2021 IMPACTS
RAPID RESPONSE & COVID-19

The WhyHunger Find Food database of more than 35,000 food access organizations is the most comprehensive in the U.S. In 2021, through our WhyHunger Hotline (1-800-5HUNGRY), texting service and online tools, we assisted 1,226,628 individuals in accessing healthy food and essential services in their communities. This year, the Find Food team launched an outreach campaign to share information about Find Food Services with hospitals, re-entry programs for returned (formerly-incarcerated) citizens, and mutual aid groups.

We also improved our infrastructure and service by leveraging additional Google Ads, monitoring our Google Analytics, and conducting a Database Focus Group with providers across the United States. This has helped us to better understand who we are connecting with and how we are meeting their needs.

RAPID RESPONSE

COVID-19 continues to have a devastating impact on communities everywhere. As the virus continues to present heart-wrenching challenges to communities around the globe, the climate crisis worsens in step. In 2021, we expanded our Rapid Response Fund and mobilized $85,000 to movement partners around the globe to set up local food pantries, food banks and soup kitchens; distribute emergency supplies; and purchase tools, seeds, and infrastructure to recover after natural disasters.

Standing in solidarity with Brazil, Haiti, and the Philippines, we activated our Rapid Response Fund to support:

1. Brazilian-led movements after a major dam collapse to distribute emergency such as food, water, medical products, supplies shelter needs, and seeds and tools for food production.

2. Haitian-led organizations after the 2021 earthquake to help families and farmers relocate and begin rebuilding their farms and local food systems to re-establish local food security and food sovereignty.

3. Philippines-led coalitions in the wake of Typhoon Rai to provide assistance to over 200 women whose houses were damaged and who were dealing with food insecurity after the destruction of many rice mills.
BUILDING GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS

Around the globe, WhyHunger supports communities to organize, grow food, and regain control of their local food systems. In 2021, we invested over $3 million in support to 4 global social movements and 112 grassroots organizations in 25 countries led by rural peasant, fishing, youth and Indigenous communities to scale our agroecology, engage more people through political education and organizing, and meet the challenges presented by COVID-19 and climate change.

It is critical that communities are able to move beyond food access to build food sovereignty, which is defined as the right to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound methods and to determine their own food and agriculture systems. The COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying hunger crisis have exposed our unjust food system and the need for communities to have greater control over their own food. In 2021, WhyHunger’s Summer’s Heating Up! campaign energized our Board and donors to raise an additional $50,000 to train small-scale farmers in sustainable food production to feed people and cool the planet.

“FOOD SOVEREIGNTY”

The right to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound methods and the right of people to determine their own food and agriculture systems.

“Until I am free, you are not free either.
FANNIE LOU HAMER

Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard, Indiana, USA
Supporting Black and Indigenous Food Sovereignty is a critical strategy in WhyHunger’s work to address systemic hunger and poverty in the United States and around the world. Systemic and institutional racism, disenfranchisement, and state-sanctioned violence against Black and Indigenous communities has resulted in gross economic, political, and social injustices. Research indicates that Black and Indigenous communities suffer most from food insecurity, struggle hardest to access and afford fresh food, adequate health care and housing, and face the deepest inequities in health, income, and employment. These cruel realities have also led to devastatingly disproportionate rates of COVID illness and death in Black communities.

WhyHunger’s partners in the movement for Black Food Sovereignty are working locally and globally to reimagine and build a food system that acknowledges food sovereignty as a human right and prioritizes the health and well-being of all people and the planet. From organizing workshops and webinars for sharing knowledge and skills to building cooperative food and farm businesses, purchasing land collectively, and re-establishing agriculture extension services, our partners are creating a new food system that restores the earth, preserves human dignity, and fosters self-determining food economies.

When communities can build food sovereignty, they not only have the power to feed themselves, but also to combat climate change, and corporate interests. This is especially true for Indigenous communities around the world who face major challenges due to displacement from their land and lack critical infrastructure, equipment, and supplies to nourish their communities. Around the world, our partners are rescuing and strengthening traditional medical practices, building alternative food systems and passing down ancestral knowledge from generation to generation. At its core, Indigenous food sovereignty provides a restorative framework that reconciles past social and environmental injustices and ensures the right to grow, eat and share food according to their own traditions and values.

In 2021, WhyHunger supported partners in the Black and Indigenous Food Sovereignty movement by leveraging critical funding to:

1. Train and equip Black farmers to grow food sustainably and resource infrastructure projects that allow them to scale production and boost their income.
2. Help communities purchase large tracts of land in the Northeast to create affordable, sustainable, healthy housing in rural communities.
3. Resource collaborative efforts led by Black urban and rural farmers and community gardeners to provide regular deliveries of healthy food to homebound and vulnerable Black seniors.
4. Build an educational training center focused on local food distribution infrastructure, food production, ecological restoration, and land stewardship.
AGROECOLOGY

Agroecology produces nutritious food in harmony with the earth, helps mitigate climate change, and strengthens communities. The most effective way to accelerate and scale the use of these sustainable agricultural methods is through farmer-to-farmer training and organizing. WhyHunger supports agroecology efforts around the globe, and provides technical support to thousands of organizers and farmers from Black and Indigenous, farmer and farmworker communities through agroecology encounters and trainings. WhyHunger mobilized $733,000 to 12 countries to strengthen agroecological production and support peasant farmer education at regional and global levels.

WhyHunger continued to deepen relationships with and provide support for 4 global social movements, La Via Campesina International, the World March of Women, the World Forum of Fisher Peoples, and the World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous People. The movements represent over 200 million farmers, Indigenous, peasant, and fisherfolk working to build food sovereignty and social justice for all. WhyHunger mobilizes funds and provides logistical and technical support and international solidarity to these movements, helping to ensure small-scale farmers, women, youth and Indigenous communities across the globe can produce nutritious food, maintain their land rights, and strengthen their ability to organize.

In 2021, WhyHunger supported partners by leveraging critical funding to support:

1. 18 farmer-to-farmer exchanges in Latin America, including a participatory diagnosis on the agroecological conditions of 10 women-led family plots, and established the technical assistance to implement the recommendations in their plots for the maintenance of crops.

2. Learning exchanges between farmers in Latin America and the United States to learn and share production methods. During the exchanges farmers worked together to help control pests, fungi and bacteria in plants.

3. The distribution of food and medical supplies for families and holding educational workshops for young people in Kuna communities in Panama, in which they created short videos of music, rap, poetry about the Earth's struggle and the importance of the Defense of Mother Earth and the struggles for food sovereignty.
WhyHunger provided over $608,653 in direct funding to help 14 organizations and community leaders across the U.S. bolster initiatives around childhood nutrition, community organizing, narrative change strategies and Black food sovereignty. By deepening local impact and building stronger connections regionally and nationally, WhyHunger is helping communities address their own immediate needs and create long-term change.

WhyHunger stewards the Closing the Hunger Gap Network (CTHG), the national alliance of emergency food providers working to shift from charity to justice. WhyHunger provided technical assistance, convenings and funding to help organizations and community leaders across the U.S. to bolster initiatives around narrative change strategies. By deepening local impact and building stronger connections regionally and nationally, WhyHunger is helping communities address their own immediate needs and create long-term change.

In 2021, WhyHunger supported Closing the Hunger Gap to:

1. Launch Next Shift, a 3-part National Narrative Change Campaign for racial and economic justice in the food system geared

   Develop brand guidelines, create critical communications, and toolkits to help organizations participate in the Next Shift campaign.

2. Continue to organize and provide logistics and capacity support for 30+ CTHG members supporting campaign development, material design and strategy.
A REGIONAL FOCUS

Across the nation, WhyHunger works with regional cohorts of food providers to provide more focused support for this transformation from food charity to real solutions to hunger. Since 2015, WhyHunger has been organizing community food providers in the Midwest, supporting and convening these groups to build relationships, learn from one another, assess opportunities and needs in their region, and collectively engage in work they cannot do alone. In early 2021, WhyHunger received a $1.6M grant to invest in longer-term solutions to hunger in Midwestern communities. With this funding, WhyHunger hired a dedicated organizer to support this network’s additional learning and growth. Each of the 25 Midwest member organizations also received a grant of $50,000 to pilot or expand programs that tackle the root causes of hunger in their communities.

1. Increase small-scale farm infrastructure in the midwest by purchasing land, tools, raised beds, refrigerators, seeds, livestock and more.

2. Expand parts of a Black-led food supply chain, including: farmers’ markets, food hubs, grocery cooperatives, food distributors, and foodmakers throughout the midwest.

3. Support the work to restore the traditional food systems and watersheds in Dzil Yijiin (Black Mesa) region and across the Navajo Nation.

4. Expand the infrastructure, staffing and communications needs of grassroots organizations working towards Indigenous food sovereignty.

5. Create youth-centered programming for young Black, Indigenous and Farmers of color to develop their experience, skills, and networks.

Closing the Hunger Gap Conference, North Carolina, USA
Nutritious food is a basic human right! WhyHunger employs many strategies to protect and expand the human right to food across the nation and around the globe, from policy and organizing to our WhyHunger hotline and Find Food tools.

The U.S. is one of only a few countries that has never ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, which includes the right to food and adequate nutrition for all people. In 2021, WhyHunger and the Human Rights Clinic of the University of Miami School of Law steward the National Community of Practice for the Right to Food, a growing group of advocates, legal experts, community organizers, food and farm organizations, and other stakeholders -- especially food workers, small scale food producers, and communities experiencing high rates of hunger and poverty. Representing grassroots efforts in the states of Washington, West Virginia and Maine, members meet monthly in a collaborative effort to develop a strong network of legal grassroots support – with a specific focus on building a network of human rights lawyers, students and legal experts that can readily engage in and provide context-specific support to right to food local and state level grassroots-lead efforts.

**Maine Voter’s Pass the Human Right to Food!**

In 2021, the State of Maine passed the “Right to Produce, Harvest, and Consume Food Amendment.’ This amendment – the first of its kind in the nation – protects the ability for Maine residents to grow, raise, harvest, produce and consume the food of their own choosing for their own nourishment, sustenance, bodily health and well-being. For the first time ever in this country, the human right to food has been guaranteed in a state’s constitution, and will protect critical tools to help end hunger and build food sovereignty, while fostering local autonomy.

**NARRATIVE CHANGE**

Changing the narrative! WhyHunger continues our work to transform the dominant narrative about hunger in the U.S. though our storytelling and organizing strategies. The global impact of COVID-19 and the call for racial justice in 2020 have increased the visibility of hunger and food insecurity as key issues to overcome as we work to ensure everyone’s basic human right to nutritious food.
Drum Together
Harnessing the power of music to spark change, WhyHunger joined forces with some of the world’s best drummers for an epic musical tribute to The Beatles’ GRAMMY Award-winning song “Come Together.” With the support of over 100 legendary artists including Ringo Starr, Brian Frasier-Moore, Cindy Blackman Santana, Jim Keltner, Jonathan Moffett, Matt Cameron, Max Weinberg, Steve Gadd, Chad Smith and 11-year-old drumming sensation Nandi Bushell, we raised over $600,000 to support our mission to end hunger.

The Alliance for Solidarity, Resistance and Hope: Love is Resistance Festival
We partnered with A Growing Culture for the Resistance is Love Art Festival, uplifting visual and performing artists from social movements and raising funds to support critical needs.

HUNGERTHON
Hungerthon 2021 raised over $920,000, fueling programmatic work and educating listeners through 30+ radio interviews with our partners at SiriusXM, Audacy New York and iHeart Radio New York. Artist ambassadors and celebrities elevated the campaign through merchandise, online auctions and promotional support, including Yoko Ono Lennon, and Bruce Springsteen. We’re grateful for the continued partnership of vitafusion Gummy Vitamins and celebrity ambassador Tiffany Haddish, raising over $100,000 to support Hungerthon and invest in direct community impact.
Ending hunger has been an issue close to my heart for decades. I believe nutritious food is our most basic human right ... My friends at WhyHunger are tackling the systemic issues at the heart of hunger and poverty so that we can all live in a just and hunger-free world.

- Bruce Springsteen in PLAY ON, aired on CBS

CHARITABLE PARTNERSHIPS

For the first time ever, WhyHunger raised over $8 million to power our mission and support solutions to hunger worldwide.


In 2021, WhyHunger returned to in-person events with a bang! Our “Come Together” event gathered over 350 friends and supporters to celebrate Brian Resnick and the visionary team behind Drum Together. It was wonderful to see new and familiar faces again, and together we raised nearly $500,000 to nourish communities around the globe.

Our long-standing relationship with Hard Rock International and our co-branded John Lennon 50th Anniversary “Imagine There’s No Hunger” and Bruce Springsteen “Land of Hope and Dreams” merchandise partnerships brought in over $865,000 to help build a hunger-free world.

Last year, WhyHunger invested 91% of our revenue directly in programmatic work and 9% on administration and fundraising. Once again, we have received the highest 4-star rating from Charity Navigator for financial health,