

**“Do I feed my kids or pay
rent?”**

**“Go to my doctor’s
appointment, find a job, or pay
my electric bill?”**



Every day in the US, 50M people are forced to
ask these difficult questions.

Users are enrolled using databases from nonprofits and government agencies. The system allows people that can’t afford food to secure breakfast, lunch, and dinner for as long as they need. | Photo source [Not Impossible Labs](#)

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BENTO APP FIGHTS FOOD INSECURITY WITH A TEXT

 FOOD & DRINK

Instead of proceeding to a food bank, the person can text the word “HUNGRY” to Bento, choose a nearby restaurant or supermarket, select a meal and pick it up

Spotted: Californian tech incubator Not Impossible Labs, a startup dedicated to solution-focussed technologies for society, has most recently created the Bento app, a text-based system that allows people to order a meal if they can’t afford to buy food for themselves. “Food insecurity is the poster child of what we refer to as an absurdity,” [explained](#) COO and Co-founder Adam Dole. “There’s 50 million people in our country that don’t know where their next meal is coming from. And yet, we’re the wealthiest country in the world.”

Instead of proceeding to a food bank, the person can text the word “HUNGRY” to Bento, choose a nearby restaurant or supermarket, select a meal and pick it up. Users are enrolled using databases from nonprofits and government agencies. The system allows people that can’t afford food to secure breakfast, lunch, and dinner for as long as they need.

For restaurants, being part of Bento doesn’t incur any operating changes. Bento’s process is integrated with the food provider’s normal ordering systems. This also relieves people of any stigma attached to going to a food bank. Ebelingh believes that through using the app people can preserve their dignity and not be outcasted.

A year in operation, Bento is working with Genpact, a professional services firm to improve their user experience through data-driven insights and analytics.

At Springwise, we are seeing an array of technological developments coming to the fore as a means of fighting social inequalities such as an [app that connects donors to the homeless through digital donations](#) and a [self-cleaning hoodie](#) for those who lack access to washing facilities in order to stay clean for longer periods.

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Takeaway:

According to the USDA's latest report on Household Food Insecurity in the United States, over 38 million people in the US experienced hunger in 2020. This is all the more difficult to stomach when we consider food waste inequality which permeates countries worldwide. In the UK alone, 2.6 million slices of bread are thrown away every day in London alone, while 8.4 million people in the UK (roughly the equivalent of the entire London population) are struggling to afford to eat. Companies like Not Impossible Labs are working hard to combat the hunger crisis and tackle this shocking disparity between those who have and those who do not.