



FARESTART



## ONE YEAR LATER: COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY UPDATE

March 2020 - 2021



## OVERVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically impacted our communities and the world around us this past year. Food insecurity more than doubled in Washington state, unemployment soared to record levels, and the income equality gap widened. The pandemic also laid bare longtime systemic racism across the United States.

Despite the challenging year, hope prevailed. Our FareStart students, volunteers, partners, staff, and supporters continued to support each other and our communities. We are incredibly grateful and proud of the work we have accomplished together.

Since March 2020, we have:

- Produced and delivered **over 2.5 million emergency meals** for the Greater Seattle area
- Provided **over 130 job placements or promotions** for students and graduates
- Launched **virtual job training programming for both youth and adults**, while supporting students with meals, housing, counseling, and wraparound services
- Supported **more than 80 nonprofit organizations** across the country with resources and connections to help promote food security, job training, and employment in response to COVID-19

As vaccines roll out and we begin to imagine a more equitable post-pandemic future for all, we know we still have a long road ahead toward recovery. Thanks to your help, FareStart will continue to stand strong to provide hunger relief and job training – one person, one job, one community at a time.

## LOCAL HUNGER RELIEF

FareStart was founded upon the idea of nourishing communities. When COVID-19 struck, we transformed our kitchens and redeployed staff to help ensure individuals and families across the Seattle area did not go hungry. To date, **we have produced over 2.5 million emergency meals** for our most vulnerable neighbors – a 145% increase in meals over previous years.

We are providing healthy, prepared meals for individuals and families who are low income or experiencing homelessness. To reach as many people as possible during the pandemic, we expanded our work with our existing meal partners as well as created new partnerships with other organizations. We are currently working with more than 30 partners to distribute FareStart meals, including **Downtown Emergency Services Center, Friends of the Children, Plymouth Housing, Seattle Public Schools, Renton Innovation Zone Partnership, Rainier Valley Food Bank, University District Food Bank, YMCA and YWCA.**



**“This meal provides a sense of security. This meal provides a sense of hope and this meal provides a sense of love.”**

*Edgar Masmela, Partnership Director, Friends of the Children Seattle and FareStart  
Emergency Meal Partner*

Our work would not be possible without our numerous food partners that have helped us expand our meal capacity. This past year we have worked with **Seattle Seahawks, First & Goal Hospitality, Taylor Hoang Restaurants, Chef Edouardo Jordan** and **MOD Pizza**. Currently we are partnering with **Gourmondo**, with generous support from **Amazon**, to supplement our meal production. We also have received generous in-kind donations of food, products and services to fuel our work and help reduce our costs.

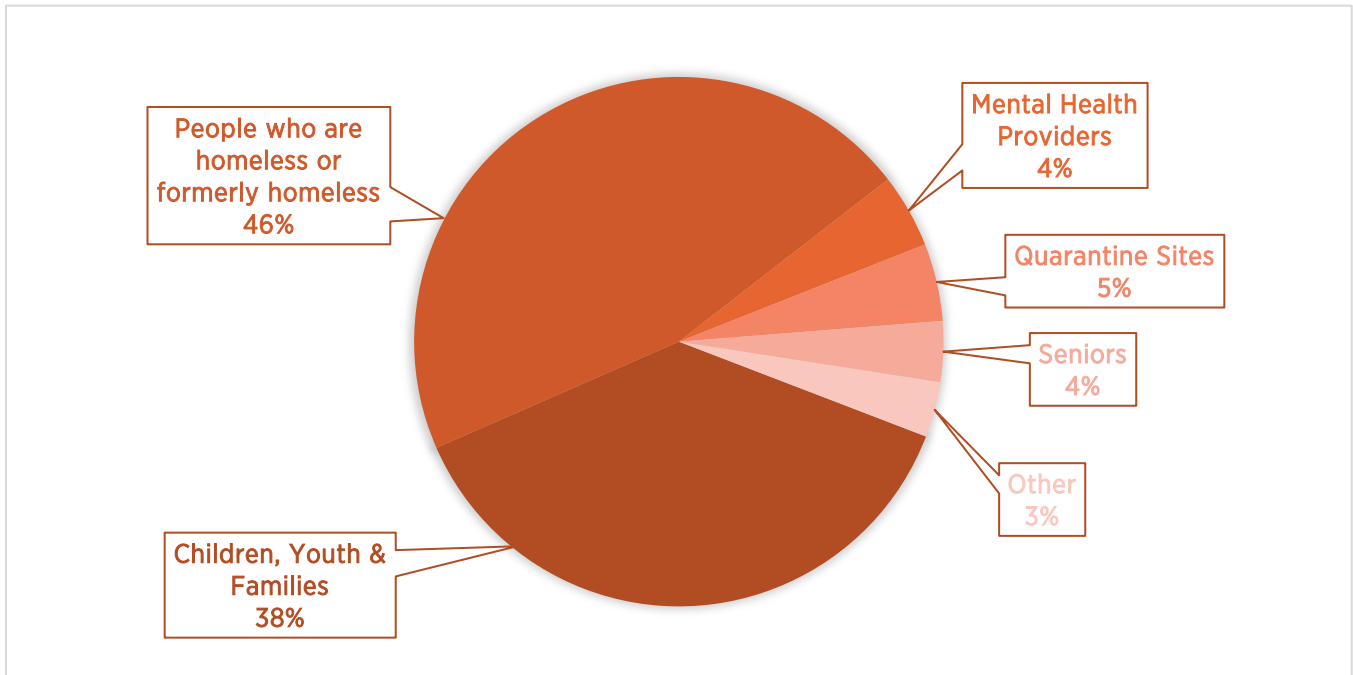
Prepared and delivered **over 2.5 million emergency meals** throughout the Seattle area

Provided over **18,000 meals** on a single day (October 2020)

Worked with more than **70 community partners** across 300 distribution sites

We will continue to produce meals as long as our communities are in need. In 2021, we will pilot additional ways to make our meals more accessible in areas that have experienced an increase in food insecurity.

## MEALS PROVIDED IN 2020



## JOB TRAINING & WRAPAROUND SUPPORT

Our students always have been at the heart of our work and mission. Providing support and resources through the COVID-19 crisis has been a top priority.

Early in the pandemic, we paused our job training programs to help protect the health of staff and students. We continued to help students with case management and wraparound services. Adult students also received paid housing as needed, counseling, substance abuse support, hygiene and comfort kits, food and employment support.

**“I was supported throughout this whole time we were on pause. I had help financially, I had support in everything that was going on with me, so I was never alone. And then virtual training started, and it felt amazing.”**

*Adult Culinary Graduate*



We have provided over 130 job placements or promotions since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis. We also hired more than 30 graduates to temporarily support our emergency meal production efforts. Faced with the upheaval in the hospitality industry and the closure of numerous restaurants, we have been developing partnerships with new employers, including those in high-volume food production, facility and building services, retirement communities and others to provide additional training and job opportunities for our students upon graduation. **Our goal is to ensure students have job opportunities now and well into the recovery and post-pandemic future.**

**"It was really a help in improving me, learning new skills and knowledge, and it was the best thing I've done to help myself."**

*Youth & Young Adult Barista graduate*

We also pivoted and developed an all-virtual job training curriculum – providing laptops, Internet service and technology support along the way. **We revamped training to focus on transferrable skills that could be applied across a variety of industries including flexibility, teamwork, decision-making and goalsetting.** We also increased our focus on self-empowerment

for trauma-impacted students and added financial planning and budgeting to our training. To date, nearly 100 youth and adults have participated in our virtual job trainings.

We are grateful to our students who have been critical thought-partners in adjusting our training along the way. Their resiliency and grit have inspired our staff. We remain hopeful that we will be able to invite students back onsite later in 2021 to continue to build their job skills and support our meal production.

Nearly **100 youth and adults** enrolled in virtual job training programs.

Over **130 job placements or promotions** were made for students and graduates.

## NATIONAL SUPPORT FOR FOOD SECURITY AND JOB TRAINING

Catalyst Kitchens, FareStart's national membership and consulting initiative, is supporting nonprofit organizations across the country as they adapt to the pandemic. We have shared resources, toolkits and guidance on COVID-19 response and recovery with more than 80 Catalyst Kitchen member

**"FareStart's Catalyst Kitchens program continues to be an incredible asset to our community, and to our organization, keeping our kitchen working at capacity as we climb out of the pandemic and even allowing us to add staff and create more jobs in our community."**

*Appetite for Change, Minneapolis, Minnesota*

organizations across the country. We have provided virtual pro- and low-bono technical assistance to help organizations pivot to emergency meals and develop virtual or hybrid job training programs for their students.

With fundraising support from the C-19 Impact Initiative spearheaded by *New York Times* journalist Nicholas Kristof and our nonprofit partner Focusing Philanthropy, **we regranted over \$1.6 million for 52 Catalyst Kitchens members to produce meals in their respective communities**, helping reduce food insecurity on a large scale.

We are continuing to work closely with our membership network to provide support as they begin to recover from the pandemic.

More than **19 million meals** were produced across the country by FareStart and our Catalyst Kitchens member network.

FareStart supported more than **130 member and non-member nonprofit organizations** at virtual trainings and events.

## ORGANIZATION UPDATE

### ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

We continue to implement diversity, equity and inclusion strategies to advance racial equity. We are proud to be a woman-led organization, with nearly 40% of our staff and one-third of our Board of Directors identifying as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). Last year, over 40% of our youth and adult students identified as BIPOC and roughly half of the meals we provided were delivered to BIPOC communities.

### SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Our FareStart Restaurant and Catering will remain closed through early 2022. We anticipate that our FareStart Cafes will reopen later this year as more people return to work in the downtown Seattle core. Reopening also will be influenced by COVID-19 restrictions, vaccine adoption and the foodservice landscape (i.e. restaurant competition, consumer appetite). We want to be a good partner to our restaurant community and avoid competing with them in the early recovery phases for the foodservice industry.

### VOLUNTEERISM

Our volunteers continue to be a critical part of how we realize our mission. Since the pandemic began, nearly 1,000 volunteers have helped to distribute emergency meals, harvest farm produce for meals, provide virtual support for students, and so much more.

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While many of our usual in-person volunteer opportunities will remain on pause for the foreseeable future, we will continue to offer a variety of virtual opportunities.

### **COMMUNITY EVENTS**

We have restructured our community events within the virtual space, including creating a virtual version of our popular Guest Chef Night. We also launched “Food for Thought”, a series of virtual conversations with community partners and thought leaders around food security, workforce development and other critical community topics.

### **HEALTH & SAFETY**

The health and safety of our staff and communities remain a top priority. We continue to observe all CDC, Seattle-King County Public Health and Washington State mandates including social distancing, increased cleaning, staff temperature checks and personal protective equipment for our staff. We are also providing resources and information to staff and students to help them navigate the rollout of vaccines.

## **CURRENT LANDSCAPE & NEED**

The COVID-19 crisis has created a second pandemic: hunger. More people are experiencing food insecurity for the first time, while tens of thousands persistently suffer from a lack of nutrition. Single mothers, low-income populations and people of color are at greatest risk, according to a University of Washington study. Roughly 30% of Washington households are at risk of going hungry, with children in 59% of those homes.

Unemployment has nearly doubled during the COVID-19 pandemic. Research indicates that by 2023, the number of people who have lost work and become homeless as a ripple effect of a pandemic-induced recession could double. Washington already has the third-highest prevalence of homelessness in the nation.

Twenty percent of the restaurants in Seattle have permanently closed during the pandemic, and more than 1,000 restaurants in King County have been shuttered. Long-term unemployment is on the rise and foodservice jobs are not expected to fully recover until 2024.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

### **FOOD SECURITY**

In 2021, we anticipate providing 2.5 million meals to our vulnerable neighbors facing food insecurity – including low-income youth, families, seniors, and those experiencing homelessness in shelters, low-income housing communities and via food banks and schools, in partnership with community organizations. We also will pilot strategies for

food systems improvements that will provide increased, sustainable and more equitable food access to the most vulnerable and chronically under-resourced populations that are most commonly Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

### **JOB TRAINING**

While we remain in a virtual setting for the immediate future, FareStart plans to reintroduce in-person on-the-job training within our food security work when it is safe to do so. Meanwhile, we continue to train remotely and project that we will enroll over 230 individuals into our job training programs in 2021. Given the current state of the foodservice industry, our training has evolved to highlight transferrable skills that are needed across a variety of industries and focuses on competencies desired by the employers that are hiring now.

### **CONTINUED NATIONAL WORK**

FareStart and our Catalyst Kitchens network members continue to produce over 800,000 meals per week to meet the increased demand for hunger relief at shelters, hospitals, senior centers and other sites nationwide. FareStart staff continue to provide consulting, remote trainings, online resources, and virtual offerings to ensure the continued success of job training and hunger relief efforts across the country.

### **COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

We project that our restaurant and catering will remain closed through 2021, and business revenue streams will not begin recovery until 2022. We continue to rely on public resources and generous financial contributions from supporters while the majority of our social enterprises are shuttered or at reduced capacity.

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**Thank you for supporting FareStart!**



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