

Demand for food aid across U.S. skyrockets over Thanksgiving holidays

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Cars line up at a food distribution site sponsored by the Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida. (Photo: Getty Images)

New York, November 27 (RHC)-- Thousands of people wait in long lines at food pantries and other donation sites across the United States as demand has grown due to unemployment and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Images from across the country show long lines and people waiting hours for donated food to feed their families.

Millions of Americans, even those who are employed, must rely on charity under the Thanksgiving holidays this year, as hunger surges amid the worsening pandemic which the Trump administration has failed to deal with.

A report by the nonprofit Feeding America issued last month found that 50.4 million Americans have been identified as food insecure, defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as "a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life."

Before the pandemic hit the country leaving millions of families without stable employment, over 35 million Americans struggled with hunger. The expiration of federal assistance programs has, however, added to the crisis.

According to CEO of Feeding South Florida, a leading domestic hunger-relief organization, if Congress fails to act and extend the Cares Act, which provides hundreds of millions of dollars to food distribution sites, there will be a slashing of about 50 percent of all the food coming in.

Meanwhile, a US Census Bureau's latest pandemic survey has shown less than half of American families with children feel "very confident" about whether they can afford the food needed over the next month. A staggering 5.6 million households were having difficulty putting enough food on the table in the past week, the survey showed Wednesday.

The survey also showed people of color are suffering disproportionately with 27% of black and 23% of Latino respondents with children saying they did not have enough to eat sometimes or often over the past week – in comparison with 12% of white people.

"Across the country demand has not let up, and food banks do everything they can to make sure families have food on the table for Thanksgiving. There's no end in sight, but we can't be the only solution," said Zuani Villareal, spokeswoman for Feeding America, a network of 200 food banks nationwide.

Since the start of the pandemic, four of every 10 people seeking food aid are first-timers and as many as 50 million people could experience hunger this year, including a quarter of all children, showed the report by Feeding America.

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