

## A Quick Look At AmpleHarvest.org

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, the U.S. is facing unprecedented levels of hunger and food insecurity. The easiest and most impactful solution is to capture and re-direct the estimated 40% of the food produced that is lost or wasted at multiple points in the production and distribution process. An 11 year old nationwide nonprofit called [AmpleHarvest.org](https://www.ampleharvest.org) is at the center of one of those points.

Pre-pandemic, over 42 million Americans were involved in growing vegetables, fruits, and herbs in their backyard, rooftop, patio and kitchen gardens. That number is now 62 million.

A typical gardener often produces a far larger harvest than they can use with most either forced to push it on unwilling friends, throw the surplus away, compost it or leave it to rot in their garden. Additionally, that most pantries lack refrigeration had it difficult for them to accept fresh produce with lead to the “jars, cans, boxes - no fresh food” mantra of food drives.



Founded in 2009, AmpleHarvest.org’s [mission](#) has been to address this by systematically educating gardeners about donating food and connecting them with nearby food pantries ultimately forming a life-long source of healthy food for the community.

Today, AmpleHarvest.org, in close collaboration with Feeding America’s network of food banks, serves nearly [9,000](#) pantries in 50 states. This represents a little more than 25% of the nation’s estimated 33,500 local food pantries. Its efforts to end hunger have earned it numerous awards such as [CNN Hero \(video\)](#), [Points of Light \(video\)](#) and a World Food Prize nomination.

The data is impressive. According to both a [university white paper](#) as well as a [study](#) by Cisco Systems in 2015, the food lost from gardening annually amounted to 11+ billion pounds and exceeded \$27 billion in value! That food (pre-Covid numbers) could have fed 28 million Americans. The same study determined that if all gardeners wanting to donate were connected to all food pantries eager for that food, the nation’s healthcare costs would drop \$58 billion. Additionally, an [analysis](#) conducted by a team from the Harvard Business School Alumni Association in 2020 found that a one-time investment of \$1 million generates \$1.5 billion in total value of produce donated by gardeners over a 20-year period, and 9.5 billion servings of fresh produce!!!

This occurs because we view hunger as an information rather than a food problem. Once the grower and the pantry are linked, the connection continues to produce benefits (in the form of annual donations of food surplus) at zero additional cost! That is why the food waste from gardens represents such a powerful and untapped resource. Learn more [here](#).



AmpleHarvest.org works to:

- increase the number of gardeners (existing and new) donating to food pantries
- increase the number of pantries receiving donations of surplus produce from gardeners

This results in an

- increasing the amount of surplus food gardeners grow once they know they can donate
- improving the nutritional quality of the food available to food insecure families
- improving community self-sufficiency as more people reduce hunger in their own community

### ***Additional Information about AmpleHarvest.org***

AmpleHarvest.org uses a two sided, web-based approach:



1. Actively invite food pantries to add their information to our search engine. In addition to contact and location information, they provide a day/time when growers can deliver the food, ideally an hour or so before pantry clients arrive. This means hungry families get food harvested hours earlier, no additional refrigeration or storage is needed, and the donor and recipient remain anonymous.
2. Make America's gardeners aware that nearby food pantries are eager to accept their freshly harvested food.
3. Manage the entirety of this as a cloud based solution rather than relying on local committees or groups. This enables AmpleHarvest.org to easily scale without major staffing or brick and mortar infrastructure. This eliminates a major hurdle facing other programs that is addressing food waste – the cost and logistics of actually gathering, transporting and distributing the food itself, since the food is brought to local pantries (a short distance away) by the gardeners themselves.

### ***Why does AmpleHarvest.org work so well?***

Gardeners are passionate about the food that they grow. They are thrilled to stop wasting the fruits of their labor and pleased to contribute to their neighbors. We tap into that.

While the nationwide food bank network cannot process donated food fast enough to handle locally grown short shelf life food which created a choke point in the system, AmpleHarvest.org's "uberization" of the food supply bypasses this and directly connect the gardeners to the pantry while eliminating any infrastructure costs at the pantry. For AmpleHarvest.org, this is a sustained and sustainable logistics-free solution that works in any community in America.



Growing and donating surplus food is a virtuous, habit-forming behavior. Gardeners can be expected to donate for the rest of their gardening lives, eliminating food waste while nourishing the community.

Once connected with their local food pantry, these growers tend to remain engaged with them, often donating money or purchased food in the off-season as well.



This behavior goes viral – as gardeners and their families share what they’re doing with their friends who want to join the movement to end hunger. Each food donor becomes a vector to other gardeners, growing public awareness of the connection between gardening and food security.

AmpleHarvest.org has received backing from Google Inc. (as one of Google’s largest non-profit partners), the White House and the USDA, Bonnie Plants, the National Council of Churches, the National Gardening Association, Feeding America and its member food banks, Garden Writers of America as well as numerous religious organizations.



AmpleHarvest.org at work nearly 9,000 food pantries in 4,200 communities in all 50 states.

AmpleHarvest.org has been highlighted by former First Lady, [Michele Obama \(video\)](#) in “Let’s Move” speeches, featured on such programs as PBS’s “[Growing A Greener World](#)” [\(video\)](#), [TV news \(video\)](#), and [newspapers](#) nationwide, has been recognized by the USDA and the EPA, the National Council of Churches, National Gardening Association and dozens of other hunger fighting organizations in America. Most importantly, food pantries across America have [thanked \(video\)](#) AmpleHarvest.org for the food nearby gardeners have been donating and the support they’ve received from the gardeners for years.



AmpleHarvest.org welcomes corporate and cause marketing partners, as well as philanthropic support. Please see our [990](#) and our [annual report](#) for more information.

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