



SUPERVISOR LISA BARTLETT, FIFTH DISTRICT
CHAIRMAN ANDREW DO, SUPERVISOR, FIRST DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

Food Assistance: Orange County Approves \$5 Million for Local Food Assistance and Emergency Preparedness

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ORANGE COUNTY, CA (September 29, 2021) – Yesterday, the Orange County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a proposal brought forth by Chairman Andrew Do and Supervisor Lisa Bartlett to allocate \$5 million towards local food assistance during emergencies.

“The COVID-19 pandemic increased an already existing food insecurity for many Orange County families,” said [Supervisor Andrew Do](#), Chairman of the Orange County Board of Supervisors. “To address the increasing need, Orange County is dedicating \$5 million for food assistance and emergency capacity for food and water storage.”

The Orange County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved \$3 million in [American Rescue Plan Act funding](#) to the OC Hunger Alliance for the purchase of emergency food and an additional \$2 million for food and water storage equipment in the event of a disaster or emergency, contingent upon submitting a countywide strategic emergency preparedness plan.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed a collective need to prioritize pandemic prevention and preparedness,” said Fifth District [Supervisor Lisa Bartlett](#). “The unprecedented ripple effects caused by the pandemic have had an adverse social and economic impact throughout Orange County. Food is one of the most basic needs and it is important that we do our part to ensure that food is available to those truly in need.”

According to an [analysis report](#) by Feeding America, the overall food insecurity rate in 2019 reached its lowest point since it began to be measured in the 1990s. In 2020, the pandemic wiped out those improvements, increasing food insecurity globally.

Supply chain disruptions due to the pandemic have increased consumer demand causing food prices to rise steeply. Many individuals who lost their homes and jobs experienced food insecurity for the very first time.

To address hunger in Orange County, [Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County](#), the [Community Action Partnership of Orange County/Orange County Food Bank](#), and [Abound Food Care](#) combined forces last year to form [The OC Hunger Alliance](#).

“Second Harvest, as a member of the Orange County Hunger Alliance, is grateful to the ongoing support that the County and the Supervisors have afforded the County’s Food Banks now and all thru the pandemic,” said Claudia Keller, Chief Mission Officer for Second Harvest. “In addition, we are thrilled to be able to work with the County on disaster planning from an emergency food perspective. We appreciate Chairman Do’s and Supervisor Bartlett’s foresight in this area and reiterate our gratitude to the entire Board.”

In 2020 alone, Second Harvest and the OC Food Bank, experienced a [400% increase](#) in demand, while experiencing a significant decrease in resources. The Community Action Partnership of Orange County/Orange County Food Bank for example, reported that they received 14,639,213 pounds of donated goods during the last two months of 2020, but only 7,858,822 pounds of donated goods during the first two months of 2021 – a nearly 50% decrease.

The current request for the \$3 million from the County of Orange is needed to narrow the divide between the immediate needs of community members and the resources presently available to address those needs.

“With COVID-19 came increased food insecurity and food system challenges. While Orange County has met the challenge, the next crisis, such as a natural disaster, may include damage to infrastructure that hinders the ability of people to access food,” said Mike Learakos, Executive Director for Abound Food Care.

“Abound Food Care, on behalf of the OC Hunger Alliance and our partners countywide, greatly appreciates the unanimous commitment by the OC Board of Supervisors in establishing an emergency meal distribution program that provides an inventory of nutritious meals staged throughout the county, ready to feed people in the early stages of the next crisis,” he added.

“When restaurants were forced to close their doors last year, many owners went out of their way to find innovative ways to provide food and groceries to those most in need,” said Supervisor Do who launched the First District’s [Neighborhood Pop-Up Pantry](#) initiative and the [Neighborhood Meal Delivery Program](#) as a way to help seniors and people living with disabilities get access to meals and groceries.

Additionally, through a partnership with Saddleback Church, Supervisor Do and Supervisor Bartlett continue to host drive-thru and walk-up food drives for thousands of families in need.

“The Month of September is nationally recognized as Preparedness Month,” said Supervisor Bartlett. “As we reflect on the COVID-19 pandemic and how much it has

impacted the community, we must highlight the importance of being prepared as much as possible for any disaster that comes our way.”

“Disasters are not going to wait until the pandemic ends,” said Supervisor Do. “Strategies to impact or reduce food insecurity must be considered as an important part of an emergency preparedness planning effort.”

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Orange County Board of Supervisors Chairman [Andrew Do](#) represents the [First District](#) communities of Santa Ana, Garden Grove, Westminster, Fountain Valley, and Midway City. One of the first officials in the state to [propose a face covering mandate](#). Supervisor Andrew Do is advocating for science-based COVID-19 policies. Chairman Do has been a leader in combating [homelessness](#), reforming [Orange County’s mental health services](#), and expanding access to [health care](#).

Supervisor Lisa Bartlett represents the Fifth Supervisorial District which includes the cities of Aliso Viejo, Dana Point, Irvine (portion of), Laguna Beach, Laguna Hills, Laguna Niguel, Laguna Woods, Lake Forest, Mission Viejo, Rancho Santa Margarita, San Clemente, San Juan Capistrano, as well as the unincorporated communities of Coto de Caza, Emerald Bay, Ladera Ranch, Las Flores, Rancho Mission Viejo, Stonecliffe and Wagon Wheel