

WTFB Board and Friends of the Food Bank,

Week 7 of our response to COVID-19 and crashing oil prices revealed continued commitment from the West Texas community to help those in need. Your support encourages the WTFB team to keep working to procure, package and distribute food across 19 counties. Clients' faces and stories inspire us to keep fighting to advocate and educate our city, state and the nation about the struggles we are facing.

Updates from this week:

- WTFB was featured in an ABC News story that aired earlier this week. The reporter visited the Odessa facility on Tuesday night during the Southside outreach and interviewed Libby. You can view the story here: <https://abcn.ws/2SxsnaL>. Craig Stoker, our Director of Communications, has been working hard to tell our story.
- The New York Times article about our area, featuring WTFB, came out today. <https://bit.ly/3flAaws>
- Mobile outreaches, like the Southside distribution, are up 47% in households served since February. 3 of our outreach sites closed once COVID-19 hit our area (VA/Hope for the Homeless, The Bridge church, 87th Street Apartments). We plan to distribute food at those sites again soon, even if we don't have the volunteers we usually had to help at those locations.
- In the month of April our two in-house pantries served 2,373 households. 73% were NEW to our doors (the 89% reported last week was incorrect – my apologies). Since today is the 1st day of the month, we are expecting long lines next week as many more families have depleted what little savings they had and will be facing food insecurity.
- WTFB warehouse staff is working hard to keep up with the increased demand. 2,300 pantry boxes were packaged over 2 days' time, and as of yesterday, 550 were left.
- 200,000 pounds of fresh produce was distributed in April. We increased by 70,000 pounds from March. Fresh produce is plentiful so we are procuring it and getting it into the hands of our clients as quickly as we possibly can.
- Good news – HELP IS ON THE WAY – Libby wouldn't take no for answer from the Texas Department of Emergency Management, and so the National Guard is coming to help. We should have 12-15 Guardsman to help with packing boxes and produce bags. They will also assist with our pantry distributions, mobile outreaches, and senior box deliveries. Normally, the National Guard will not travel for less than 30 Guardsmen, but Libby's persuasiveness saved the day for WTFB again!
- Giving Tuesday Now is almost here. The campaign has kicked off, but on May 5th be prepared to see lots of media about it.
- Partner agencies remain vital to the distribution of food to the communities they serve. Many are seeing their numbers increase as the weeks go on. We are so grateful for their efforts to feed the hungry.

A final note – a friend had an op-ed in the New York Times this week. It is beautifully written and conveys the feelings many of us are having.

This 'Big Oil' Bust Is Killing My Small Town
<https://bit.ly/3flAzEU>

As the weeks roll on it is hard to remember how things were before March 16th. But what we do know is that WTFB will not stop working to feed those in need until we reach our vision of a West Texas without hunger.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts! Stay well friends.

Amanda