

**Greater Cleveland Food Bank**  
**COVID-19 Update**  
**April 29, 2020**

Wednesday brought warm temperatures and some rain – getting closer to what late spring should look and feel like. We're also getting ready for tomorrow's drive thru distribution at the City's Muni Lot and we're looking at what appears to be a rainy afternoon. Rain can't dampen our spirits though -- as of this afternoon we had about 2,000 households who had pre-registered. Seven weeks of drive thru distributions and each time, the cars line up for nutritious food – and each week, the variety gets better as we now have fresh produce as well as shelf stable food. Tomorrow's distribution will include a Facebook live with Cleveland City Councilperson Basheer Jones so feel free to tune into that at 2 p.m. He will be talking with Kristin and various staff members about the distribution, our response to COVID-19, all of our wonderful partners we've worked and that as a community, we're stronger together. He'll also talk about how our community can continue to help till we get through this. So stay tuned.

A great article ran in Crain's this past Monday about non-profit organizations in the greater Cleveland area and their fundraising efforts during this pandemic. Kristin was interviewed and shared that the community has been wonderfully supportive of our efforts.

Some great news to share as we continue to offer home deliveries to those in need. In the past few weeks, Jess Morgan and Tiffany Scruggs, two members of our Senior Leadership team have been in discussions with First Year Cleveland, a non-profit focused on combating infant mortality. Due to families preparing to give birth being within the population advised to stay home during this pandemic, we will begin to offer deliveries to 62 of their program participants next week! We look to serve up to 150 families on a monthly basis. The extension of support to this vulnerable population is so important and we are honored to be a part of this work. Big shout out and thanks to members of the National Guard who will help us with these deliveries.

Thus far during this pandemic, we have distributed 20,048 emergency boxes of food and 33,420 backpacks. Those numbers continue to grow each week. Despite all of the wonderful media coverage we've had on efforts to get food out to the community, we continue to receive lots of calls to our Help Center from so many individuals in need of food and other services. The call volume has been steadily increasing and despite the increased number of calls, wait times have gone down. In March 2020, the average wait time was 1.7 minutes and time spent on a call was 3.7 minutes. In April, average wait time was 0.8 minutes and time spent on a call was 4.6 minutes. Our Call Center Specialists are patient, knowledgeable and can help guide a caller to an agency in their neighborhood. Our website includes an interactive map of pantries and food sites. Anyone needing help or wanting information about SNAP can call us at 216-738-2067.

A huge shout out to our warehouse staff and drivers. They continue to be the steady and consistent backbone of the Food Bank – receiving truckloads of product, storing that product and pulling orders to ship out the door. And, day in and day out, our drivers ensure that food is delivered to our program partners who help feed so many families in greater Cleveland! In total pounds distributed, we are up almost 500,000 pounds as compared to last year for the period of March 15 through this week!

April is Volunteer Appreciation month and although the month is coming to a close, we will continue to salute our volunteers who are vital to our operations. Check out our website, [www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org](http://www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org) as we shine a spotlight on these fabulous individuals. Thank you!

Sleep well as tomorrow will be another busy day!

***Focus on possibility and who can help and how. Mary LaVigne-Butler, VP of External Affairs***