



## Technology Proves Mission Critical as Food Banks Deal with COVID-19 Crisis

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### Food banks across America turn to Blackbaud solutions to rapidly process unprecedented donation volumes and scale service work in their communities

CHARLESTON, S.C., April 14, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- [Blackbaud](#) (NASDAQ: BLKB), the world's leading cloud software company powering social good, is powering food banks across the United States with critical technology to manage the influx of donations to keep up with the surge in demand for food during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the operations of many social good organizations have been significantly challenged due to COVID-19, food banks are among a few bright spots in terms of fundraising and engagement levels. Food banks are widely relied on to supply food to pantries, soup kitchens, meal programs and other food scarcity organizations. As millions of Americans face food insecurity, many for the first time, food banks are experiencing surges in demand with the need for more donations to support that demand. While communities, philanthropists, celebrities, corporations and others have stepped up with donations to narrow the gap, Blackbaud—which supports a large number of the nation's food banks—has recorded a 1,300% year-over-year increase in online donations for this segment processed in the second half of March.

Time is of the essence as food banks around the country race to transform these donations into meals for people in need. Having the right cloud technology to communicate with supporters and potential donors, collect donations, securely and reliably process them and to manage them at scale is a critical part of the success equation. To meet the COVID-19 demands and disruptions head on, many food banks are relying on Blackbaud solutions.

"When the COVID-19 crisis overtook the U.S., food banks intensified their efforts to meet the sudden spike in demand," said Jay Odell, president and GM of Blackbaud Nonprofit Solutions. "With their quick, innovative actions and the trust they had already earned in their communities, many have seen a rush in donations, although there is still significant need. Major donors, celebrities and companies have also made major gifts to our customers, which is exciting to see. We are heartened to support so many food banks through Blackbaud's cloud-based solutions as they rise to the unique challenges of this moment."

Many Blackbaud customers have benefited from recent celebrity donations, including **Food Lifeline**, which received a donation of [one million meals from Russell Wilson and his wife, Ciara](#), and **Alameda County Community Food Bank**, which was one recipient of [a donation from Steph and Ayesha Curry's foundation](#), Eat. Learn. Play.

Food banks across the country have also demonstrated ingenuity in how they leverage technology to quickly adapt to both the need and the generosity coming in.

[North Texas Food Bank \(NTFB\)](#) faces more demand for food than ever before in its 13-county service area. "With unemployment rates rising at an all-time high and children being out of school, the need increases by the day," said Anna Kurian, senior director of marketing and communications, who noted that it's also more difficult to obtain because of the high demand for supplies at grocery stores. "With this increased demand, financial donations are critical for the North Texas Food Bank to continue providing nutritious food to our community."

NTFB has quickly adapted, pointing the public to purchase items from an Amazon Wishlist, shifting to low-contact distribution models and suspending its traditional volunteer program to allow hospitality industry workers who've lost income to sign up for paid work through a tech platform partner.

Those who still want to help from a distance are encouraged to become "virtual volunteers," spreading the word about the need on social media. A growing number of supporters, including the students of Plano West Choir, are using [Blackbaud Peer-to-Peer Fundraising™, powered by JustGiving™](#), which is available to social good organizations at no subscription cost, to rally donations and showcase NTFB's efforts. One corporation has set a goal to raise \$10,000 for its campaign. "The easy to use platform makes for strong peer-to-peer campaigns, turning supporters into champions of our mission," Kay said.

A Blackbaud customer for years, North Texas Food Bank had just migrated in March to the advanced capabilities of Blackbaud Peer-to-Peer Fundraising along with Blackbaud Luminate Online® and Blackbaud Raiser's Edge NXT®, meeting the needs of fundraising staff with flexibility during an uncertain time.

[Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina](#) saw a spike in daily online donations beginning March 13, as the state's government began asking citizens to take precautions. Donations intensified as the food bank shared a story of need and response through COVID-19 emails, website messaging and media; for example, highlighting the food bank's shift to distributing thousands of family-sized disaster boxes, each of which provides about 20 meals.

Totals for the second half of March reflected a 1,075% increase in donations over the same period last year, when the food bank had a major fundraising drive. To Samantha Wright, director of development operations and analytics, the uptick reflects the trust supporters put in the 40-year-old food bank, which now serves 34 counties in North Carolina. "Really, it's just so humbling and moving," she said. "They're listening to us, and they're responding."

Blackbaud's cloud-based solutions for fundraising and payment processing have seamlessly powered those efforts at a time when efficiency has been critical. "If we didn't have these systems and processes in place, the increased volume would have been overwhelming in light of all the changes to our staffing and operations," Wright said.

[Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan](#) launched its Powered by Food Initiative—an online fundraising campaign to keep kids healthy and fed—the same day GovGretchen Whitmer announced the state would close schools, and within hours community support started to flow in. The Gleaners team also created a COVID-19 Response portal that included local updates, resources and a direct link to the donation form.

Just as the food bank quickly pivoted on the communications and fundraising front, with an approximate increase in online fundraising of 1,100% during the second half of March compared to last year, the food bank added more than 50 emergency food distributions to its 500 agency partner network and increased its monthly food distribution by hundreds of thousands of pounds.

The food bank credits a "robust and flexible technological platform" for allowing them to establish COVID-19 content while handling significant website traffic increases, according to Stacy Averill, senior director of community engagement and PR for Gleaners. "Blackbaud provided consistent technological support and a platform capable of handling and implementing quick-paced updates and financial management, while allowing Gleaners to communicate outwardly to provide community reassurance and information," Averill said.

Learn more about Blackbaud's Cloud Solution for Nonprofits at [Blackbaud.com/who-we-serve/nonprofit-organizations](https://blackbaud.com/who-we-serve/nonprofit-organizations) and get access to Blackbaud's robust library of free resources for the social good community during COVID-19 at [Blackbaud.com/COVID-19-resources](https://blackbaud.com/COVID-19-resources).

#### **About Blackbaud**

Blackbaud (NASDAQ: BLKB) is the world's leading cloud software company powering social good. Serving the entire social good community —nonprofits, higher education institutions, K–12 schools, healthcare organizations, faith communities, arts and cultural organizations, foundations, companies and individual change agents—Blackbaud connects and empowers organizations to increase their impact through cloud software, services, expertise and data intelligence. The Blackbaud portfolio is tailored to the unique needs of vertical markets, with solutions for fundraising and CRM, marketing, advocacy, peer-to-peer fundraising, corporate social responsibility, school management, ticketing, grantmaking, financial management, payment processing and analytics. Serving the industry for more than three decades, Blackbaud is headquartered in Charleston, South Carolina, and has operations in the United States, Australia, Canada, Costa Rica and the United Kingdom. For more information, visit [www.blackbaud.com](https://www.blackbaud.com) or follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

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