

*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 20, 2020

At the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, we celebrate life's daily surprises, and accomplishments. Another day into our efforts to serve our community by providing an essential service - food and assistance to our clients. In light of the Governor's Press Conference on March 18, we have some new requirements and resources to help us do our jobs and make our workplace safer.

One of these requirements will change the way we start our day. Beginning as soon as we can get our hands on temporal or infra-red thermometers – the kind you wand on the forehead – we will begin daily taking the temperatures of every person coming into our building. We've ordered thermometers online and hope to see them early next week.

Today, Food Bank staff met with a Sergeant from the Ohio National Guard. She came to the Food Bank to introduce herself and advise that we'd have approximately 56 service members available to assist us during the COVID-19 outbreak. She anticipates they will be reporting on Monday and will assist with a variety of jobs. The Ohio Association of Food Banks made the request earlier this week for each of the twelve food banks across the State, and we appreciate the Governor for providing this additional manpower. We are looking forward to the extra hands. The National Guard will arrive on Monday and begin work at 10 a.m. Media is welcome to come at that time.

More disheartening news on the claims for unemployment in Ohio: in the last 4 days more than 111,000 online claims for unemployment benefits have been filed. Here at the Food bank, we are working on creating a one page "help sheet" that will be available from our Help Center and on our website to help the thousands of people needing some guidance and direction when facing this process. This will be available early next week.

We held our onsite produce distribution yesterday in our new format – a drive-thru. We had the assistance of the Cleveland Police Department to help direct traffic – estimates are that it stretched more than two miles. We had three members of the Cuyahoga County Sheriff's staff as well. It was our first experience at doing a total drive through and the results are astounding. We served 1,203 families and 3,198 individuals. Of those, 450 were new families served as well as 274 new seniors served. We distributed over 61,000 lbs. of fresh produce as well as 46,000lbs. of shelf stable product thanks to CareSource – they not only funded the contents of 1500 emergency food boxes but they also sent a team of over 30 volunteers to help. The amazing TEAM of volunteers who assisted stayed here till 7:30 pm and beyond – normally we finish up at 6:00 pm or so. Volunteers, Food Bank staff, Care Source volunteers and behind the scenes folks made it all happen. The enormity of the need is great and the Food Bank will continue to step up and accept the challenge – after all, people need to eat to stay healthy!

Calls to our Help Center continue to grow – since Monday, we've had over 1,000 calls. Our monthly average is 1400. We will be extending the hours the Center takes calls and our Outreach Team continues to be a huge help returning calls and reaching out to folks who left messages. The Help Center's phone number is 216-738-2067. We expect the calls to increase significantly as the days go by.

We've experienced a great response to our online fundraising – a \$50,000 match gift from Baker and Emily Mayfield, on top of a gift from an anonymous donor, has spurred on wonderful gifts from many donors. And, a \$5,000 match Facebook fundraiser was met in just a few hours. Our COVID-19 response expenses will be significant and we are grateful that our community has begun to step up as this will be a long and hard fight. If you or someone you know would like to help, go to [www.Greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/give](http://www.Greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/give).

Great news on the legislative front – the federal Families First Coronavirus Act was signed into law on Wednesday evening. This will provide increased funding for TEFAP, PSNAP and overall, provide increased flexibility to feed more kids. This afternoon, we were on a call with Senator Portman and spoke about a range of issues relating to connecting our community to food during this crisis. He was very supportive and is working to find out what additional flexibilities can be put in place to make it easier to help food banks and emergency food providers to better serve the community. He was also made aware of Feeding America's request for additional TEFAP funding for both food and overhead costs during this time of rapidly increasing need.

We appreciate the support on so many fronts from members of our community. To help ensure we can continue to provide these essential services, please go to: [www.Greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/give](http://www.Greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/give)

Focus on possibility and who can help and how