Mission
Feeding the Gulf Coast, working through member organizations and special programs, will provide nutritious food to meet the challenge of feeding people who are hungry as a result of systemic poverty, personal crisis or disaster. Feeding the Gulf Coast will educate the public regarding domestic hunger, proper nutrition and related issues.

Commitment
Put the food insecure family at the center of our decision-making.

Strategic Goals
By 2022, Feeding the Gulf Coast, in collaboration with Feeding America and our partners, will increase access to enough nutritious food for individuals and families struggling with hunger to make meaningful progress toward ending hunger. Additionally, we will help individuals access essential programs that provide much-needed basic resources and connect them to other community-based services. We will accomplish these directives by implementing the following four goals and strategies.

Goal 1. Food Distribution
Increase access to nutritious food and reduce the food insecurity rate in our service area from 17.4% to 16.5% by 2022. Note: The 2017 food insecurity rates are: National: 12.9%; Alabama: 17.7%; Mississippi: 21.5%; Florida: 15.1%.

Strategies:
- Reduce the meal gap by providing 30 million pounds, equivalent to 25 million meals by 2022.
- Transition all 24-counties in our service area from red to green.
- Offer a wide variety of food.
- Participate in regional co-ops.
- Build the agricultural projects program with farmers to include purchase of fresh product, accept and encourage donations of surplus, and glean fields when possible.
- Create a Food Sourcing Committee to increase sources for food.

Agency Relations Action Steps:
- Re-evaluate and boost falling numbers of the Mobile Pantry Program in Alabama and Mississippi and consider growth of the program in Florida.
- Develop strategies to better understand partner agency reticence in engaging Produce Drops.
- Continue engagement with the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).
- Continue to grow and expand programs and agency partnerships to boost distribution.
- Focus coordinator efforts on discovering organizations that already distribute food and partner with them to expand CSFP, mobile pantries and produce drops.
- Develop new partners in hard to reach areas.
- Consider and implement new formats, such as tiering and hub & spoke, to encourage agency distribution and cut down on operational costs.

Child Nutrition and Nutrition Education Action Steps:
- Increase Backpack program funding by through online giving, newsletters, backpack mailers, public-private partnerships, and grants. Create a unique brand for the program to foster new sponsorship participation.
- Increase the nutrition quality of backpack items.
- Increase Backpack program participation by 15% in Mississippi: 5% in Alabama; and 3% in Florida.
• Increase rural participation in our Summer Feeding (SFSP) and Afterschool Meals programs throughout our Alabama service area (excluding Mobile and Baldwin counties) by 8%. Sustain the level of SFSP participation from 2016.*

(*In 2017, Feeding the Gulf Coast picked up all Mobile County Public School System (MCPSS) sites for one year due to MCPSS nutrition division staffing changes. As a result, 2017 data is not reflective of our normal summer operation. 2016 data should be used.)

• Increase Florida program participation by 20% and Mississippi program participation by 40%.

Marketing and Community Engagement Action Steps:
• Join local Chambers and target outreach efforts through increased print, radio and media advertising in red counties to raise awareness and encourage partnerships and community engagement.
• Increase community involvement in local food and fund drives.

Operations Action Steps:
• Seek nontraditional sources of food, i.e., cold storage facilities.
• Assist agencies in building their capacity to distribute larger quantities of produce and increase mobile pantries and produce drops (hubs) in red counties.
• Aggressively seek fleet replacement for outdated transportation.
• Renovate the Mississippi facility so that it can be used as a sorting and distribution hub for our Mississippi agencies and allow us to build a volunteer base, resulting in more community visibility.
• Acquire a warehouse in Panama City and expand the Milton warehouse capacity.
• Evaluate existing routes for efficiency and future expansion.
• Increase efforts to decrease costs of distribution, including transportation costs.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Outreach Action Steps:
• Target at-risk red counties through various outreach tactics with the ultimate goal of maximizing SNAP impact to 50% in the counties with the highest vulnerability.

Goal 2. Improve Diet Quality
Educate agencies and clients on how to obtain and maintain a healthy diet stressing that food insecurity compromises health.

Strategies:
• Partner with healthcare providers to address food insecurity and promote screening for food insecurity and referrals to local food pantries, SNAP benefits, etc. to ensure patient referral needs are met.
• Increase on-site pantries in healthcare settings.
• Provide education on health consequences (impaired growth for children, childhood obesity and increase in diseases for all, including diabetes) and financial consequences (higher healthcare costs and lower incomes due to poor health) of an unhealthy diet.
• Increase client consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Agency Relations Action Steps:
• Survey partner agencies and clients in anticipation of the No Hunger Study.
• Pursue discussion with agency representatives, such as roundtables, focus groups, county level meetings, etc.
• Develop groups regarding particular interests, such as produce obtainment, produce distribution, and advocacy.

Child Nutrition and Nutrition Education Action Steps:
• Create sustainable funding sources for the Nutrition Education program.
• Sustain and expand healthcare partnerships in Alabama and establish healthcare partnerships in Mississippi and Florida.
Marketing and Community Engagement Action Steps:
- Market the health value of fresh produce and other nourishing foods to agencies by informing them of the product we have on site and by providing informative handouts and recipe cards for mobile pantries and agencies.
- Develop a volunteer program to repackage bulk items; providing healthy foods in easier to distribute formats.

Goal 3. Food Security for Working Families
Decrease the number of families with children from food insecurity to food security and assist in sustaining food security over time through community-based partners and advocacy efforts to increase client self-sufficiency.

Strategies:
- Increase resources available to households, beginning with public benefits such as SNAP and Child Nutrition Programs.
- Partner with workforce development resources to connect with food insecure individuals.
- Increase partnerships with community-based services to help families move to financial security, stressing that the heart of the hunger problem is financial instability.
- Advocate policies such as elimination of benefit cliffs, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), sustain SNAP levels with no block granting, increase levels of TEFAP from USDA and expansion of federally funded Child Nutrition Programs.

Agency Relations Action Steps:
- Partner with organizations that provide services related to food insecurity, health and nutrition, i.e., medical partners and clinic pantries
- Share developed information with agencies through webinars, emails and other formats.

Marketing and Community Engagement Action Steps:
- Educate our community regarding policies that affect those we serve through guidance from the Advocacy Committee.
- Create marketing and outreach with Bank on South Alabama—an organization that provides access to the right kind of checking account, savings account and financial guidance.
- Develop resource materials for SNAP and Child Nutrition Programs.

SNAP Outreach Action Steps:
- Implement and maintain a SNAP Outreach incentive plan for agencies that will further engage them in our SNAP outreach and will more efficiently increase the applications being submitted by outlying county partnerships.
- Further engage partner food banks (Community Food Bank, Mississippi Food Network and Food Bank of North Alabama) to increase funding so that they are providing 50% of the funds for their individual outreach programs.
- Increase volunteer engagement by utilizing college interns and senior employment programs so that all outreach sites are maintaining two additional non-paid staff year-round.
- Create a SNAP Outreach manual that details all aspects of the program by the end of 2018.
- Increase benefits and services offered to more holistically serve food insecure clients.
- Streamline and consolidate information through technological updates to integrate client and grant data.

Goal 4. Increase Public Passion and Support to End Hunger
Increase the number of donors supporting Feeding the Gulf Coast and foster empathy by shining a spotlight on the blameless, including families, children and seniors facing hunger.

Strategies:
- Expand messaging and community awareness to feature working families, children, seniors and veterans.
- Tell the story of hunger in our community by utilizing all media channels.
- Recruit “hunger alumni.”
- Involve total agency network and their volunteers in telling the story.
• Build partnerships with corporations.
• Increase targeting to Millennials.
• Recruit highly skilled volunteers to support staff in administration and operations.
• Teach a common message throughout the organization.
• Support Alabama’s efforts to obtain CSFP.
• Strengthen Development and Support to provide all required funding for the mission.

**Development Action Steps:**
- Implement a strong development focus in Major Donor Gifts, Foundational and Grant gifts, Endowments, Planned Giving and Corporate Partnerships and increase individual donor support.

**Marketing and Community Engagement Action Steps:**
- Identify marketing opportunities that are provided free of charge (i.e., PSAs, radio air time, billboards, online digital marketing, civic and community clubs and organizations)
- Promote the organization and create a stronger, more consistent messaging to be used throughout our outreach efforts. Provide resources to educate new board members, donors, community partners, employees, and volunteers about the organization. Create a stronger social media presence and platform for consistent messaging and education.
- Develop community partnership videos that can be promoted through social media and radio air segments to showcase what Feeding the Gulf Coast does in collaboration with other organizations in our community.
- Partner with existing community events to be the beneficiary of choice to help increase community awareness about Feeding the Gulf Coast while also increasing fundraising dollars with minimum effort.
- Target millennials and other potential donors through digital efforts.
- Create a Junior Advisory Council to reach a younger demographic.
- Utilize the established relationship we have with corporate volunteers to translate them into committed donors and vice-versa. Utilize company match and grant opportunities. Invite committed donors to volunteer which will show them how their support makes a difference.
- Create a team of key community volunteers in each state to help organize, develop, and implement large events (i.e., Chef Challenge) to help reduce staff time and costs associated with the planning of the event.
- Find ways to partner with like-minded organizations to utilize efforts, versus compete. Improve their perception of who we are and how we can assist in their mission.
- Educate the public on how vast our hunger-relief efforts are as a food bank and how we serve over 400 partner agencies.
- Increase our testimony database through the collection of “Hunger Alumni”, agency and volunteer stories.