



**Contacts:**  
Abena Foreman-Trice  
[aforemantrice@brafb.org](mailto:aforemantrice@brafb.org)  
540.280.6588  
&  
Matt Harakal  
[Matthew.Harakal@foodlion.com](mailto:Matthew.Harakal@foodlion.com)  
704.310.2858  
610.349.0814

## **Food Lion Donation Helps Ensure the Food Bank and Partner Food Pantries Can Serve Families in Need During Pandemic**

**VERONA, Va.—July 14, 2020**—This spring, Food Lion donated a total of \$64,000 to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank through its ***Food Lion Feeds' COVID-19 Hunger Relief Fund***.

Thirty-three partner food pantries operating in the Blue Ridge region, near Food Lion stores, received cash gifts totaling \$50,000. In addition, the Food Bank received \$14,000 to support food acquisition and distribution during our COVID-19 response.

Food Lion understands the vital human service the Food Bank provides, particularly at a time when people are hurting due to coronavirus, job loss, or both.

These dollars help the Food Bank purchase food, supplies, hygiene items, cleaning products and personal protective equipment. The gift also helps partner pantries with equipment, rent, utilities, and supplies.

Gifts like this one from Food Lion help the Food Bank respond to the fourfold spike in the number of individuals requesting food assistance for the first time. In April, 26% of visitors to our partner pantries were there for the first time compared to the number of first-time visitors seen in the winter months before the outbreak.

Many recent visitors are newly unemployed or had their work hours reduced.

“Throughout our service area, more than 136,000 individuals have filed for unemployment insurance since mid-March,” said Food Bank CEO Michael McKee. “Food Lion is a long-standing, generous partner, and we are so grateful for their ongoing commitment to our cause, especially at this time. Their support helps us nourish many more lives impacted by the COVID recession.”

“This is an unprecedented and challenging time, and we know our neighbors are counting on us more than ever to help nourish their families,” said Meg Ham, Food Lion

president. "From schoolchildren missing meals while schools are out, to parents who have lost jobs, and seniors who are struggling to make ends meet, we're committed to serving all of our neighbors now more than ever. We are doing what we can to support our food bank partners and these local feeding agencies that share our passion for ensuring none of our neighbors have to worry about where their next meal will come from."

Food Lions has been a dedicated partner with the Food Banks for decades—helping to ensure vulnerable families get the meals they need by donating funds. Since 2016, Food Lion has donated 8.5 million pounds of food to the Food Bank—providing more than 7.1 million meals throughout the Blue Ridge region.

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### **About the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank**

Founded in 1981, the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank is the largest organization alleviating hunger in western and central Virginia. Headquartered in Verona, VA, the Food Bank serves 25 counties and eight cities through distribution centers in Charlottesville, Lynchburg, Winchester, and Verona. The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank distributes nearly 26.4 million pounds of food annually to 103,500 people each month through a network of 205 community partners - food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, schools, churches, and other non-profit groups - and 175 program sites serving children, seniors, and families. The Food Bank is a member of Feeding America, a national food bank association that supports 200 food banks across the United States. For more information, visit [www.brafb.org](http://www.brafb.org). For more ways businesses can help, visit [www.brafb.org/give/more-ways-to-give/business-partnerships/](http://www.brafb.org/give/more-ways-to-give/business-partnerships/).

### **About Food Lion**

Food Lion, based in Salisbury, N.C., since 1957, has more than 1,000 stores in 10 Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic states and employs more than 77,000 associates. By leveraging its longstanding heritage of low prices and convenient locations, Food Lion is working to own the easiest full shop grocery experience in the Southeast, anchored by a strong commitment to affordability, freshness and the communities it serves. Through Food Lion Feeds, the company has donated more than 500 million meals to individuals and families since 2014, and has committed to donate 1 billion more meals by 2025. Food Lion is a company of Ahold Delhaize USA, the U.S. division of Zaandam-based Ahold Delhaize. For more information, visit [www.foodlion.com](http://www.foodlion.com).