

# Response made a difference in mitigating food insecurity

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Food insecurity spiked during the first six months of the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting one in four Texas households, according to a recently released analysis of U.S. Department of Agriculture data by Northwestern University.

However, the combined response of the federal government and private-sector charitable organizations—such as ministries supported by the Texas Baptist Hunger Offering—helped mitigate food insecurity later in 2020.

Overall, one in eight Texas households struggled to avoid hunger between 2018 and 2020, with an average 13 percent of Texas households experiencing food insecurity—a comparable percentage to several years before the pandemic.

“Food insecurity is about economic uncertainty, and these latest data reflect the roller-coaster of uncertainty launched by the pandemic. While many Texans experienced this uncertainty for the first time over the last 18 months, the reality is that millions of families faced hunger prior to the pandemic,” said Celia Cole, CEO of Feeding Texas.

“This uncertainty is likely to continue for some time, particularly given the resurgence of the virus. In the meantime, we need to sustain our efforts to keep our neighbors nourished and our communities resilient.”

## Private charity, public investment

# ‘bridge the gap’

Cole emphasized Texas cannot “food bank” its way through the end of the crisis.

“But we have seen clearly that private charity partnered with public investment in nutrition programs, unemployment assistance and child tax credits can bridge the gap. COVID may be a tough battle to conquer, but hunger is easily treated,” she said.



Katie Frugé

The pandemic brought into focus the reality of how many Texas families are potentially vulnerable to food insecurity. But it also reinforced the importance of ministries supported by the [Texas Baptist Hunger Offering](#) that “deal with food insecurity in sustainable and holistic ways that minister to the body and soul,” said Katie Frugé, associate director of the Christian Life Commission.

The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic reversed many of the “positive gains communities had made in the past few years combatting hunger,” Frugé said.

“Recovering will require us working together, combining the best of all available resources providing training, education and support. Hunger

offering ministries provided emergency aid and training at the peak of food insecurity in 2020 and will continue to play a crucial role going forward,” she continued.

“Now more than ever, faithful and continuous support of the hunger offering is one of the most impactful ways to help support Texas Baptists as our hunger ministries work to serve the least of these.”