was also used to purchase items like diapers that were in short supply at the start of the pandemic.



Curbside service at the Jewish Community Pantry, May 2020

CHABAD CARES KIDS WELLNESS INITIATIVE

The Milwaukee Jewish Federation learned of a USDA-funded program that was feeding thousands of children in Jewish communities across the country. Any family with children up to age 18 is eligible for the program regardless of income. More than enough food—including fresh produce—is delivered for seven breakfasts and seven lunches for each child in a household.

The USDA is only working with schools that have existing federally funded food programs. Fortunately, we found a local partner in Bader Hillel Academy. One of the challenges BHA encountered in pursuing this program was finding affordable kosher food given the amount of funding per meal provided by the USDA.



Boxes of food for distribution through the USDA food program, August 2020

They were able to establish a relationship with an organization in Illinois that was already participating in the program, creating an economy of scale that made the BHA program a possibility. Unfortunately, the USDA reimbursement was insufficient to cover all costs.

The Milwaukee Jewish Federation made a grant of \$50,000 to cover part of the difference between the reimbursement from the USDA and actual program costs. This includes the gap between the cost of kosher food and the USDA per-meal reimbursement, and all the costs associated with transporting the food from Illinois to drop off sites across the State of Wisconsin.

Impact of Chabad CAREs Kids Wellness Initiative

The impact of this grant is profound: 44 tons of food were delivered over the summer, and 108 tons of food are projected to be delivered between September and December 2020.

	Summer ¹ July-Aug.	Winter ² Sept.-Dec.
Children served	745	875
Families served	225	260
Meals provided	83,440	225,280
Food provided	44 tons	108 tons

For more information about The Fund for Jewish Milwaukee, contact Julie Schack, MJF's VP of Philanthropy, at JulieS@MilwaukeeJewish.org or 414-390-5760.
Or visit MilwaukeeJewish.org/TheFund.

¹ Actual

² Projected