

Child Hunger Relief

OFS has a long history of addressing the nutritional needs of children. Due to COVID-19, these needs are heightened. We are responding in the following ways:

- OFS is essentially starting its Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) effective Fri., March 27 to accommodate children while schools are out. This is the ninth year that OFS has operated this program, which is funded by the USDA and ensures children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. OFS will offer free grab 'n go meals to all children ages 18 and younger. We are currently finalizing our community locations and meal hours. Details will be posted and continuously updated at <https://www.operationfoodsearch.org/emergency-response-2020/>
- We are supporting the outstanding work of St. Louis Public Schools to get food to any children who need it, whether they are residents of the district or not. OFS will provide emergency food packs for the families of those children. The packs will contain meal kits that feed a family of four breakfast and dinner and kits that include kid-friendly entrees. A current list of locations is at <https://www.slps.org/meals>
- At the St. Louis County level, we are providing guidance on food policy to school district superintendents as they solidify their response plans. We are also providing emergency food packs at many school districts and independent schools.
- We developed a map that is constantly being updated to show where children will be able to get free meals at schools or other locations. Visit <https://www.operationfoodsearch.org/covid-19-meal-map/>

Food Distribution and Rescue

We are continuing our regular food distribution to our partner agencies, serving 200,000 people a month. Many agencies are shifting to drive-through service and scheduling appointments to limit the number of clients in the pantry at one time. We are also working with restaurants and farmers to rescue food that would otherwise be wasted and getting that food to the people who need it.

Regional Response

OFS has been asked to serve as the Lead Agency for food insecurity for the five major jurisdictions in our region (St. Louis City, St. Louis County, St. Charles County, St. Clair County and Madison County). In that role, we are coordinating with regional leaders to address the needs of at-risk populations, low-income communities, first responders and other essential personnel.

Policy and Government

We are in close contact with our community food partners, local and state government officials and stakeholders so we may respond swiftly and responsibly to the crisis. Our policy team is analyzing the Family First Coronavirus Response Act to determine the impact on education, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in our state.