Dear Friend of CRS,

We are at a pivotal moment. Even as technology advances at a rapid pace, average life expectancy increases, and child mortality rates decrease, global hunger and malnutrition remain pervasive issues. In 2018, an estimated 820 million people did not have enough to eat—that’s 1 out of every 9 people, with the largest concentration in Africa and Asia.

As families struggle to access enough nutritious food to survive, we have a responsibility to take actions that change the systems and structures that cause worldwide hunger and malnutrition. We have the power to literally feed the hungry and to create transformational change to address this global crisis.

This toolkit is meant to help you take those first steps with us. Individually and with your community, you can make a difference in the lives of millions of vulnerable families around the world.

Use these tools and others found at crs.org/leadtheway to learn more and take action with your community:

- An overview of global hunger and malnutrition in the world.
- Prayers and reflections on this global crisis.
- Opportunities to support the immediate needs of those directly impacted around the world.
- Opportunities to address the systemic causes of world hunger and malnutrition.

At Catholic Relief Services, our shared vision is that all people reach their full God-given human potential in just and peaceful societies that respect the dignity of every person. Access to enough nutritious food is essential for a person to grow and thrive. We can make that happen with the support of you and others who join this national movement.

We need prophetic voices—voices like yours—who have encountered Christ in the face of the poor and seek to lead the way to a world where no one is hungry, and all people thrive. Pope Francis shares, “Food shortage is not something natural, it is not a given, something obvious or self-evident. [...] The earth, abused and exploited, continues in many parts of the world to yield its fruits, offering us the best of itself. The faces of the starving remind us that we have foiled its purposes.”

As we seek to uphold the dignity of every person, we must follow Jesus’ example and teaching to feed the hungry. And we must also work to eliminate hunger as a problem entirely—our world depends on it.

Thank you for leading the way. Thank you for taking the first step toward putting faith into action through prayer, support and advocacy. Thank you for believing that together we can make a difference.
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GIVE US A HUNGER FOR JUSTICE, LORD

God of abundance,
You gave us the earth to be enjoyed
by all creatures,
to be our common home.
You blessed us with the sun, water
and bountiful land
so that all might be nourished.
How can we ask you to eliminate hunger
when you have already given us
the tools to prevent it?

Perhaps, Lord, we must ask you
for a more just heart,
a more generous heart.
The scandal of hunger and malnutrition
in our world of plenty shows us
that we have not been
good stewards of what you have
entrusted to us.
Forgive us, Lord!
You taught us to break bread together.
You showed us how to share
when you multiplied the loaves and
the fish.
May we believe again and break our
bread to share it among all people.
May we follow your example
and bring what we have,
trusting that you will multiply it
in new ways.
Open our minds and touch our hearts
so that we attend
to the root causes of hunger.

May we not avert our eyes
in the face of natural disasters.
May we help each person secure
what they need.
Most of all, help us to be conscious
that our common home belongs
not only to us,
but to all future generations,
and that it is our responsibility
to preserve it.

You call us to respond to the immediate
needs of our brothers and sisters
while also working toward just
and lasting solutions to hunger.
Give us your strength to lead the way
and persevere in our mission
to build a more just world.

You call us to make decisions that help
all people, not just ourselves.
Give us your strength not to waver
in our effort to lift up the cry
of the earth
and the cry of the poor.

May our hunger for justice remain
until all creatures have a share
in earth’s bounty
and all people have enough
nutritious food
not only to survive but to thrive.

Lord, give us a hunger for justice.

Amen
Food is a necessity. Its scarcity shortens lives, hampers development and causes immeasurable loss of human potential. The numbers are staggering. One in nine people worldwide do not have enough to eat. Many lack access to enough nutritious food. Each year, nearly 3 million undernourished children under age 5 die from illnesses that healthier kids recover from. Of those who survive, 1 in 4 do not grow or develop as they should. Globally, the number of children who face a lifetime of developmental challenges caused by malnutrition exceeds 149 million—that’s more than twice the number of all children in the United States.

WHEN DID WE SEE YOU HUNGRY?
As a Church, we believe that all people have the right to regular access to healthy food. As missionary disciples, we are compelled to respond to the needs of the hungry. For more than 75 years through CRS, Catholics in the United States have led the way in supporting short- and long-term solutions to hunger. Together, we respond to immediate emergencies that keep people from accessing food. We prevent hunger and malnutrition from developing in the first place. Land management and conservation programs transform barren hillsides into productive farmland. Nutrition is delivered to children in their critical first thousand days of life. Agricultural training increases food production and income. CRS programs help prevent and end hunger.

There’s more work to be done.
For every cause of too little food, there are proven solutions that can alleviate suffering or prevent the crisis from ever occurring.

Lead the way in supporting the world’s hungry.
The need is great. The solutions are proven. Your opportunity to lead is unprecedented.

YOU CAN LEAD IN 3 WAYS:

1. ADVOCATE by writing, calling or visiting with members of Congress to:
   - Increase funding for global nutrition and other programs to prevent and end hunger.
   - Pass the Global Child Thrive Act to help children reach their God-given potential.
   - Address our changing climate and the needs of our one human family.

2. DONATE your time and resources to:
   - Help support and increase CRS’ life-changing hunger solutions around the world.
   - Compel others to take part in and support our work overseas.
   - Organize and publicize a community fundraiser.

3. INSPIRE and motivate others to:
   - Pray for our vulnerable brothers and sisters as a community.
   - Stand with and advocate for the world’s hungry.
   - Learn about hunger and its solutions and educate community members on the issue.
What Can I Do?

We can lead the way by putting faith into action through two concrete actions that are distinct yet complementary: advocacy and fundraising.

WHY ADVOCATE?
Part of leading the way means looking at the bigger picture and imagining what can—and should—be. In this, we are challenged to address structural issues in our world that prevent individuals and communities from thriving. Advocacy is one important way to do this.

Advocacy is the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal. It includes various strategies that influence decision making at local, national and international levels. Advocacy is generally organized around the resolution of a problem. It can include using multimedia to form public opinion, educate decision makers, organize public events, research issues and create coalitions.

Effective advocacy requires an understanding of the problem, analysis of the political environment and a proposal for its solution. Advocacy encompasses the education and mobilization of citizens so they can become involved in developing and promoting policies.

Advocacy is one of the most effective ways to ease human suffering and confront global poverty for the long term. When an unjust policy or system is changed because of our advocacy efforts, millions of people win.

WHY DONATE OR FUNDRAISE?

Our efforts to build the world we believe God desires requires bold, imaginative thinking about the future and a clear, empathetic understanding of the present. That means we are called to meet the needs of people right now.

Charitable works are the ways in which we provide support for emergencies and immediate assistance for those in need. We are called to provide immediate relief to migrants and refugees, including shelter, food and other basic necessities. We must also help those experiencing hunger. Through food, education, job training and agricultural support, we can provide families with the tools they need to thrive and have sustainable livelihoods. All of these meet immediate needs through charitable works.

Your financial support—through a direct donation or by joining us in one of our community fundraising opportunities—helps us meet the needs of those who are most vulnerable. You are also helping build a world where communities everywhere have what they need to thrive. We actively work for systemic changes through advocacy, and support the needs of those trapped by the systems we are working to change through charitable works.
How Can I Advocate?

*Advocacy is one of the most effective ways to ease human suffering and build a more just world.* Together, we have a mission to advocate on behalf of our most vulnerable brothers and sisters living in poverty around the world.

We have the power to influence policy and make things happen. In fact, research shows that the voices and actions of constituents—that’s you—have the greatest impact on members of Congress and their decision making.1 There are many ways to lift your voice on the issues you care about.

*Here are a few ways to be effective in your advocacy:*

- **WRITE YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES**
  Emails and letters on an issue can influence your members of Congress, but it’s best to make them personal. Share who you are and why you care about the issue—it will make your message 10 times more effective.1

- **CALL AT KEY MOMENTS**
  If a bill is gaining or needs momentum, or a vote is expected, phone calls get the attention of your member of Congress quickly. **Text LEAD NOW to 306-44** to join our mobile network so you’ll know when your voice is urgently needed!

- **SPREAD THE WORD**
  Op-ed pieces and letters to the editor in your local press amplify the issues you care about and promote support in your community. Local media is monitored by congressional offices, so it’s a great way to put your issue front and center.

- **USE SOCIAL MEDIA**
  Whether it’s Twitter or Facebook, the social media platforms you use can be powerful tools to contact Congress. In fact, research shows that just 30 posts or comments from constituents on an issue will help get the attention of congressional offices.

- **ATTEND AN EVENT**
  Members of Congress regularly host town hall meetings and other gatherings in their districts or states to hear from constituents like you! Attending an event is a great opportunity to ask questions about your issues and get to know congressional staff.

- **MEET IN-PERSON**
  There is *nothing* more impactful than in-person meetings with your members of Congress.1 Whether in Washington, DC, or back home in the local office, your meetings help develop relationships and can shape policy.

Visit crs.org/leadtheway for easy how-to guides on these actions, tips and other tools to advocate effectively!

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How Do I Fundraise With CRS?

We have created an online fundraising platform—crs.org/leadtheway/fundraise—that helps you raise money to feed the hungry, heal the sick and respond to emergencies around the world. You can make a life-changing difference in three easy steps:

- **Create a page.** Set up a personal fundraising page at: 
  crs.org/leadtheway/fundraise It’s easy and takes only minutes!
- **Show your commitment.** Choose your fundraising goal and make the first donation to show your family and friends that you are passionate and committed to the work of CRS.
- **Spread the word.** Share your fundraiser with friends, family, coworkers and across social media! You’ll be able to watch your compassion grow into generosity that saves lives around the world.

We can’t all go overseas to help the most vulnerable—but you can use your skills and talents to raise money in a way that’s fun and effective.

**QUICK TIPS TO START YOUR FIRST FUNDRAISER**

1. **Start early.** It’s never too early to begin planning your fundraiser or event. Whether it’s one week or one month, consider these questions when thinking about how you want to raise money for CRS:

   - **What** kind of fundraiser do you want to have? A memorial fundraiser to honor a loved one? Donations instead of birthday gifts? Running a race to support CRS? Choose what works for you.
   - **Why** are you passionate about CRS? What inspires you about our mission? What causes do you care about the most? Identifying what you care about and why, and being able to communicate it, will give other people a reason to care and get involved. Your fundraiser will help CRS where it is needed most—but sharing your “why” helps connect your passion to your fundraiser!

   - **Who** can you contact for support? Start thinking about who you know and how they might be able to help you reach your goal—by making a donation, helping you plan or by sharing your campaign with their network. You can get more strategic about who—and how—to ask later, but start brainstorming early.

   - **Where, when and how?** If you’re hosting an event, start thinking about logistics. Do you need to reserve a venue? Will you serve food or refreshments? Will there be any costs associated with the event?
2. **Set a goal.** How much do you want to raise for CRS? $100, $1,000, $5,000? Be ambitious but realistic. You can always adjust your goals as you go.

3. **Don’t be afraid to ask for help.** Once you launch your fundraiser, you’ll be asking people to share it on social media. You may also want to ask for help before you launch your campaign. If you’re planning an event, put together a small committee of people who can help you strategize and assist with tasks. If you’re planning something small, ask a friend or two for feedback on your plan. You don’t have to go it alone!

4. **Spread the word.** Share information about your fundraiser on social media, by email, phone calls or in-person. Get the word out!

   - **Don’t be shy.** Most people make annual charitable donations—so keep in mind that you’re not asking people to become givers—you’re giving them an option to give!
   - **Create your potential supporter list wisely.** Who shares your passion for CRS and its mission to help the poor and vulnerable overseas? Your fellow parishioners? Your book club? Parents at your kids’ schools? Your family? Be strategic about who you ask—and what you ask for. You might feel more comfortable asking closer connections to give more. If you know someone is not in a position to give financially, you can ask them to support you by sharing your campaign or event with their network.

5. **Inspire your supporters.** The key to creating excitement about your campaign or event is giving people a reason to become involved. In your messaging, share stories about the people CRS serves and the impact your financial support can have on their lives. Statistics and numbers are important, but stories and photos make it personal. Include why you’re passionate about CRS on your personal fundraising page and in your messaging. By sharing your passion and our stories, your event will build its own momentum.

6. **Recognize and thank your supporters.** It’s important to acknowledge the generous donors who contribute to your campaign. Send a personal thank you email or handwritten note after each contribution—within two or three days, if possible. You can also recognize your supporters using social media or email updates. Post an update to Twitter each time you get a donation or send a weekly email naming everyone who has contributed to your campaign. Showing your gratitude will increase the likelihood of people supporting you in the future.

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**Can I really make a difference?**

You have the power to help create change in the world. You can raise money with friends, family and co-workers to impact lives overseas.

When you support our work around the world, you help feed hungry families, protect vulnerable children, help farmers grow better crops and provide health care and clean water to remote communities.

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**Use social media.** Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Use social media to launch your campaign and share updates with your friends. Social media is a great way to reach people in your network.
Thank you for joining the movement and leading the way to a world where all people have regular access to nutritious food and the opportunity to reach their God-given potential. Together, we can prevent and end hunger.

Find more resources to learn, pray and act at crs.org/leadtheway.
Join us by texting LEAD NOW to 306-44 to get the latest CRS campaign news and alerts.

crs.org/leadtheway