

Greater Cleveland Food Bank
COVID-19 Update
Week of August 2 – August 7, 2020: Week in Review

The first week of August has brought lots of changes. We are preparing for several transitions in our programming, our distributions and our volunteers shifts, but change is nothing new to this dedicated group of food bankers. We've become masters at managing quick pivots and constant evolutions.

We have officially extended the use of our Outreach Trucks to continue their Summer Feeding distributions through the end of August. While we still have 31 Summer Feeding sites continuing their distributions, many of our Summer Feeding programs are wrapping up for the summer. The trucks will be an important part of the way we bridge the gap between our Summer Feeding Programs and our Kids Cafe programs starting this fall. Our team is already preparing to switch gears to our Kids Cafe distributions, which provide after-school meals and activities for students, and working to ensure kids will have access to nutritious food no matter what their school's plans are for re-opening.

Another big transition we are preparing for is with the continued deployment of the National Guard. Friday was supposed to be their last day with us, but last week we received news that their deployment will be extended through September 30th. However, due to budgetary concerns, this extension has not been finalized and we must be prepared for the Guard to leave sooner than that. We expect as time goes on many members will need to leave to resume their normal lives, so we continue making contingency plans for their departure. For example, next week will be the first time the Guard will not be at our Muni Lot distribution, and we will rely solely on our wonderful group of volunteers. We have about 70 volunteers recruited for next week's distribution and will use this as a test run to make sure these large scale distributions continue to run like clockwork.

The need to continue and expand our distribution is more important now than ever. While recent reports show that national unemployment levels have declined slightly, we know that millions are still struggling to find jobs in this unprecedented economic downturn. The challenges faced by individuals who are currently unemployed were only made worse when last Saturday morning the \$600 weekly supplemental unemployment benefits that so many families relied on expired. This benefit created a sense of security and some stability during a time of lost wages, uncertainty surrounding school closures, and the ending of eviction protections. This week we saw increases in registrations at both our Parma and Muni lot distribution, and expect that these numbers will only continue to increase. You can join our Advocacy team [by participating in our action alert](#) urging our Senators and Representatives to strengthen SNAP and extend P-EBT as they continue to negotiate this next round of COVID-19 relief legislation.

If you or someone you know is in need of assistance, you can check out the attached guide to COVID-19 benefits created by one of our Benefits Outreach Counselors. Our Benefits Outreach Team has done incredible work to help connect people to a wide variety of benefits, and continues to look for ways to better serve our neighbors. Most recently, this team has started partnering with 211 and Enterprise to assist the overwhelming amount of individuals that are non-tax-filers and haven't been able to receive their stimulus payments. For help accessing any of these benefits as well as for information on SNAP, please call our Help Center at [216-738-2067](tel:216-738-2067).

Also attached you'll find a Voter Registration Guide. The General Election is quickly approaching and every vote counts! The toolkit was created by our advocacy intern, Jenna, and details out every step of the voting process. If you aren't registered, or would like to help people get registered, check it out!

We also want to do a huge shout out to our amazing community for helping us collect nearly 22,000 masks! When Betsy Kling started her campaign with WKYC to collect 10,000 masks, we never imagined the outpouring of support we would receive. Even though the campaign has ended we continue to receive hundreds of masks. Our partner agencies are thrilled, and have quickly begun distributing them. Thank you and don't forget to keep wearing your own masks to keep yourself and loved ones safe!

"If you're walking down the right path and you're willing to keep walking, eventually you'll make progress."

- Barack Obama

Focus on possibility and who can help and how. Leah Markovich, Grants Coordinator