

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](http://www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/give-help/donate-food-funds/covid19)

**Greater Cleveland Food Bank  
COVID-19 Update  
March 23-24, 2020**

As we begin another week, we are grateful for many things including the fact that our staff continues to hang together and adhere to our internal safety rules. This morning, every staff person had their temperature taken by our HR staff.

We welcomed 60 members of the Ohio National Guard and the Ohio Military Reserves to the Food Bank Monday morning. They began to show up before 8:00 am and we are honored and happy to have them here. They are here at the request of the Ohio Association of Food Banks and each of the 12 food banks in the state have these extra hands to help. They are here doing humanitarian work that needs to be done in terms of helping us get food out to our community. They went through orientation and a tour and then got to work - they rolled up their sleeves and are helping us in repack, the warehouse and anywhere else we need them to be.

This past weekend, we were pleased to have good news on the legislative front. The USDA waived the congregate meal requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program meaning grab and go meals can be reimbursed through this federal program. The USDA also approved a waiver requested by the state of Ohio to extend SNAP recertification periods to 6 months for households whose recertification takes place in March, April, or May 2020. Food banks are requesting additional food from state and federal programs and also advocating to lift the income eligibility requirement when distributing TEFAP food for the time being. It is simply not possible to have a private conversation about a client's income from six feet away - and it is our experience over many years that people don't wait in long lines for food they don't need. All of this is quite a lot and we again appreciate the Ohio Association and our advocacy team for leading the charge!

In addition, the Governor issued an Executive Order on Sunday requiring Ohioans to stay at home.

Here is a brief summary of how we are impacted by that order:

- Food banks are considered essential providers and are categorized under Human Services Operations.
- The language is broad enough to cover all of our partner agencies that choose to continue to operate.

We must also comply with all health and safety requirements outlined for employers in the order. And, we have been earnest in our efforts to do that as we know that the safety and health of our employees, volunteers, partners and clients is primary.

We are continuing our efforts to pack at least 6,000 boxes of shelf-stable food a week, though this number could very well increase. Our goal is to provide a 5-7 day supply of food and distribute these boxes via drive-thru distributions at the Food Bank and through community distributions in partnership with food pantries and other Food Bank agencies/programs. Distribution days to be announced. For the latest information call our Help Center at 216-738-2067.

We will be packing enough backpacks to distribute up to 3,500 per week, more if needed. While some of our backpack partners have closed their doors temporarily, others have

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stepped up, even some new partners, and want to get food out to children. For example, we have partnered with CMSD to provide weekend backpacks to roughly 2,600 kids at the 22 CMSD locations that have remained open to serve meals, and this will continue through the duration of the pandemic.

We are doing everything we can to support our network partners. Some of our food pantries and hot meal sites have closed, but many have remained open and some are even stepping up their distributions and meals to provide even more food to people in need. We are seeing an increase in the volume of agency orders and will have to source more product to make sure we can fulfill these orders and support our partners.

We are hopeful that the data gods continue to smile on our team as they are gathering stats daily so we can better chart where we are and what we need. We want to be able to plan as far ahead as possible.

We are continuing to implement our own "social distancing" and working through alternative schedules, physical space, working from home as possible and other ways to keep our staff and volunteers safe.

We are gearing up for our second drive through distribution today, Tuesday, from 2-5 p.m. We'll put what we learned to use. We saw such great need and are grateful to be able to have the opportunity to serve more neighbors and friends in our service area and beyond. We are expecting another large turnout and our team has been working hard to make this distribution even more successful than the last.

We've done some rough math, and we are calculating that the increased need as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic could cost the Food Bank an additional \$170,000/week, perhaps more, as the demand escalates. This is on top of the cost of our regular operation, which provides almost 1,000,000 pounds of food in a busy week. People are scared and we want to make sure we can meet the need to the best of our ability while keeping the safety of our team at the forefront. [www.Greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/give](http://www.Greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/give)

As usual, a busy day. Again, we are humbled by the work we do, honored to be part of this community and grateful for the fact that everyone is trying to do their part to get us through this rough patch. Later this week, the sun is supposed to come out - let it shine on your face as it'll feel good. After all, we all need a little sunshine in our lives!

**Focus on possibility and who can help and how**