



# Outcomes of the Community Food Response Grant Fund

to 31 December 2020

As part of MSD’s Food Secure Communities programme, the Community Food Response Fund supports **131 community food providers** to meet increased demand on their services over a two year period (August 2020 to June 2022) due to the economic impact of COVID-19. It also contributes towards creating food secure communities.

The funding helps with increased costs on services rescuing or distributing food for people, families and whānau unable to afford or purchase food since the COVID-19 pandemic. Providers needed to demonstrate they had strong and ongoing connections to the cohorts they were supporting with food. They also had to establish processes for identifying or assessing who required food support, and connecting people to other support such as Building Financial Capability (budgeting) and local Work and Income service Centres.

Over **\$19.6 million** over two years has been allocated through the Community Food Response Fund, including **\$10.3 million** in F2021.

Food Secure Communities Relationship Managers have played a pivotal role visiting and engaging with providers nationally who were awarded grant funding, monitoring the grant funding and providing support. Through kano ki te kano (face-to-face) connections we solidified relationships and gained an appreciation and fuller understanding of the unique challenges providers encountered.

## What Providers have shared with us

Providers told us they distributed an average of **103,800 meals** each, and that around **37%** of those meals were rescued food.

## What were the highlights/achievements during this period?

It was great to see, acknowledge and celebrate the good work that arose during a time of challenge and great need. Here’s a snippet of the positive mahi:

### Reaching out to those in need and making a difference



Nutritional value pack before delivery  
(Source: Kindred Family Services)

- > Serving a wide range of population groups – Indian, Chinese, Malaysian, Punjabi, other parts of Middle East and Asia, as well as Muslim community.
- > Reaching out to the wider community – elderly, and those with complex needs

- > Supported 40 families – providing school stationery supplies for the year so families could commit to other essentials
- > Two thousand people reached
- > Seeing a reduction of repeat users
- > Securing priority shopping for patients (Countdown) at a time of great demand



Otara Community Maara Kai – creating a food secure community (source: The Community Builders NZ Trust)



Ready for collection and distribution! (source: Kōkiri Marae Keriana Olsen Trust)

### Increasing the quantity and quality of food provision

- > Ability to modify food availability to meet specific dietary requirements
- > Increased food volume (54%)
- > Able to provide 258 whānau with Christmas Food Parcels
- > Free Friday Night Take-Away Meals
- > Being able to purchase essential equipment to meet service demand
- > Able to hire additional staff to meet need
- > Able to meet food demand requests with FSC funding



Staff dedication to meeting community need (Source: SuperGrans Tairāwhiti)



Funding towards truck purchase for distribution of rescued food (Source: Nourished for Nil Limited)

### Recognising supporters and being recognised

- > Donations towards Christmas parcels from New World Kerikeri, PC Meats Waipapa and Bald Angels Trust
- > Food supplied by New Zealand Food Network and food rescue organisations helped alleviate pressure
- > Getting Foodstuffs on board to assist with set-up/ implementation of social supermarket
- > Being recognised by the community for work carried out
- > Getting endorsement by three Wairarapa mayors

## What were the challenges experienced during this period?

We saw increased demand for food due to loss of employment, increasing housing costs and economic hardship. With each operation having their own unique challenges, here's a snippet of what stood out:

### Issues being experienced by whānau

- > A new cohort – people experiencing job losses/reduced hours and increased mental health issues
- > Emergency housing clients (motel accommodated) in confined situations with inadequate cooking facilities, leading to unhealthy eating
- > Increased living costs – lack of housing supply and meeting rent costs
- > Affected Whānau not reaching out for help, depriving themselves
- > Extra demand due to ending of Winter Energy Payment (WEP) and temporary wage subsidy



All loaded up and ready to go (source: Halo Charitable Trust)

## Operational challenges of dealing with increased demand



Making those community connections to those in need (Source: Marlborough Community Foodbank Inc.)

- > Due to increased demand, some situations have been confrontational putting the safety of volunteers at risk
- > Logistical challenges and adequate storage of donated goods
- > Strain on resourcing, especially with deliveries outside of respective areas
- > Trying to meet operating costs (staff wages)
- > Hard to deal with unpredictability of rescued food and not knowing next delivery
- > Lack of refrigeration
- > Time spent replacing people in key roles and getting the right fit, skills and attributes.
- > Having to say “no”, especially during festive season and when children involved
- > Concerns around climate change and drought season in the Far North limiting water for Maara Kai

## Continuing impact when Alert Levels change

- > High turn-over (staff/volunteers) due to burn-out/health issues (especially 70 plus during alert level restrictions) meaning lost knowledge
- > Having to review/revise processes and adapt to the unknown
- > Premises unsuitable when dealing with demand and applying social distancing rules



Team taking a well-deserved break (Source: Bethlehem Baptist Church)

## How is your organisation working towards creating a food secure community

While serving increased demand during a global pandemic, our valued providers took time to work on building food secure communities.

### Solutions focussed outcomes for whānau

- > Some whānau were not accustomed to some food products so we looked at recipes to explore new dishes
- > Use of picture-based resource to help with choice selection for those with limited English/literacy barriers
- > Offering combination of nutritious food parcels (made up) and offering financial mentoring services
- > Involving children in learning to cook/prepare food
- > Kai Marama Programme created (encouragement to become more independent)

## Creating food secure communities



The buzz of sorting and allocating operations to new Petone site (source: Kaibosh Charitable Trust)

- > Operating own Fruit & Vege Co-op offering low cost purchase option
- > People on periodic detention helped with digging potatoes
- > Contributed to Pataka food store – used traditional Māori techniques for Maara Kai gardens
- > Provided vegetable seedlings for free – encouraging self-sufficiency
- > Running a ‘no pay Christmas shop’ for those families unable to buy presents
- > Use of ‘WhatsApp’ application so users could share surplus food instantly