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The Duke Endowment Awards \$3.5 Million to Feeding the Carolinas Grant Aimed at Alleviating Hunger in Wake of COVID-19

May 12, 2020 – Trustees of The Duke Endowment in Charlotte, N.C., have awarded a \$3.5 million grant to Feeding the Carolinas, a network of 10 food banks serving more than 3,700 charitable agencies in North Carolina and South Carolina. The funding will help Feeding the Carolinas respond to increased demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“With food insecurity challenging so many more families and individuals during this crisis, food banks are stretching to provide critical support,” said Duke Endowment Board Chair Minor Shaw. “In this escalating fight against hunger, Feeding the Carolinas is committed to helping people who urgently need it the most across our two states.”

Feeding the Carolinas is an affiliate of Feeding America, the nation’s largest network of food banks. Its [10 food banks](#) annually provide food to 2.6 million Carolinians facing hunger, including hundreds of thousands of children and seniors. Each food bank has met stringent guidelines to be associated with the network.

Feeding America says the many challenges resulting from school closures, job disruptions, lack of paid sick leave and the coronavirus’ disproportionate impact on seniors and low-income families have created a sharp increase in demand for food assistance. While food banks are dealing with this expanding need, they are facing operational challenges, including declines in volunteers and retail donations. Feeding the Carolinas expects to spend between \$1 million to \$2 million per week on food purchases for the next six to eight weeks, and that continues to grow.

“The impact is being felt in communities large and small,” says Mike Darrow, executive director of Feeding the Carolinas. “The crisis is disrupting the lives of nearly everyone in some way, but food-insecure individuals are facing particular challenges, and the number of people who experience food insecurity is expected to grow.”

Nationally, Feeding America serves more than 40 million people each year, many of whom will experience more severe levels of need in the coming months.

“Feeding America member food banks are trusted community institutions that help feed people in times of disaster and throughout the year,” said Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, CEO of Feeding America. “The Duke Endowment’s generous investment will help provide more food to people across the Carolinas who have been deeply affected by the COVID-19 crisis, and we are grateful for their support.”

The Duke Endowment is one of the largest private foundations in the Southeast. Its work in North Carolina and South Carolina focuses on four program areas: child and family well-being, health care, higher education and rural United Methodist churches. The foundation shares a name with Duke University and Duke Energy, but they are separate organizations.

The Endowment previously awarded \$2.5 million to address vital health care and social needs related to the coronavirus crisis. With that funding, \$1.25 million is being dispersed through the North Carolina Healthcare Foundation, the charitable nonprofit affiliate of the North Carolina Healthcare Association. In South Carolina, the \$1.25 million is being dispersed through One SC, a fund created at Central Carolina Community Foundation in 2015 to respond to natural disasters.