



**\$40,000 request for support
to
Vivian L. Smith Foundation
Backpack Buddy Proposal**

October 2022

CONTACT:
Melody Taylor
Grants Coordinator
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houston**food**bank

Our mission: Food for better lives.

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Brian Greene

October 1, 2022

Vivian L. Smith Foundation
Ransom C. Lummis, President
1900 West Loop South, Suite 1050
Houston, Texas 77027-3207

Dear Mr. Lummis,

On behalf of the Houston Food Bank (HFB), our Board of Directors, our 1,600 partner agencies, and most importantly our clients, I want to extend gratitude to Lyons Foundation for its support in 2021. Your generous \$40,000 contribution helped HFB fill 227,755 backpacks with nutritious, child-friendly food for students throughout our 18-county service area.

Please find HFB materials, including our formal request to renew your support at the \$40,000 level, enclosed. At this level, you will cover the cost of 13,377 meal bags for backpacks. Each bag provides six weekend meals to participating students.

Thank you for taking your time to review these materials. We are grateful for your continued support in helping HFB provide food for better lives.

If you have any questions about Houston Food Bank or require additional materials, please do not hesitate to contact Grants Coordinator, Melody Taylor, at 281.961.2040 or mtaylor@houstonfoodbank.org.

Sincerely,

Brian Greene
President/CEO

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Houston Food Bank (HFB) is the largest food bank in the United States in meals distributed to partner agencies and a member of Feeding America, the largest hunger-relief charity in the nation. Founded in 1982, HFB's mission is to provide food for better lives. In the last fiscal year, we provided access to 183 million nutritious meals in 18 counties in southeast Texas through partnerships with 1,600 food pantries, soup kitchens, social service providers and schools.

In addition, the Food Bank provides child hunger-relief, nutrition education, job training, health management, and helps residents apply for state-funded assistance. These programs empower participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to fill their pantries now and reduce their need for food banks in the future. Ultimately, HFB's fundamental objective is a world without food banks by acknowledging and addressing hunger as a symptom of poverty.

STATEMENT OF NEED

As Texas families are experiencing one of the nation's highest food insecurity rates (14%), inflation is hitting a 40-year high and the housing market is becoming more unaffordable, families are facing an increased risk for food insecurity. Of the 1.1 million individuals, including 220,000 children are experiencing food insecurity within our service area.

Recovery from the pandemic continues. Those impacted the most by the COVID-19 are some of the last to recover from the pandemic's economic fallout. According to an August 2022 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation report, roughly half of Black (55%) and Latino (48%) households, nearly two-thirds (63%) of Native American households, and one-third (29%) of Asian and White (38%) households in the U.S. say they are facing serious financial problems paying off credit cards and loans, affording food, medical care or prescription drugs, and problems paying mortgage or rent. Those statistics are translating into a 33% increase in families receiving emergency food in comparison to pre-pandemic food assistance¹.

Support in the amount of \$40,000 from Vivian L. Smith Foundation will help offset increased operating expenses and strengthen HFB as it works to meet our community's increased need.

REQUEST OUTLINE- BACKPACK BUDDY PROGRAM

To help combat these statistics, Houston Food Bank is requesting your renewed support of our Backpack Buddy program. As you may know, many K-12 students rely on free or reduced-priced breakfast and/or lunch during the school year for their nutrition. Yet, on weekends, they go home to meager or no meals. This program works to fill that meal gap. On Fridays, at 752 participating schools and other locations, students' backpacks are filled with nonperishable and easily consumed nutrient-dense food to take home over

¹ Feeding America Charitable Food Assistance Participation Report

the weekend. Having reliable access to wholesome meals and learning the importance of maintaining a healthy diet supports high performance in academics. Children who receive proper nutrition can pay attention in class, process learned information, and retain knowledge more easily than children that are undernourished. Specific contents of the Backpack Buddy food sacks include: one serving of low-fat milk, eight servings of fruits and/or vegetables (either 100% fruit juice, canned fruit in 100% juice, or vegetables), two servings of whole grains, and two servings of protein. All product is shelf stable and, when available, toiletries (including toothbrushes and toothpaste) are placed into the food sacks as well.

The long-term goals for the program are to provide more proactive wrap-around services to children and families at all participating sites. Eligible families participating in the Backpack Buddy program are offered access resources such as: health and wellness programming, financial literacy programs, nutrition education, and public benefits application assistance through the Benefits Enrollment Center (BEC) at HFB's North Branch. The BEC serves as a space for hosting initiatives and programming from Houston Food Bank and other organizations and making connections to resources that will help people in the community achieve long term stability and end cycles of poverty.

The Food Bank's Community Outreach Services staff consistently work to expand the program to more schools and counties, including those in rural areas where food insecurity is prevalent. *During the 2021-2022 school year, HFB staff distributed 227,755 food sacks at 752 area schools.* The requested amount of \$40,000 was determined based on year-to-date revenue for the program (actual and anticipated/pending funds) against projected expenses.

PROGRAM MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

HFB measures and examines key internal metrics on a monthly basis. Management has consistently affirmed the importance and value of quantifying activities and uses this data to improve efficiency and performance. Specific metrics have been established for each program area and are matched against monthly targets. Key metrics for the Backpack Buddy program includes the number of children served, number of backpacks distributed, and number of area schools participating. Metrics are collected by Backpack Buddy site staff and submitted monthly to HFB's Director of Outreach Services for review. Data will be compiled into reports to be submitted to The Vivian L. Smith Foundation per applicable reporting requirements.

FY 2022 PROGRAM UPDATES

As we reported last year, HFB quickly responded to the increased need to emergency food relief brought on by the pandemic. We expanded the Backpack Buddy program by adding 4 sister programs to fill the unprecedented need. While the nation has entered a recovery period from the pandemic, it is well-documented that families affected the most are the last to recover due to, among other barriers, depleted savings and lower-paying jobs being the last to rebound. To right-size the Backpack Buddy program to fit the current

need and continue services that proved to be the most effective during the pandemic, HFB is continuing 2 sister programs:

- Lockers - The locker program serves students/families who are unable to access food from a pantry or distribution because of work schedules or transportation barriers. With conveniently located and climate-controlled locker families have 24-hour access to food ordered on our Order Ahead online platform, which allows families to shop for the items they would like delivered to their locker. By allowing clients to order what they would like, food waste is eliminated, and clients maintain dignity by selecting food that fits their need.
- Home Delivery – In partnership with Amazon, the Backpack Buddy Home Delivery Program addresses food insecurity within school districts for students experiencing homelessness. Homelessness can be defined in many ways, including doubling up with other families, living in a hotel, staying in a car, park, an empty building, or a bus station, and being an unaccompanied youth. The stigma of receiving assistance is reduced since Amazon delivers on their normal route. Home delivery assistance often includes a family food box, two hygiene kits, and two bags of school supplies. Students can select a preferred delivery that fits their personal situation.

PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY

HFB's Development staff understand the importance of maintaining diverse funding streams to ensure program / funding stability and will continue to solicit funds for the Backpack Buddy program to facilitate program expansion in its service area. Backpack Buddy regularly receives funds from a mix of individual, foundation, and corporate donors. The appeal of providing financial support for child hunger-relief programs is universal and the Food Bank expects to continue seeing a variety of individuals and groups interested in supporting the Backpack Buddy program.

The Vivian L. Smith Foundation has a stated interest in providing philanthropic support for child welfare. HFB's Backpack Buddy program addresses this interest by empowering children to be healthy, successful students through proper nutrition. The Houston Food Bank is incredibly thankful for the ongoing support of the Vivian L. Smith Foundation and is looking forward to the opportunity to feed more children in the same spirit of generosity that the foundation has shown Houston over so many years.



FY23 Backpack Buddy Program

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Program | \$69,748 |
| Supplies | |
| Printing and | \$45,000 |
| Boxes | |
| Travel and | \$15,155 |
| Training | |
| Purchased Food | \$900,000 |
| Technology | \$47,000 |
| EXPENSES | \$1,076,903 |

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Houston Food Bank (HFB) is the largest food bank in the United States in meals distributed to partner agencies and a member of Feeding America, the largest hunger-relief charity in the nation. Founded in 1982, HFB's mission is to provide food for better lives. In the last fiscal year, we provided access to 183 million nutritious meals in 18 counties in southeast Texas through partnerships with 1,600 food pantries, soup kitchens, social service providers and schools. In addition, the Food Bank provides child hunger-relief, nutrition education, job training, health management, and helps residents apply for state-funded assistance. These programs empower participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to fill their pantries now and reduce their need for food banks in the future. Ultimately, HFB's fundamental objective is a world without food banks by acknowledging and addressing hunger as a symptom of poverty.

BACKPACK BUDDY PROJECT AND EXPENDITURES

Within HFB's 18-county service area in southeast Texas, 1.1 million individuals, including 220,000 children, are experiencing food insecurity. While school nutrition programs, such as the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs give K-12 students access to food during the week, the students may not have access to food over the weekend. Each week, HFB's Backpack Buddy program – through partnerships with 752 schools - fills students' backpacks with nutritious, child-friendly food to fill their weekend meal gap.

The requested \$50,000 contribution to the program will be used to fill backpacks with 16,722 meal bags. Each meal bag includes six meals, which translates into more than 100,000 meals for students participating in the Backpack Buddy program.

Thanks for HFB's strong network of rescued and/or purchased food suppliers, the cost to fill each backpack with 6 purchased or donated weekend meals is \$2.99 (.50 cents per meal).

The following food groups are distributed each week:

- Two proteins
- Two fruits
- Two vegetables
- One grain
- Two healthy snacks
- Two shelf-stable dairy products

Every child deserves access to healthy food. As Texas families are experiencing one of the nation's highest food insecurity rates (14%), and as inflation hits a 40-year high and the housing market becomes more unaffordable, southeast Texas families are facing an increased risk for food insecurity.

Filling backpacks with meals helps the entire community by giving each student the nutrients needed to properly develop physically, intellectually, and emotionally. Additionally, according to the Center for Public Policy Priorities, children who have access to healthy food choices are better at focusing in school, and less likely to have social and behavioral problems.

Amount Received: \$40,000**Date Received:** December 15, 2021**Contact Person:** Lesly Johnson
ljohnson@houstonfoodbank.org
832-369-9366**Purpose:** Backpack Buddy**Grant Funds Expended:** \$40,000**Summary:**

With your generous grant of \$40,000, the Houston Food Bank has expanded its impact in providing food for better lives. You provided support to Backpack Buddy and empowered Houston Food Bank to reach hungry families through our pantry programs. This grant was critically important in helping us combat hunger throughout Houston and southeast Texas. Without supporters like you, HFB would not be able to do the work that we do! Below is a summary of what was accomplished this reporting period.

The meal counts and pounds distributed you will see in these materials are more than just a number or statistic; they represent thousands of smiles from our neighbors in southeast Texas who felt relief from the pain of hunger because of your donation. On behalf of the families we serve, thank you for your continued commitment to helping us provide food for better lives.

FY 2022 Achievements with Your Help (July 2021 – June 2022)

- 227,755 backpacks filled through our Backpack Buddy program
- 1,364,748 meals (six per backpack) were provided

Client Story

Erica has three kids ranging in age from 19 to four. Her oldest is working at a local restaurant, but is still in school, so it is not a lot of hours or money. There is also some income from food stamps and a small amount of child support. Erica and her sister have consolidated households to save on expenses, but they still struggle.

Both Erica and her sister volunteer at Looscan Elementary doing anything needed, including helping with the weekly Backpack Buddy distribution. She volunteers to be around her kids and be involved at their school. She says there are families at the school who are worse off than hers.

"We are going through the same situation, but maybe their situation is worse. It breaks my heart to hear the parents ask if there will be food every Friday."

"I appreciate what you all do so much - not just for us, but for everybody who needs it."

There are about 350 students at Looscan Elementary. Twenty-five students, including Erica's kids, participate in the Backpack Buddy Program. She says there are families at the school who are worse off than hers.

OGDEN UT 84201-0038

In reply refer to: 0437974133
Aug. 22, 2011 LTR 4168C E0
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HOUSTON FOOD BANK
535 PORTWALL
HOUSTON TX 77029



022154

Employer Identification Number: 74-2181456
Person to Contact: M.Selim
Toll Free Telephone Number: 1-877-829-5500

Dear Taxpayer:

This is in response to your Aug. 11, 2011, request for information regarding your tax-exempt status.

Our records indicate that you were recognized as exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code in a determination letter issued in January 1984.

Our records also indicate that you are not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code because you are described in section(s) 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).

Donors may deduct contributions to you as provided in section 170 of the Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers, or gifts to you or for your use are deductible for Federal estate and gift tax purposes if they meet the applicable provisions of sections 2055, 2106, and 2522 of the Code.

Please refer to our website www.irs.gov/eo for information regarding filing requirements. Specifically, section 6033(j) of the Code provides that failure to file an annual information return for three consecutive years results in revocation of tax-exempt status as of the filing due date of the third return for organizations required to file. We will publish a list of organizations whose tax-exempt status was revoked under section 6033(j) of the Code on our website beginning in early 2011.