

For more updates on the Greater Cleveland Food Bank's response to COVID-19, please visit www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/give-help/donate-food-funds/covid19

**Greater Cleveland Food Bank
COVID-19 External Response
March 17, 2020**

The Greater Cleveland Food Bank has activated our disaster plan in response to COVID-19. Each day, the Senior Leadership team meets to address key updates regarding the work we are doing to help keep our staff and visitors safe as well as providing meals to people in our community in response to the major changes taking place in their lives because of COVID-19. Then, the internal Disaster Response Planning team meets daily at noon for a broader discussion on both internal and external factors affecting our day-to-day operations. Needless to say, all of us are learning as we go and appreciative for the support and inputs from the entire GCFB staff and community at large.

In a typical week, we provide nearly 1 million pounds of food for clients who need us: seniors living on fixed incomes, working poor families struggling to make ends meet and children who need nutritious food to learn and grow. Our work **MUST** continue, even during this time of crisis.

In addition to our typical distribution models, we are doing the following to be more responsive:

With the recent school closures and other community resources such as the libraries, we are working with partners to get “grab & go” bagged after school meals to sites that can distribute them to children in need.

Providing weekend bags of food through our Backpacks for Kids program at additional sites. Through this program, we provide a bag of food to more than 3,500 children each week that contains six meals for Saturdays and Sundays, when they don't have access to free and reduced priced school meals. We are working to provide these weekend bags to children at the 22 CMSD schools when they leave with their lunches on Friday as well as some CMHA sites.

Packing emergency food boxes with a seven-day supply of nonperishable food for households in need, particularly seniors. We have ordered the product we need to make 6,000 of these boxes a week for distribution – and we will need more.

Putting out the call for healthy volunteers to help pack emergency food boxes, bagged cold meals and backpacks while, at the same time, implementing additional wellness procedures for volunteers. To volunteer, go to www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/volunteer

Gearing up to provide frozen and/or shelf stable meals through our kitchen for multiple days if needed as senior congregate meal sites close and transition to delivery or pick up models.

Continuing to actively promote calls to our Help Center for anyone in need of food. So if you know someone who needs food, have them call **1-216 -738-2067**. We are trying to track changes or closures at our partner agencies and connecting callers to an open food site in their neighborhood.

Turning our monthly produce distribution into a drive thru pantry. We are piloting an app that will allow staff and volunteers to sign in clients on their smart phones during this distribution and there will be no need for the client to sign or get out of their cars.

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Tracking the progress of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) which is heading to the Senate for a vote and then on to the President. This bill essentially provides additional resources and dollars to reach more people during this health crisis as well as authorizes new programs to respond to the increased need. We are hopeful this will pass the Senate soon.

Reworking our repack area to provide social distancing between volunteers which began this morning. Employees are also practicing social distancing— a wave and thumbs up from across a room will suffice!

FINALLY, raising money to help us do all of the above and more as our plans continue to develop. Our mission is to ensure that everyone in our communities has the nutritious food they need EVERY day ... even in times like this. To help, go to www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/give

The Greater Cleveland Food Bank is doing, and will continue to do, everything we can to ensure that children, families, seniors and hardworking neighbors have the nutritious food they need during the COVID-19 outbreak, and every day, but **WE NEED YOUR HELP.**

www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org