In the early days of spring 2020, as the economic impact of the pandemic became evident, the Amherst Survival Center’s immediate task became clear: We needed to take bold, decisive action to ensure that we could provide more food to more people, while protecting the community.

Thanks to your support, we transformed operations to offer grocery delivery and curbside pickup, tripled the size of our community meals program, welcomed more people into our food pantry, and recovered more food from our recovery partners. Last year, we provided more than a million meals—prepared and groceries—to close to 7,000 people in our community.

Food insecurity rates are slowing declining, but not to pre-pandemic levels—and, let’s be clear, our pre-pandemic levels of food insecurity were utterly unacceptable. Many of our neighbors are still struggling to put food on the table and pay the bills. The stresses that come with these impossible choices—food or rent, food or medicine, food or heat—have a direct and negative impact on an individual’s mental and physical health.

Many people have shared with us that the food they receive from the Center allows them to use their limited financial resources on other basic needs and relieves some of the stress they are facing. A participant said, “During the pandemic the ASC saved my life. As a veteran with PTSD and a small poverty budget, it was my survival.” Another wrote, “We are a poor student couple with a little kid who needs nutritious food. With ASC’s help, I do not worry about feeding my family.”

The past year has been a test of our strength as a community, and together we have made a huge difference. We extend our deepest gratitude to you for joining us in this work. And we need you to continue to do so. While many COVID-specific grants and fundraising have wound down, the need in our community persists. As we strive towards a future without hunger, please help ensure our neighbors have a place to turn to for help.

Healthy Food is a Human Right

As our community continues to recover, the Amherst Survival Center will be here to ensure that no family goes without the food they need.

In September, we reopened in-person, full choice shopping in our food pantry, while maintaining options for curbside pickup and grocery delivery. For many, being able to again pick out all of one’s own groceries has been a very welcome return. We still distribute delicious hot lunches (packed to go), produce, and bread from our outdoor distribution shed. We serve 90,000 meals to close to 3,000 people each month.

Also in September, we reopened a warming center, which along with the Center’s hot showers, laundry facilities, lockers, and mail service, provides much-needed support to people experiencing homelessness. The warming center provides computer access, charging stations, and a comfortable place to be warm and dry. This will be particularly critical as the weather gets cold.

Community members who access our services regularly tell us that they are “so much less stressed” and “feel good bringing food to my family”. Not worrying, having less stress, knowing you can feed yourself and your family. All of our neighbors deserve this.
More Food for Our Neighbors

The pandemic hit our community hard. The Amherst Survival Center committed to bold action early on and stepped up as a consistent source of healthy food.

We provide 250-300 hot lunches each day—three times our pre-COVID meal service. Over the last year, we have nearly doubled the amount of food that pantry shoppers take home, from roughly one weeks’ worth of groceries to 10+ days’ worth. With your support, we will continue to increase the amount of fresh, healthy foods that families get each month to a full two weeks’ worth. We will continue to provide food that is culturally appropriate and meets dietary restrictions, such as a nut or gluten allergy. In response to feedback from families, we have expanded Kids Boost—extra groceries and kid-friendly snacks—from months with school vacations to year round. To distribute this much food, we must make more trips to the Food Bank each week and recover more food from retail donors. Help support the nutritious core of the Center’s operations.

$18
Expanded Kids Boost
More food for growing children.

$70
Twice the Groceries for a Household of 4
Doubling the amount of food families receive from the pantry.

$180
Lunch for 50 People
Hot, nutritious lunches packed in compostable to-go containers.

Want to sponsor a full day of lunch? See page 3.

Pet Care Package
When times are hard, the companionship of a pet can be priceless. But often budgets are so tight that some may forego feeding themselves in order to feed their pets. The availability of pet provisions can make all the difference to those for whom a pet is part of the family or a best friend.

$25 Pet Care Package
Make a gift in honor of or in memory of a favorite furry friend!

3,689 bags of pet food were distributed in FY21.

“The Center is a holistic kind of program, where each individual is respected for who they are.”

“I started volunteering in the kitchen when the Amherst Survival Center was still in the old location. Back then, the kitchen was half the size of the current kitchen! I have no qualms saying that I volunteer, but I also use the services. I think the best part of the Survival Center is that no questions are asked, there’s no criteria to be eligible. For anyone whose earning or life circumstances have changed, the Center supplements in a very critical way. Volunteering has given me an added sense of belonging to the community.”

— Naz
No One Hungry: Reaching More People

The pandemic forced us to innovate and figure out new ways to get food to people by offering grocery delivery and curbside pickup. Since these new options make getting food easier, they are now here to stay.

Throughout the pandemic, more of our neighbors have been struggling to make ends meet. Since lack of transportation, health risks, or loss of childcare made it hard for many to get to the Center, we decided to bring the food to them. Last year, we expanded grocery delivery to families and individuals of all ages, across our service area. We partnered with area organizations and recruited volunteers, and the delivery program grew rapidly. We delivered monthly groceries—milk, fresh fruits and vegetables, bread, frozen meat, eggs, cheese, and non-perishables, as well as diapers and personal care items—to 1,580 people last year. One senior wrote, “Due to mobility problems, the Center has been a lifeline. I never expected to use it in my elder years.”

Help deliver nutritious food to people with mobility issues, caring for a loved one at home, or without transportation.

|$100 Delivery Vehicle Maintenance |
| Gas and repairs to connect more people with the food they need. |

|$200 Evening Curbside Pickup |
| Expanded hours make food accessible to those who work during the day. |

|$250 Grocery Delivery for 5 Households |
| Delivering two weeks of groceries to 5 families’ doors. |

“No One Hungry: Reaching More People”

“I’ve been here for 20 years. This place has changed my life!”

“I first got involved in volunteering back in ’98. When my mom and I used to live in North Village, we were in walking distance from the old building. It was something to do, to get involved in the community. I started off in the sorting room, then bounced around the building doing other things. Now I have become ‘the cardboard guy,’ breaking down all the boxes and making sure they’re recycled. It’s the only job that nobody else wants to do! But I love being outdoors and it’s a fun job, plus I get to take home good food.”

— Kurtis
Despite the extraordinary challenges of the last year and a half, the Amherst Survival Center remained focused on providing more food to more people as safely as possible. We scaled our programs to meet the increased demand and expanded access to our services. As we emerge from this crisis, we are using the lessons learned to sustain our increased reach and impact.

**Meals Provided**

**Total Meals Provided**
Includes prepared meals and groceries for meals at home.

1,146,675 meals for ~7,000 people

FY19 (Pre-COVID): 513,520

**Prepared Meals Served**
96,793

FY19 (Pre-COVID): 35,894

**Average # of Lunches Served Per Day**
272

FY19 (Pre-COVID): 90

**Groceries Distributed**

**More Food to Each Family**
A 4-person household with 2 kids receives:

11 days of groceries (160 lbs) each month

FY19 (Pre-COVID): 6 days of groceries (86 lbs)

**Fresh Food Distribution**

**Fresh Food, Less Waste**
Fresh produce and bread recovered daily from local farms and stores, distributed to:

105 people per day

**Total Distributed**
200,000 lbs

**According to a recent survey of food pantry shoppers:**

96% of people said that the food they get is good quality

95% of people said that the food helped them prepare healthy meals at home

99% of people would recommend the ASC to someone else

Because of the food from the Amherst Survival Center, “I am more food secure”

96% of people surveyed

"Thanks to the ASC, since the pandemic started last year, I have been able to obtain certain foods for me, my granddaughter and dogs. They have helped me a great deal and I am super grateful for that."

"I'm in a good mood when I arrive, then I'm in a GREAT mood when I leave because I feel like a superhero bringing food home to my family."

"Because of the food from the Amherst Survival Center, "I am more food secure""
Providing Health Essentials

When times are hard, personal care items such as a toothbrush, a bar of soap, or tampons can be hard to come by—much less toilet paper, hand sanitizer, or diapers for a child.

We hear regularly from parents who are out of diapers for their babies and seniors who need incontinence products but can’t buy them with SNAP (food stamps). As well as supplying these necessities, we have distributed more than 10,000 face masks to date—some purchased, and many lovingly sewn by our network of volunteers. Never has the impact that each of us has on the health of others been clearer. Your support helps the Center purchase needed items when they’re not available through donations.

$30
Diapers for Four Children
Help wipe out diaper need.

$50
Toiletries & Personal Care Pantry
The bare necessities of toilet paper, soap, toothpaste, or menstrual products.

10,770 diapers distributed last year

"There’s no judgement, people take you as you are."

“It’s a blessing. A huge blessing. I’m not a good cook, and I’m recovering from cancer, so you’re supposed to eat things that I wasn’t eating before—like broccoli, and lots of fruits and vegetables. Now, I get them here and eat them. They deliver my groceries to my apartment because I don’t have a car, and that makes a huge difference. It’s easy for me to get there by bus to pick up a lunch, and some fruit, bread, and dessert. I really like the prepared meals! It’s a very comfortable place. It feels safe.”

— Elizabeth

“It’s like the food store. You can use it for dinner tonight!”

“I first came here 25 years ago with my sponsor from church. We’d come here for shopping trips for food and clothes. I had young children, now they are grown up in college and high school. I don’t have a lot of money and this helps. The grocery store is expensive, and with COVID, the kids were home more and hungry. Sometimes I come every day. American food, I learn from my daughter. Cambodian food, she learns from me. And they eat both. When my daughter comes home and says, ‘Mom, I’m hungry! Do you have apples?’ I can say, ‘They’re on the table.’”

— Marlee
Thank You, Volunteers!

You can feel the excitement as we see more and more volunteers return after a year away. We also acknowledge the overwhelming dedication of those who were able to remain with us through the pandemic. The Center simply would not exist without the hard work and friendly faces of our volunteers.

Thank you to our dedicated Staff, Board of Directors, and Committees!

Collectively, this team of people ensured continued and expanded services, rising to the immense challenges of this time.

Staff

Philip Avila, Community Meals Coordinator  
Carleen Basler, Program Director  
Lev Ben-Ezra, Executive Director  
Chris Dyson, Food Pantry Assistant  
Phil Gilfeather-Girton, Director of Finance & Administration  
Joel Gladu, Kitchen Assistant  
Miranda Groux, Administrative Associate  
Sam Guerin, Operations Coordinator  
Clara López, Food Pantry Coordinator  
Marcella McNerney, Service Coordinator  
Sez Morales, Food Pantry Coordinator  
Elizabeth Morrissey, Food Pantry Coordinator  
Lisa Queenin, Development Coordinator  
Lisa Solowiej, Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator  
Kendell Sweeney-Thomas, Food Pantry Associate

Board of Directors

Ted Parker, President  
Nicola Usher, Vice President  
Deron Estes, Treasurer  
Christopher Howland, Clerk  
Neftalí Duran  
Jan Eidelson  
J. Lynn Griesemer  
Matthew Gordon Morin  
Jennifer Moyston  
Allison van der Velden

Thank you to the community members who join our Board on the Development, Finance, and Investment Committees.

Thank you to the interns and support staff who joined the team to lead our COVID response.

327 volunteers contributed a total of 21,900 hours in the last year!
Food Recovery Is Essential to Our Food Programs

We are fortunate to live in an area where nutritious food is abundant, and we believe everyone should have access to the bounty grown locally. Luckily, our food recovery partners agree. Thank you to the local farms, grocery stores, and community members with backyard gardens who generously gave in-kind donations of fresh produce, baked goods, and surplus food for our neighbors to access every day.

Thank you to our Food Recovery Partners...

ALDI, Atkins Farms, Big Y, Bruegger’s Bagels, Henion Bakery, Mi Tierra, Panera Bread, Starbucks, Stop & Shop, Tandem Bagels, Target, Trader Joe’s, Walmart, Whole Foods Market

...and to Local Farms Fighting Hunger!

Amherst College Book and Plow Farm, Ancient Ponies Farm, Astarte Farm, Bloody Brook Farm, Brookfield Farm, Buffam Brook Farm, Food Bank of Western Mass Farm, Jekanowski Farm, Joe Czajkowski Farm, Kitchen Garden Farm, Laurenitis Farm, Many Hands Farm, Mycoterra Farm, Next Barn Over Farm, Old Friends Farm, Riverland Farm, Simple Gifts Farm, Small Ones Farm, UMass Student Farm

Area businesses are vital partners in the Amherst Survival Center’s mission, providing financial support or goods and services, running food drives, and supplying volunteers. At a time when many local businesses are themselves struggling, we have been so touched and honored by the ways they have continued to support their communities. Please join us in thanking them!

To do this, we need your support.

Cash Revenue: 46%
In-Kind Donations: 54%

This past year, we relied on support from individual donors more than ever. It was your prompt and generous contributions that enabled our response.

Togethor we can!

The Amherst Survival Center’s response to the pandemic was made possible by the generous support of our community. An unprecedented number of people stepped up to invest in our mission, allowing us to respond boldly to the challenges at hand. Thank you to all those who generously donated your time, talent, and money, making it possible for our neighbors to have a place to turn to for help, no questions asked.

We have seen just how critical it is to maintain our expanded food and nutrition programs, and we need your help!

With your support we will:

✓ Increase the amount of food provided in the food pantry, offering two weeks of groceries for all households and increasing access to fresh produce and perishables.

✓ Sustain the delivery program at full scale, ensuring reliable access for our neighbors who can’t get to the Center.

✓ Sustain the expanded lunch offerings, providing 300% more hot, nutritious lunches than before COVID.

Revenue Sources

Individuals 58%
Government 23%
Grants 14%
Business/Orgs 4%
Interest 1%
Thank you for your ongoing support!

This holiday season, give the gift of nourishment and health. We invite you to honor your friends, family, or business associates with gifts from this catalog. You can also make an unrestricted gift, which will be used wherever it’s needed most.

Join our Sustainer’s Circle

We are in this for the long haul. When you become a Sustaining Partner, you show your neighbors you are here for them. Your monthly gifts allow us to plan effectively, increasing your impact as we care for our neighbors and strengthen our community.

Sign up at www.amherstsurvival.org

Donate online at www.amherstsurvival.org

Multiple gifts? Wonderful! Please enclose a note with your gift selections and your recipients’ names and addresses.

We will be delighted to send an ‘in your honor’ acknowledgement card to each of your recipients or, if you prefer, we’ll send the cards to you so you can distribute them yourself.

For News & Special Events, sign up for our email newsletter at www.amherstsurvival.org

Follow us!

United Way

Serving the Pioneer Valley

The Amherst Survival Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations to the organization are tax deductible in accordance with state and federal tax laws.

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