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# Feeding potential: How PepsiCo's Food for Good is creating a blueprint for global food security

Case study

# At-a-Glance

**Company:** PepsiCo

**Industry:** Food & Beverage

**Challenge:** In the United States, about [47 million people](#) lived in food-insecure households in 2023, the highest level in nearly a decade, with children disproportionately affected.

**Asset-driven solution:** Leveraging PepsiCo's role as a leading global food and beverage company, Food for Good (FFG) partners with nonprofits and food banks in the U.S. to distribute nutritious meals to families and children in need.

**Impact:** Since 2009, FFG has delivered more than 75 million meals and has served over 2 million children.



# The challenge: Making healthy, delicious meals accessible



Food for Good — the PepsiCo Foundation initiative for advancing food security — launched in Dallas, Texas, as an exercise in deep listening. Through sustained conversations with trusted community volunteers and leaders, PepsiCo learned that the 19 million school-aged children in the U.S. who depend on free or reduced-price meals at school were facing critical gaps in access to nutritious food during the summer months, when school was not in session.

Beginning in the summer of 2009, PepsiCo leveraged its food production, logistics, and distribution expertise — as well as a partnership with Frito-Lay, the convenient foods business unit of PepsiCo, that allowed for borrowed access to trucks and warehouse space — to prototype a summer meal delivery model. The privately-funded program quickly expanded into new cities, eventually outgrowing its original facility but maintaining its original commitment to staying rooted in community feedback and mission to fight hunger through access and equity.

Food for Good combines large-scale meal distribution, job creation, targeted child nutrition, disaster relief, and impactful storytelling to distribute nutritious meals and address crisis-driven hunger at scale.

# PepsiCo's asset-driven approach

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“Immerse yourself in the community—live it, observe it, and prototype within it. Innovation doesn't start with your idea; it starts with walking alongside others, not doing something to them or for them. You can't create meaningful solutions if you don't truly understand the people you're designing for.”

**Matt Smith,**

*Senior Director, PepsiCo Foundation*

Food for Good draws on PepsiCo's core strengths across three parts of its business: people, partnerships, and processes.



## People

The program has a dedicated staff in five different locations, employing individuals in roles ranging from meal packing and delivery to finance, communications, and community engagement. Many team members come from within PepsiCo, bringing expertise from supply chain, sales, and research and development, while others bring nonprofit or community-based experience – together creating a dynamic workforce that applies a wide range of skills to advance the mission.



## Partnerships

Food for Good strategically leverages partnerships to drive its mission forward and deliver impact at scale. While partnerships with private companies like Sysco, AT&T, and Ryder help source food, provide mobile technology, and assist with transportation logistics – often at reduced cost – it is nonprofit partners who truly unlock access. These organizations, serving as sponsors of meal sites under USDA programs, are deeply rooted in their communities and play a critical role in connecting Food for Good meals to the children and families who need them most. By working hand-in-hand with nonprofits on the ground, Food for Good is able to extend its reach and increase its impact across communities nationwide.



## Processes

Operationally, the program incorporates proven PepsiCo business processes – including route optimization, inventory management, warehouse communications systems, and strict safety standards to ensure meals are delivered efficiently and safely.

## Key components

**Location-based meal sourcing, packing, and delivery:** PepsiCo partners with local nonprofits and food banks in the U.S. to source and distribute breakfasts, lunches, snacks, summer meals, weekend “backpacks”, and emergency food to underserved communities. Food for Good aims to provide food that is reflective of local needs and customs, continuing the listening journey that lives at the center of the program's origin.

**USDA-compliant meals:** Food for Good operates primarily through USDA-funded programs. This means all meals supplied must meet a specific nutritionally-compliant requirement to have five different components: a vegetable; a fruit; a meat (or meat alternative); a grain; and a milk.

**Social enterprise model:** In the U.S., Food for Good operates as a social enterprise in cities like Dallas, Austin, Houston, and Little Rock, where it hires locally, adheres to USDA nutrition standards, and builds community capacity – demonstrating how a business-driven approach can create jobs and advance food access in a financially sustainable way.

**Strategic partnerships and funding:** Food for Good collaborates with organizations like Feeding America, Feed the Children, local YMCAs, and Boys & Girls Clubs to expand its reach and impact in communities. These partnerships are further strengthened by PepsiCo's broader pep+ sustainability strategy, which includes a goal of \$100 million toward zero-hunger initiatives by 2030.

**Year-round support and crisis response:** Food for Good tackles weekend and summer meal gaps in U.S. schools through partnerships with organizations like No Kid Hungry, delivering meals directly to students' doorsteps when school is out. During times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic or in support of disaster relief efforts, Food for Good works with local community partners to provide meals on the ground to children and families in affected areas.



# Impact highlights

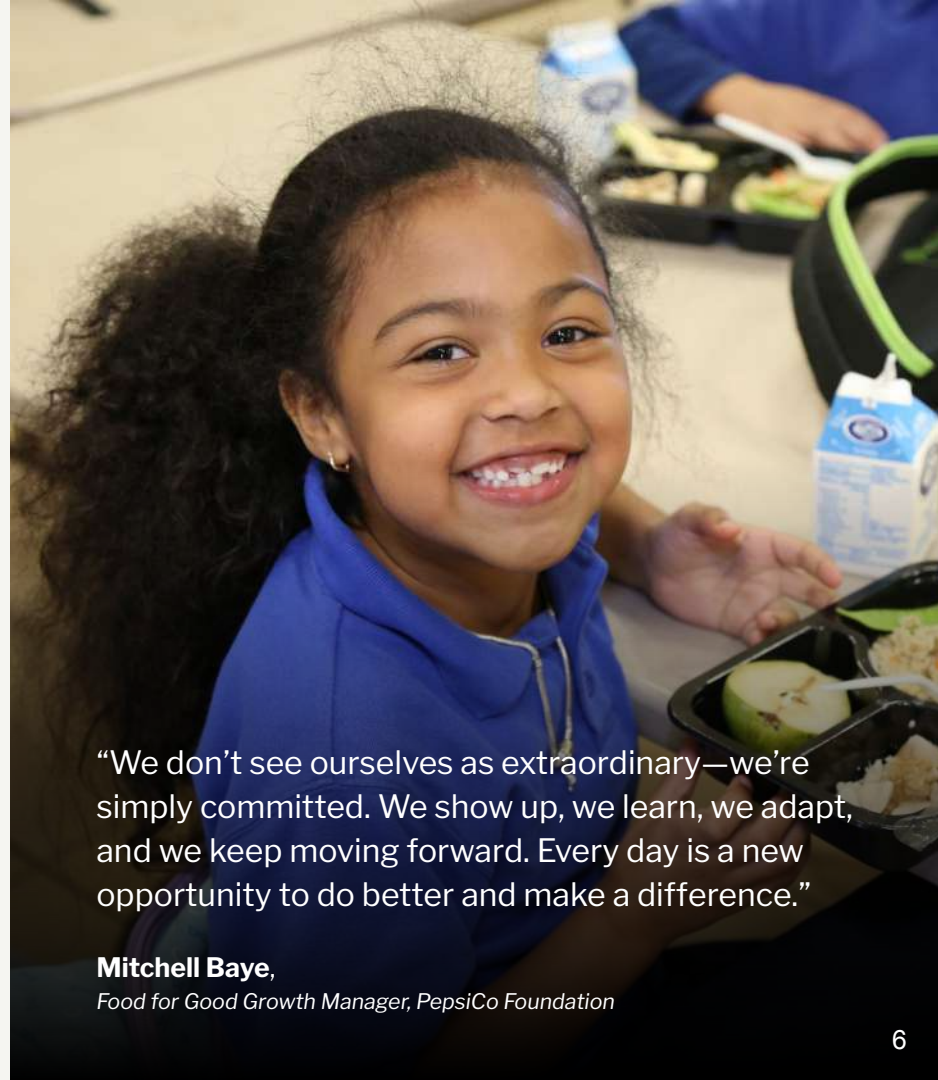
Since 2009, FFG U.S. has delivered **more than 75 million meals** and has **served over 2 million children**.

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In addition to tracking metrics around outputs, **Food for Good is actively experimenting with qualitative feedback loops to measure outcomes.** For example, team members recently began sending out qualitative surveys to the students and families who benefit from the program to gauge their feedback on the meals provided.

“The summer meal program has been such a big help to our family. It's so convenient that we don't have to drive anywhere to pick up the food since it's delivered straight to our doorstep every two weeks all summer long.”

**Parent from Accomack County Public Schools,**  
FFG Sponsor for the Summer Food Service Program



“We don't see ourselves as extraordinary—we're simply committed. We show up, we learn, we adapt, and we keep moving forward. Every day is a new opportunity to do better and make a difference.”

**Mitchell Baye,**  
*Food for Good Growth Manager, PepsiCo Foundation*

# How the program is making an impact at PepsiCo



**Supports PepsiCo's pep+ goals.** The program contributes directly to PepsiCo Positive (pep+), the company's end-to-end sustainability transformation (specifically the goal to provide nutritious food access to 50 million people).

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**Leverages existing strengths.** Food for Good puts PepsiCo's core assets—like logistics, supply chain, R&D, and procurement—into service for social good, demonstrating the power of using business capabilities to create community impact.

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**Enhances employee engagement.** The initiative gives employees across geographies and functions a purpose-driven way to contribute, often through meal-packing events or cross-functional collaboration, which strengthens internal culture and pride.

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**Builds brand trust and relationships in local communities.** By showing up consistently and centering community voices, the program deepens PepsiCo's reputation as a committed local partner—not just a global corporation.

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**Creates talent development opportunities.** Employees move between the business and the Foundation, gaining new perspectives and leadership skills that benefit PepsiCo holistically.

# Lessons and implications for other businesses

**Start by listening, not assuming.** Rather than beginning with a top-down strategy, PepsiCo's team sat down with community members — inclusive of trusted local caregivers and even volunteers already doing the work — to learn firsthand about real needs. Effective solutions start with humility and community-centered listening.

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**Stay nimble; keep iterating.** Particularly in a rapidly changing macro environment, the PepsiCo team emphasizes agility, action, and rapid prototyping to refine solutions. Don't wait to launch the perfect plan — start small, learn fast, and evolve with your surroundings.

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**Build real relationships, not just partnerships.** When PepsiCo first began building relationships in Dallas, community members emphasized that they'd believe in the company's desire to create impact if the team came back for a second conversation. Cultivating real trust takes time, commitment, and dedication to the communities you serve.

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**Allow stories to define success, not just numbers.** Early on in prototyping the program in Dallas, one executive told team members to de-emphasize vanity metrics: "Success is... I'm going to come back and ask these community members if you've changed their lives." Measure what matters — focus on real human outcomes, not just numbers.

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**Engage employees through purpose.** Team members across functions are involved through volunteering, problem-solving, and even career pivots between the Foundation and business roles. Purposeful work energizes employees and unlocks talent in unexpected ways.



# Related resources

[Food for Good](#)

[When Helping Hurts](#) (book)

[PepsiCo Positive \(pep+\) sustainability framework](#)



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**Please don't hesitate to  
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