The onset of COVID-19 brought the hunger problem for many more Arizonans. People who had enough food — maybe just barely — were suddenly trying to figure out how to feed their families. Here are some stories we heard at food banks.

Christy
I am 47 years old and disabled for the past 15 years. My husband is 54 years old and lost his job because of the coronavirus. My husband also has health issues related to his heart. Because of the coronavirus, our total monthly household income has been reduced to my $600 Social Security payment. We just qualified for the SNAP program and were approved for $292 each month. Because my husband requires a special diet for his heart, $292 does not go far. Since the coronavirus started, we have been coming to the food bank every week. My husband and I make do with what we pick up from the food bank. Sometimes we have to go to the grocery store but not very often. When we go, we pick just a few items, like milk and eggs. We still believe we are blessed and we should help others.

Michael
My wife was in the first wave to be laid off at her company. I am an electrician by trade, and because of the coronavirus, I have to be careful about going into people’s homes. Before the coronavirus, we had been to the food bank on occasion when we were in between jobs. We are incredibly grateful that the stimulus package was approved by Congress; it has been our only source of income. I think lawmakers need to be more involved in understanding the financial situations people are in.
**Roy**

I am 62 years old, and before the coronavirus, I had never been to a food bank. Today is the second time I have come for a food box. The food box we receive gives us the safety net we need during this time of crisis. There are two in my household. We have always had enough money to purchase food, but now that I am working part time, the food box provides general food items that we make good use of. We heard about the food bank's food distribution from friends, and we also saw it on the news. After the coronavirus crisis is over, we will only come to the food bank if needed. For now, it is our safety net.

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**Evelyn**

Because of the coronavirus, I lost my job seven weeks ago, and now I have no income. I was working as a server, and most of my income came from the tips I received. It has been super hard to get by. I was only able to pay April’s rent because I worked for a couple of weeks in March. I recently got SNAP and receive $194 each month. I am grateful that because of the coronavirus, the governor of Arizona approved additional funds, and we will be getting more benefits for the months of March, April and May. I see the benefits of federal programs. I have been desperate, as I am the sole provider for myself and my son, Alejandro. Without the help of the food banks, I do not know what would happen to families like mine in these hard times. I do not think we will go back to normal; I do not see restaurants filled up again. Wearing masks and gloves will stay around for a long time. I am a hard worker. I am now looking for a job where I can contribute to others, maybe by working in a hospital or a seniors home. I hope that one day I will be the person that is able to give back and do something meaningful for someone else who is in need.

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**Ashley**

I am a 27-year-old restaurant server, and because of the coronavirus, I have been unemployed since March. When the news of the coronavirus hit, we knew the restaurant would eventually close, but I was surprised by how quickly it happened. In 2018, I graduated with a master’s degree, but I have yet to go into the “real” marketplace because I have been helping my parents. This is my second time picking up food at the food bank. My parents are high risk, so we are all reluctant to go to the grocery store. The food bank has been extremely helpful.