



Case Study

How a unique partnership raises millions of dollars for hunger relief

As the largest domestic hunger-relief organization in the United States, Feeding America has long played a critical role in the fight to end hunger.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic set in motion a series of events that immediately threatened food security for millions of people across America. In communities across the country, demand for food banks grew overnight, and the gap in food resources grew with it. With the food supply severely disrupted, food banks struggled with the pace of change. So Feeding America accelerated their mission. They aimed to quickly scale and distribute

essential funding to community food banks in the face of unprecedented need.

As donations at the national level surged, they efficiently funneled funds to their vast network of 200 food banks, 60,000 food pantries, and meal programs – not only addressing their network's immediate needs but also laying a broader foundation for the future.

PayPal sat down with Aaron LaMonica-Weier, Senior Manager of Digital Platforms at Feeding America, to find out exactly how they did it.

PayPal Giving Fund and Give at Checkout power a cross-channel donation strategy

In an outpouring of support never seen before, donations to Feeding America soared in 2020. PayPal and PayPal Giving Fund (PPGF) were there at the outset, processing donations directly on the Feeding America website and capturing new donors through PayPal Give at Checkout on platforms like eBay.

Feeding America also explored a new strategy: activating activism with the next-gen streaming audience on platforms like Twitch and YouTube. Influencers hosting live streams were able to encourage their communities to donate in real time and process those donations securely through PayPal.

"Specifically with the streaming audience, there's a lot of focus on privacy. They don't want to provide so much information, and they want to use their streamer handles as their name in our database. That audience, in particular, likes the PayPal payment option." Aaron explained. "Without PayPal Giving Fund, it'd be totally different model of how we're partnering with those platforms."

As the Feeding America media presence grew, celebrities and television networks came to the forefront, tapping their vast social media followings to drive donations. PPGF featured Feeding America in their Giving Tuesday campaign as well as several COVID-response campaigns.

"When I got the email that PayPal was going to highlight us, I could just trust that it was going to be done right. Our brand name was going to be accurate and that there was going to be additional revenue and awareness coming from that campaign was extremely valuable," said Aaron.

Each exposure highlighted the importance of their strategic partnership with PayPal. The seamless processing of high volumes of donations meant that Feeding America could efficiently serve community organizations by providing the additional resources they needed fast.

"We'd invested in an infrastructure that could scale quickly," Aaron noted. "That includes PayPal's processing solutions, powered by Braintree. We went from pre-COVID numbers to the transaction volume that we saw in March, April, May of 2020, not to mention the holiday season. **The volume was exponentially higher than we'd ever seen before. Having PayPal on the front end – where the donations were coming in – was crucial to our success.**"

\$2.8m

in donations raised in 2020 through PayPal Giving Fund campaigns.

\$33.1m

raised in 2020 with PayPal – an 11x increase from \$3.1m in 2019.

Note: Results are based on internal PayPal data from 2021. Results may not be typical and may vary substantially by business.



Harnessing the processing power of PayPal to drive a peer-to-peer giving model

Coming out of 2020, Feeding America pursued a peer-to-peer fundraising model, enabling people to set up campaigns to fundraise on behalf of Feeding America across their personal communities and social channels. “The community aspect of peer-to-peer giving allows individuals and smaller organizations to be our voice in their circle of influence. That’s a big lift,” said Aaron.

They set out to bridge technology gaps in mobile optimization and expand beyond the limitations of their previous solution. **“We integrated PayPal’s processing solutions, powered by Braintree, because it gives us the most robust options in terms of payments. Being able to use it as the back-end payment processor for the program has been crucial.”** This ensures that any donation to Feeding America from any channel will be backed by the security and peace of mind that comes with using PayPal.



“That has transformed our strategy a lot. Knowing that PayPal is enabling those transactions on the platforms where that peer-to-peer model exists on the back end, PayPal Giving Fund is there and funneling those to us,” said Aaron. **“This has really enabled that community-building aspect and these are people that we’re trying to elevate and celebrate in a different way because that is a heavier lift to do.”**

Faced with incredibly challenging times, Feeding America was able to expand its donation strategy with the power of PayPal. From activating giving with next-gen audiences on platforms like YouTube and Twitch to strengthening their peer-to-peer giving model, Feeding America now makes donating a seamless part of people’s everyday digital experiences.



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Feeding America





“As charitable giving continues to get integrated into our everyday activities through apps, websites, and purchases... we want to meet our donors there and make sure that Feeding America is present in those daily lifestyle interactions. PayPal makes that possible.”

Aaron LaMonica-Weier

Senior Manager of Digital Platforms, Feeding America

