



## Feeding America: Responding in Times of Crisis

### Recovery Effort for Tornado Disaster in Joplin, Missouri.

On Sunday, May 22, a massive and deadly tornado cut through the city of Joplin, Missouri, leaving a 6-mile path of devastation and ruin in its wake. As an entire community picks up the pieces of shattered lives, **our charge at Feeding America is to give sustenance and hope to the thousands of Americans suddenly turning to us in desperate need.**

The tornado in Joplin is the latest in a string of deadly tornadoes and storms this season that have killed hundreds and left thousands homeless or struggling to find basic necessities like food and clean drinking water. Alabama and other states across the South are still recovering from a series of tornadoes in late April that leveled neighborhoods and killed more than 300 people. The Feeding America network is still actively providing disaster relief in four of those states and has thus far **distributed nearly 5 million pounds of food, water and hygiene products and provided 3.8 million meals in eight tornado-ravaged states, including Missouri.**

Feeding America has mobilized its disaster resources to help the victims of Joplin, Missouri. The damage in Joplin caused by the tornado is immense. Much of the city's south side was leveled, and **an estimated 2,000 buildings were**

**damaged, including homes, schools, businesses and a hospital.** Joplin fire chief Mitch Randles estimated the damage covers at least a quarter of this city of about 50,000 people.

Feeding America's member agencies—the food pantries, soup kitchens and emergency shelters served by network food banks—have a long-standing relationship in the community, putting them in a unique position to reach out to those in need. **Currently, the Feeding America network is distributing 262,000 pounds of food, beverages and products to disaster victims as well as to search and rescue teams,** while moving disaster product from the Southeast (the site of last month's deadly tornadoes) to Missouri.

This year's particularly violent and deadly storm season of tornadoes, storms and flooding is taxing Feeding America's resources, which are already stressed by an unprecedented rise in demand stemming from the recession. And, **we anticipate that the need for our services will continue to at high-levels throughout the year as we move into the official six-month hurricane season.** NOAA's Climate Prediction Center—a division of the National Weather Service—is predicting an above-normal hurricane season this year with three to six major hurricanes.



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## Feeding America's Response to the Tornado Disaster

Effective response to disaster requires organizations and volunteers to be able to deliver a high volume of service to populations in need, during a compressed time period and under difficult working conditions. Indeed, **many of our network staff and volunteers are helping with relief efforts even as they grapple with the effects of the storms in their personal lives.** Feeding America staff member Rebekkah Lyman is in Joplin helping victims of the disaster as her mother and nephew undergo surgery for severe injuries sustained during the tornado. After an exhausting night at the hospital with her mother, she returned to work to help out people in need.

"It's emotional," she explains. "But when I look around, I don't just see destruction—I start to see hope and I start to see ways that we can all get together."

Currently, most residents are without power, and many areas—including the local hospital—have no running water. Many people are moving in with family and friends, but food is starting to spoil, and we anticipate a dramatic increase in need for food for the weeks and months ahead.

**Some Feeding America network agencies in Joplin have been completely destroyed by the tornado.** St. Mary's Catholic Church operated a food pantry in a facility that was completely demolished. The parish priest was pulled from the rubble, and fortunately no one in the building was killed.

**In the face of these types of challenges, Feeding America does more of what we do best 365 days a year—we feed people.** Through our network of warehouses, we deploy trucks and logistical solutions to deliver food, water and supplies to at-risk people. After last month's storms in the South, more than 40 trucks of donated and pre-staged disaster relief food items had been moved out of storage within 24 hours and sent to Alabama, the hardest-hit state.

Our existing programs—from mobile food pantries to donation partnerships with food and grocery manufacturers—can be applied directly to coordinated disaster response. When the need is especially great, Feeding America must augment its existing resources by renting additional trucks and buying foods and products (such as diapers, toothpaste and detergent) that are in high demand.

In addition, quickly moving great quantities of food and products from warehouses across the region to food banks servicing affected areas, and then from the food banks to member agencies for distribution, requires significant manpower and resources. Additional expenses incurred during a crisis include fuel and labor costs—as hundreds of workers move millions of items from unaffected areas to communities struggling in the aftermath of the devastation.



## Feeding America's Disaster Relief Program

### PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Feeding America works to alleviate the disaster of hunger in communities across the nation every day of the year. When disaster strikes, our Disaster Relief Program provides assistance to the historically underserved populations in a community—and to those who are newly in need.

While many of our partners in disaster relief are “first responders,” Feeding America is already on the ground and in the community, allowing us to respond immediately by providing food, water and other basic necessities to victims. After the disaster headlines dissipate, torn lives remain. It is Feeding America's network of food banks that continues to respond for the days, weeks, months and even years ahead to bring hope for survival and a brighter future. Continued, ongoing support from our partners is vital to ensuring that our already over stretched network is able to respond for the duration of the long road to recovery.

Feeding America's Disaster Relief Program employs a strategy that encompasses all stages of disaster response. From preparing for disasters before they hit, to responding to victims in the midst of the disaster, to rebuilding lives and communities from the rubble—Feeding America staff are committed to serving people in need under any circumstances.

**PREPAREDNESS:** Feeding America makes communities more resilient to disaster by planning ahead to coordinate the resources of federal, state and local government agencies and other community partners. Feeding America works with state and local government entities to spell out the specific roles of food banks in times of disaster and partners with states seeking to officially include food banks in state emergency management agency plans. In addition, Feeding America assists in hands-on local and regional training and disaster response “table-top exercises” that identify technologies, protocol and agencies in play during disasters. We also engage creatively with the private sector, developing relationships with donors of food and grocery products essential to disaster relief.

**RESPONSE:** During a disaster, Feeding America quickly delivers stockpiled food and grocery products to disaster-struck communities, providing government entities and other nonprofits with a strong infrastructure to deliver emergency services to the most vulnerable and hardest to reach populations—seniors, children and low-income families. Corporations that manufacture food often make sizeable product donations for disaster relief, but there is an unavoidable lag in time between the decision to donate and the actual delivery. A major lesson learned in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina was that despite the good intentions of donors,

emergency food aid can take seven to 10 days to arrive from far-flung areas of the country. To avoid future bottlenecks and delays in aid, Feeding America stockpiles shelf-stable nutritional foods, beverages and household supplies in regions that are highly vulnerable to hurricanes and other disasters, allowing Feeding America to reach people in a matter of hours instead of days.

**RECOVERY:** Feeding America remains rooted in communities long after the response-oriented organizations have moved on to meet new needs. As local stakeholders, our member food banks are major contributors to community restoration and long-term recovery efforts. The long-term impacts of disaster are unemployment and higher levels of poverty—two causes of food insecurity. On the heels of the immediate physical devastation, disasters disrupt people's working lives. When “business as usual” becomes impossible and demand for routine services evaporates, faltering consumer confidence also reduces the money people have to support local businesses. Feeding America's network of food banks will be critical to helping communities cope with economic upheaval and lost jobs by providing a steady supply of nutritious food and grocery products. This foundational support will help as people rebuild their homes and businesses, and seek to re-establish their livelihoods after disaster.

## Conclusion

At times of disaster—whether the event is localized or widespread—**Feeding America's emergency food distribution network is critical to the resilience and vitality of our nation.** Your generous gift will provide support and relief to victims of disasters, like the recent tornado disaster in Joplin, Missouri. On those rare occasions where donations exceed Feeding America expenses for a specific disaster, contributions are used for network support where the need is most pressing.

Enormous sections of a once vibrant city have been rendered a flattened wasteland by the monstrous tornado that swept through Joplin. The human suffering is deep and palpable. **During this crisis, our staff is working every day and at all hours because we know that our community and our neighbors are depending on us. For food, for hope, for dignity.**

We know it will take a team effort of individuals, nonprofits, state and federal government agencies and for-profit corporations to provide relief and essential resources to the city of Joplin, and to eventually return some sense of normalcy. This will be a long, arduous recovery process, and **it is only through the generosity of our corporate partners that we are able to provide both the physical and emotional sustenance to all of the victims** struggling to meet even their most basic needs during this difficult time.

**Thank you for your consideration.**





**Feeding America  
Disaster Campaign 2011**

***Expenses***

Purchase of Shelf Stable Food, Ready-to-Eat Meals, and disaster boxes	\$ 335,000
Purchase of Fresh Produce	\$ 800,000
Capacity Building including additional trucks, freezers, coolers to meet increased need	\$ 500,000
Transportation of Donated Loads	\$ 100,000
Staff Support/Technical Assistance (includes deployment of Assessment and Support Team and Communications support)	\$ 65,000
Grants to Impacted Member Food Banks	\$ 200,000

**Total Expenses** **\$ 2,000,000**