

Food Is Medicine

Florida Blue and Florida Blue Foundation partner with Feeding Florida to provide life-saving aid during times of hardship

Florida Blue and the Florida Blue Foundation have been longtime, supportive partners of Feeding Florida, helping to provide aid to Floridians across the state through multiple key programs and initiatives. The support of Florida Blue was crucial when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and left millions without access to nutritious food and produce. Florida Blue was able to feed 739,000 people and provide 14.5 million meals to those needing COVID relief. The Florida Blue Foundation's food security grants awarded prior to the pandemic also provided an additional 1.75 million meals and served 31,237 new individuals.

"We understood our communities, members and employees were facing tremendous uncertainty and needed immediate help in a growing crisis," says Susan Towler, executive director, Florida Blue Foundation and Florida Blue Corporate Social Responsibility.



"Collaboration during a crisis is critical, and Florida Blue worked with coalitions of leaders, such as Feeding Florida and its local food banks, to support Floridians during unprecedented times."

Florida Blue also works individually with several Feeding Florida food banks on programs that educate and address special areas of nutrition and how it all impacts health.

Feeding Northeast Florida

One of Florida Blue's main efforts to support hungry Floridians during the height of the pandemic was to team up with Feeding Northeast Florida for Project S.H.A.R.E. (Solving Hunger & Assisting Restaurant Employees). Through this project, they were able to utilize their corporate kitchens and chefs to prepare ready-to-go meals for seniors in our community. Of the roughly 5,000 meals the food bank delivered each day, 3,000 came from the Florida Blue kitchen. By the end of 2020, Florida Blue had produced over 475,000 meals. These efforts also enabled at least 40 food service employees to keep earning paychecks and in turn enabled those workers to take care of seniors in need.

Florida Blue also provided a three-year, \$300,000 grant to Feeding Northeast Florida at the end of 2020 for a Mobile Markets Program. The program will leverage culinary and nutrition education to influence healthy food selection in a free, mobile, client-choice pantry food market. Two mobile markets will serve 100,000 individuals and families as well as enroll 25,000 clients in SNAP*.

Feeding Tampa Bay

Feeding Tampa Bay also teamed up with Florida Blue during 2020 to create several key programs, including the Produce Pantry Program and Feeding Tampa Bay's Food Rx Program.

Through the Produce Pantry Program, mobile food pantries provide nutrient-rich foods to more than 4,000 households in the University Area of Tampa Bay. The Food Rx program is focused on creating healthy food pantries at medical facilities. The program allows doctors and health care professionals to support food insecure patients through the pantry specifically stocked with foods targeted to help them manage their health conditions.



Feeding South Florida

At the end of 2020, Florida Blue provided a food security grant to Feeding South Florida to support Healthier South Florida. The three-year, \$300,000 grant will establish a Client Services Call Center to screen 50,000 individuals and families and connect them with the appropriate services including home delivered meals and/or grocery boxes through partnerships, as well as double capacity to enroll clients in SNAP.

[Learn more](#) about the Florida Blue Foundation and the work they are doing.

*Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program that provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of needy families so they can purchase healthy food and move towards self-sufficiency.