



## **UNPRECEDENTED NEED REQUIRES AN UNPRECEDENTED RESPONSE**

Brad Cecil & Associates is known for our custom work and ability to change directions quickly when new information or opportunities present themselves. But never before have we experienced the kind of immediate and dramatic shift in messaging that the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated this spring. We are proud that during this unprecedented time, our team was able to quickly adapt and find creative ways to serve our clients however needed. The response from donors has been remarkable!

### **OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

When nationwide stay-at-home orders became widespread beginning in mid-March, it was immediately clear that we should not continue business as usual. Although our projects with late-March in-market dates were already printed, we stopped everything to regroup.

Based on individual client needs and feedback, we decided to simultaneously re-write several print appeals, prepare a special emergency insert for others and begin a COVID-19 email series specific to each clients' response. The new appeal letters were ready to mail in April, and the new inserts were created, printed, added to the already-printed mail pieces and sent out *within a few days*, as were the first of the email campaigns and social media content.

We continued with bi-weekly emails for several clients, eventually tapering to once a week at the clients' discretion. Each email was written and approved as far in advance as possible but had the ability to be edited with up-to-date information as late as the day of the send. We understood from the beginning that our clients' responses to what was happening in local communities would have similarities but that hyper-local messaging would be essential to communicating with donors in the most authentic way.

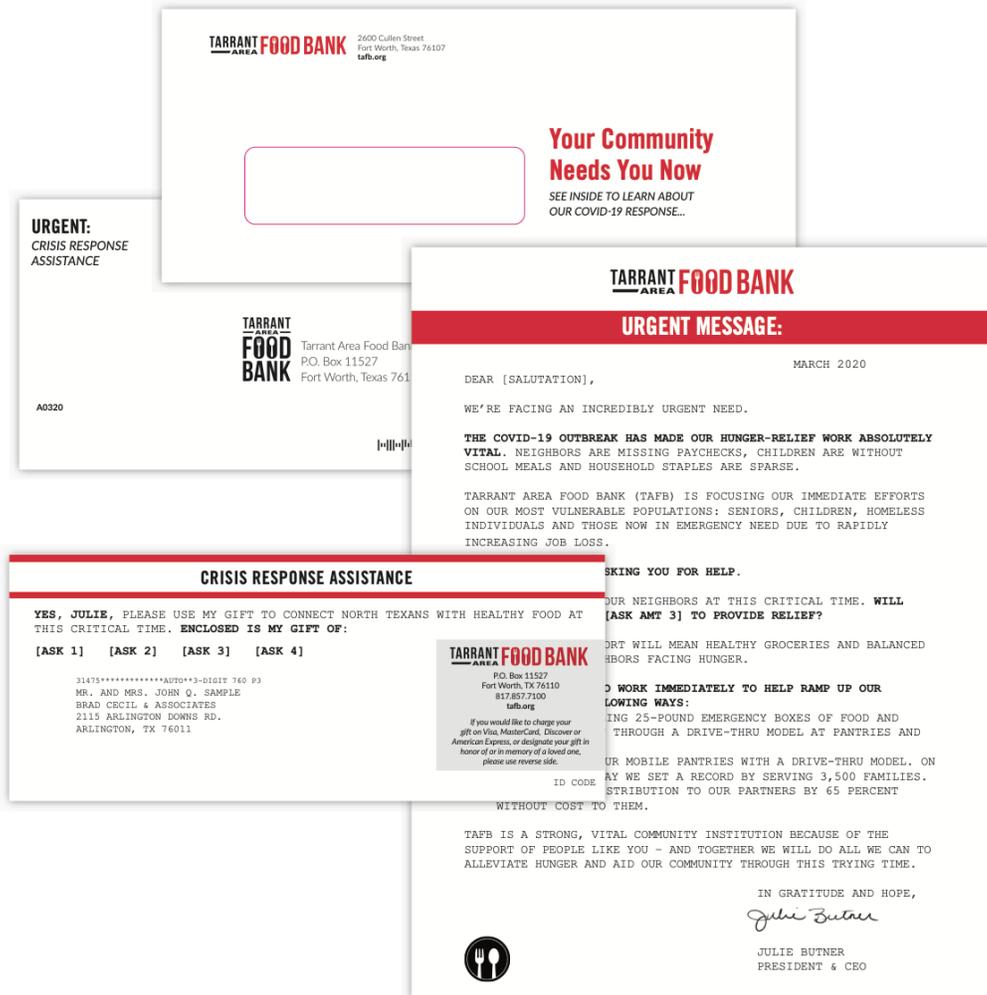
In addition to emergency email series, we very quickly created a plan to write, design, print and mail emergency update appeals specific to each client, which went out in mid-April to a deep audience of all active, lapsed and even some deeply lapsed donors, as well as

special segments that do not typically receive mail.

We also re-wrote May newsletters to be relevant to current events and changed all mail and email schedules and strategies for the remainder of the calendar year, beginning with April. We were even able to onboard a new client extremely quickly that had not planned to begin our work together

until July. Instead of waiting until July, this food bank was able to begin getting COVID-19 email communication out to donors in March.

In short, all the regularly scheduled custom work we had done that would have put us into July was shelved and reimagined at no cost to our clients.



**Tarrant Area Food Bank**  
COVID Emergency Appeal  
2020

Name], Your Community Needs You – Inbox

Message

Tarrant Area Food Bank  
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2020 at 1:51 PM  
To: John Q. Sample

**TARRANT AREA FOOD BANK**

**Update: Our Response to COVID-19**

Dear [name],

We find ourselves in troubling times. But rest assured Tarrant Area Food Bank is quickly mobilizing to minimize the escalating effects of COVID-19 on those most vulnerable to hunger.

No one in our community is unaffected. In this uncertain world, we are certain that **your support makes a difference**. We expect our need to provide relief will increase exponentially in the days and weeks ahead.

[If you can, please help today.](#)

Your gift will go to work immediately to help ramp up our services in the following ways:

- We're assembling 25-pound emergency boxes of food and giving them out through a drive-thru model at pantries and schools;
- Pivoting our Community Kitchen to increase the volume of ready-to-heat meals for partner agencies;
- Increasing distribution to our partners by 35 percent without added cost to them

Thousands of children are missing school-provided meals. Hourly workers are suddenly without income. Senior citizens are self-isolating. **The need for food is critical right now.**

As you give generously, please know that we are also taking the safety of our volunteers, staff, partner agencies and community members very seriously and have implemented CDC and local healthcare protocols to mitigate the spread of illness and ensure food safety.

**Now is the time to band together and support those in our community who are most vulnerable to the effects of this pandemic.** Tarrant Area Food Bank is a strong, vital community institution because of the support of people like you — and together we will do all we can to alleviate hunger and aid our community through this trying time.

Gratefully,  
*Julie Butner*  
**Julie Butner**  
President & CEO

P.S. For more detailed and up-to-date information about Tarrant Area Food Bank's response, visit [tafb.org/coronavirus](http://tafb.org/coronavirus)

**Donate Now**

**Tarrant Area Food Bank**  
COVID Emergency eAppeals  
2020

**TARRANT AREA FOOD BANK** 2600 Cullen Street  
Fort Worth, TX 76107

Update: Our Response to COVID-19

... affect our nation — and world — we're people in our community. We're all in this hope.

... ty grows. With children out of school and ors are truly struggling.

... y to help.

... e face of COVID-19.

... munity's most essential services — id that's critical to maintaining good health. lest hit by this pandemic, and it's more to help.

... st generous gift you can give to help meet

**Donate Now**

Connect with Tarrant Area Food Bank:

Fundraisers  
Shop  
About  
Photos  
Events  
Twitter  
Reviews  
Welcome  
Videos  
Notes  
Posts

**HELP THOSE MOST VULNERABLE**  
COVID-19  
TUESDAY MEALS

Like Comment Share

**TARRANT AREA FOOD BANK**

Want to help your Tarrant County neighbors amid the COVID-19 crisis? School closings and reduced working hours have put thousands more in need of food. A donation to Tarrant Area Food Bank will help keep our community fed. Share with your friends who are looking for a way to help.

August 22 at 12:00 PM

**WANT TO HELP AMID THE COVID-19 CRISIS?**

Like Comment Share

Twitter Post

TarrantAreaFoodBank @TAFoodBank · Aug 19

Everyone in our community has been affected by #COVID19, especially those most vulnerable. Your generous support will help increase access to food for those struggling in this uncertain time!

**HELP THOSE MOST VULNERABLE**  
COVID-19

TarrantAreaFoodBank @TAFoodBank · Aug 13

Want to help your Tarrant County neighbors amid the #COVID19 crisis? School closings and reduced working hours have put thousands more in need of food. A donation to Tarrant Area Food Bank will help keep our community fed. Share with your friends who are looking for a way to help.

**WANT TO HELP AMID THE COVID-19 CRISIS?**

**Tarrant Area Food Bank**  
COVID Emergency Social Media  
2020

## **NEW DONORS, RENEWED DONORS AND EXPONENTIAL GROWTH IN INCOME**

As many non-profit organizations have struggled with the loss of revenue, all of our Feeding America food bank clients have experienced record growth and income during the crisis. Donor files and donated income grew dramatically in the first and second quarters of 2020. The combined efforts of our re-directed campaigns and of donors self-identifying to help feed their neighbors resulted in a growth in income of 250 percent and a donor count three times higher than for the first two quarters of 2019. For many, if not all, of our food bank clients, more funds were raised in the first two quarters of 2020 than in all of 2019. The exponential increase in need has been met with an exponential increase in donor support.

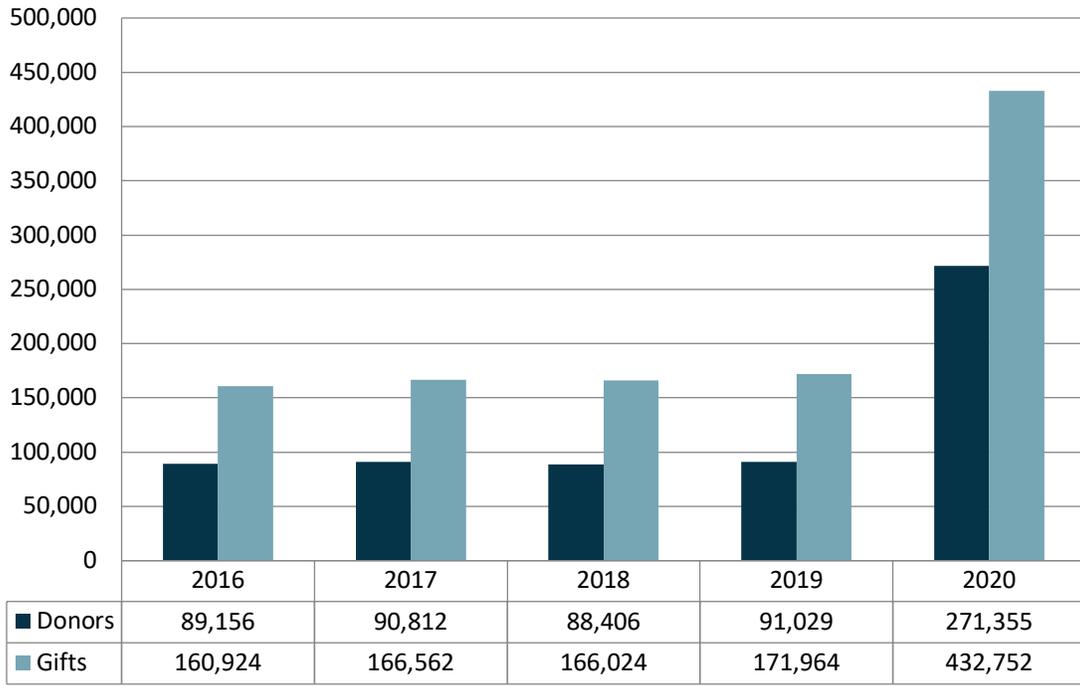
Not only have donors been responsive – they have been very generous: 95 percent of Brad Cecil & Associates' food bank clients' income in the first two quarters of the year came from gifts over \$100, and over 70 percent came from gifts over \$1,000.

Of those donors who made a gift in Q1 and Q2, 44 percent are new to the organization. And equally as positive is that 20 percent of lapsed donors renewed their commitment as a response to the crisis.

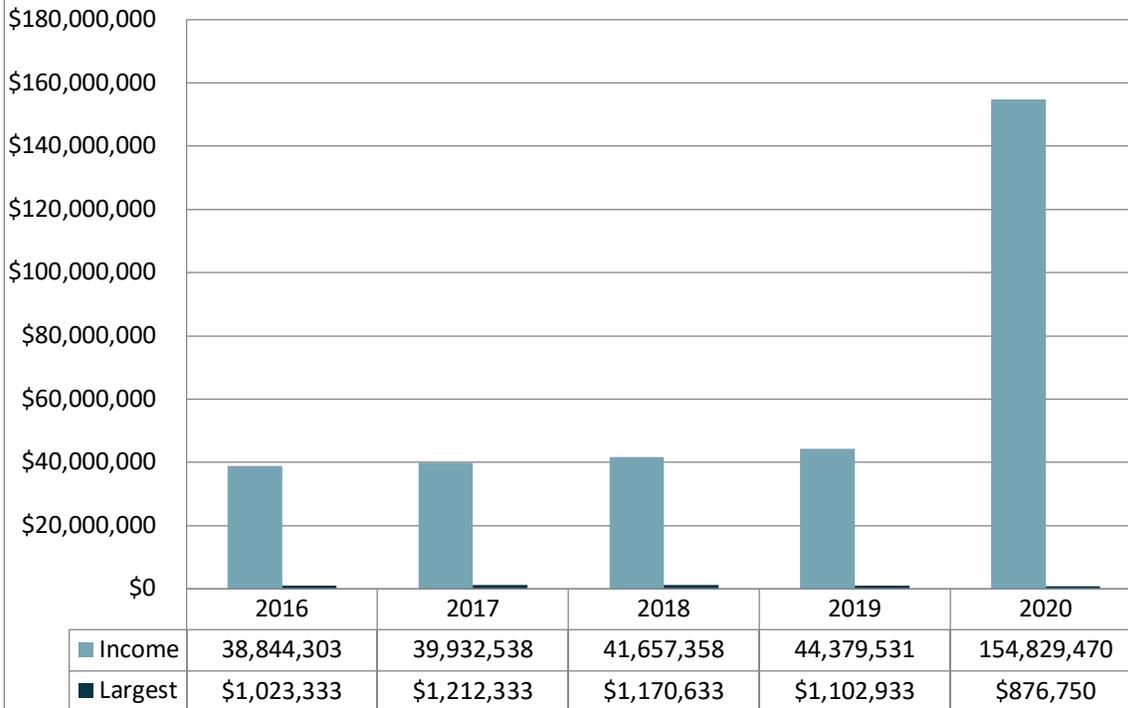
As an example of this unprecedented growth, one of our food bank clients added close to 40,000 new donors in the first half of 2020 and another close to 20,000. All of our food bank clients added new donors in record numbers.

Not surprisingly, most of this giving occurred online. In fact, five years ago, online gifts represented just one-third of all gifts made to food banks, but in the past six months, that figure has jumped to two-thirds of all gifts. The pandemic has accelerated the transition to the majority of gifts being made online and it's not going backward. Every food bank now needs a direct response agency with expertise in multi-channel donor communication, including high-level skill in online strategy and optimization. We are proud to be such an agency.

### Brad Cecil & Associates' Food Bank Clients Donors/Gifts Per Year Q1 & Q2



### Brad Cecil & Associates' Food Bank Clients Donor Revenue Per Year Q1 & Q2



## RETENTION OF COVID-19 NEW DONORS

We know it's not enough to acquire new donors...we have to do all we can to retain them. With this important goal, Brad Cecil & Associates has implemented several new retention strategies targeted at first-time donors who gave in response to COVID-19.

We developed a new welcome kit specific to the crisis offering donors a snapshot of what they're a part of related to disaster response, but also introducing them to the broader mission of the organization. We also began creating special variable language in appeals specific to new COVID-19 donors. Newsletters are

another way we are connecting with this group. From the start of the pandemic we have made sure our newsletters reflect the current crisis and are relevant to what both new and existing donors care about.

As with any new donor, we will ensure COVID-19 donors continue to be cultivated consistently so there is no lapse in communication and so that they continue to feel that they are a part of the organization. We will be tracking this class of new donors carefully over time and will continue to develop intentional strategies to keep them engaged.



## ON THE GROUND

Because travel has been restricted, our team has been frustrated not to be able to conduct our regular in-person visits with our out-of-state clients. But we've still found ways to work around this challenge to ensure our custom work is able to reflect true, local stories. We are assisting our clients in their own story-gathering from a distance as well as sourcing and conducting interviews with food recipients remotely by phone.

For local clients, we are thrilled to have the ability to safely attend numerous mobile food distributions and adapt our story-gathering process to be able to interview and photograph clients at drive-through

mass distributions. Our ability to document this historic time is so valuable to our clients as we communicate relevant current events and needs to their donors.

Like you, we have been overwhelmed by the sight of cars stretched for miles and the profound need these lines represent. We are determined to humanize the individual families we meet by listening to and retelling their unique stories – separating them from the thousands of faces in the crowd. This work of going above and beyond to connect donors to the end result of their gifts is not new to Brad Cecil & Associates...it's built into our foundation as an agency.



## **NEW-DONOR RESEARCH**

As our clients began to see gifts from new and lapsed donors pour in with urgency, our team recognized a need to provide a deeper level of individual donor analysis so that organizations could choose wisely how to allocate staff resources. When there are tens of thousands of new donors to communicate with, it's difficult to know where to focus the most attention.

That's where Brad Cecil & Associates' capital campaign and major gifts team has stepped in.

As a service to our existing clients while incurring no additional fees, our team is screening top new and/or upgraded donors in order to identify outliers who should receive additional touch points from staff. We are then narrowing the field to a smaller group of donors who surface as having significant potential for

deeper engagement and providing abbreviated profiles to include:

- Estimated net worth and gift capacity
- Age
- Property value
- Current occupation and employer
- Notable charitable gifts
- Volunteer leadership positions
- Basic family information

It's not possible for most major gift teams to expand portfolios by hundreds of donors at once, which is why this targeted research and profile-building is so helpful for our clients. And because we understand that time is of the essence when connecting with new and newly generous donors, our team is committed to turning this research around in two weeks from the time the list of prospects is finalized.

## **IT'S NOT OVER**

As we are all acutely aware, the challenges for food banks are far from over as financial devastation continues to plague our communities. We are committed to walking through these challenges and inevitable changes in lockstep with our clients, serving in every capacity we can. Our flexibility, responsiveness and creativity as an agency will serve our clients well in the new philanthropic landscape.