

Since we are all in this challenging time together, many HFB volunteers have expressed an interest in learning if the Houston Food Bank (HFB) is open; what HFB is doing to increase our sanitizing procedures at our facility; what our volunteer needs are; and how they can support the Houston Food Bank (HFB) from their home or office. Below please find answers to the most frequently asked questions.

Is the Houston Food Bank open?

YES! We are open and we need volunteers.

Even though Harris County has issued the "Stay Home-Work Safe" order, please know that the Houston Food Bank (HFB) will remain open as part of a list of 16 sectors that are essential to maintain supply chain, under Food and Agriculture –

https://www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce?fbclid=IwAR3hQebc0eN3q0fakG3rEnEEXsUD98TijXWY_Syht1hGBdEse0XoIO3jeU.

HFB and our partners, including vendors and volunteers, who support us in essential ways, are considered part of this “critical infrastructure” workforce. HFB performs “essential services” so our mandate is that the work goes on no matter what. We will continue to utilize the community and governmental resources, because our community needs us now more than ever and failure is not an option.

What is the Houston Food Bank doing to support a safe and healthy volunteer-space?

Amid the growing concerns around COVID-19 (Coronavirus-19), we are closely monitoring the situation. We realize that the steps that we will take today may be different next month or even tomorrow, so any changes will be communicated through email to group leaders and individuals who have registered for a shift.

- **Face Masks:** HFB is currently requiring that every person at our facility wear a face mask. Face masks are in limited supply, so we hope that you will take a moment to make your own out of a piece of cotton cloth, or an old t-shirt. Watch this video to learn how easy it is to make: <https://mashable.com/video/cdc-face-mask-how-to/>
- **Temperatures checks:** HFB is currently checking the temperature of each person who enters the building. If an individual’s temporal artery (forehead scan) temperature reading is 99.4 degrees (38 C) or higher, we will not allow the person and/or group to stay and volunteer.
- **Cleaning and disinfecting:** HFB continues to maintain a clean and healthy environment for our staff and volunteers by increasing the cleaning frequency -- especially around areas of high traffic. Every volunteer shift has its own cleaning crew that wipes down tables, chairs, benches, conference rooms, stair bannisters, elevator doors and buttons; and our bathrooms are cleaned multiple times a day via HFB housekeeping.
- **Sanitizing, cleaning and safety:** Volunteer Services has added 5 stations. In addition to volunteers in-house receiving gloves to work all projects, we have implemented a “Wash-In/ Wash-Out” process where volunteers are asked to wash their hands before projects start, again when returning from break, and one more time at the close of projects.

- **Social Distancing:** We are also intentionally increasing the amount of space between projects and persons working projects; for example, instead of normally having 8-9 persons working a sorting table, this number has become 4-6 OR instead of project “work” tables touching, we’ve added space between them.
- **Reminders:** As a final safeguard, internal/external communications are being disseminated to encourage everyone working or visiting our facility to follow these health-conscious habits:
 - Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after visiting the restroom; before eating; after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing or touching your face
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
 - Cough or sneeze into your elbow, then wash your hands
 - Keep disinfectant with you as a precaution
 - Please stay home if you are feeling unwell

Does the Houston Food Bank need volunteers?

As you continue to support the Houston Food Bank's efforts, we want to let you know that the community need is growing so distributions are heavy. One day recently week we distributed 960,000 pounds. To put that in perspective, our average is 480,000 pounds each day. As donations are not flowing in at this level, we are adjusting as best we can.

Especially in challenging times, our community depends upon HFB to provide daily essential nutrition services to children (Backpack Buddy), seniors (Senior Box Program) and families (mobile pantries, markets and partner distributions) across our 18-county service area. With the individuals that we serve in mind, it is important to note that the following shifts are open for volunteers to sort, box and bag the food that is distributed each day.

Our current onsite at HFB shifts are:

- **Monday through Friday (warehouse):** morning - TEAM A: (8am – 12pm); morning - TEAM B: (8:45am – 12pm); afternoon - TEAM A: (1pm – 4pm); afternoon - TEAM B: (1:45pm – 4pm); evening - TEAM A: (6pm – 9pm); evening - TEAM B: (6:45pm – 9pm);
- **Saturday (warehouse):** morning - TEAM A: (8am – 12pm); morning - TEAM B: (8:45am – 12pm); afternoon - TEAM A: (1pm – 4pm); afternoon - TEAM B: (1:45pm – 4pm);
- **Sunday (warehouse):** morning (9am – 12pm)

How can I support the community from the confines of my home or office?

Every dollar donated to HFB creates 3 meals for the community. To donate money, we have the following 2 convenient methods:

1. Give directly to HFB: individuals and organizations can go to our website <https://www.houstonfoodbank.org/ways-to-give/give-funds/>
2. Download the Flourish app: anyone can easily use this app to choose a monthly limit and have purchases automatically rounded-up to donate to HFB -- <https://my.flourishchange.com/register/151/>

Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do to support the Houston Food Bank's mission: **Food For Better Lives.**