

Greater Cleveland Food Bank
COVID-19 Update
May 6, 2020

It's Wednesday, and it's hard to believe we are already half way through the week. The days are flying by, and it seems so easy to lose track of what day it is in this crazy time. But there's one thing that always keeps us centered, and that's our weekly Thursday distribution. Everyone here at the Food Bank is busy with their weekly preparations to make sure our distribution tomorrow goes as smoothly as possible. Our Repack and Operations team makes sure boxes of shelf-stable food and fresh produce are packed and ready to go; our Help Center is taking calls to get people registered at www.wefeedcle.org; the IT team is making sure our check-in system is up and running; members of our program teams are coordinating logistics of delivery and on-site distribution; and our volunteer experience team is making sure we have all the helping hands we need. We are grateful that Cleveland Police and the State Highway Patrol will be with us once again, and as always, the National Guard and Ohio Military Reserves are looking forward to another day of serving.

We are excited that this week we will once again have the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Music Van at the City's Muni Lot keeping spirits high during our distribution. Last week the Music Van's great songs kept our volunteers and National Guard dancing and in a good mood. And in addition to coming to our own distributions, the Music Van has even traveled to a few of our partner agencies' distributions to help spread some good vibes and lots of joy.

Tomorrow's distribution will also help us make some more space in our very full warehouse. Our receiving team has been incredibly busy bringing in lots of the great product that we have ordered over the last month. We finally hit a slower period on the receiving end, and while we still are getting orders and we are still very busy, things have slowed down just enough to give our team some breathing room so we can get everything as organized as possible to make space for the next heavy round of deliveries. Space can get pretty tight in our warehouse, so as we are ordering more food, it's important that we have this time to try to maximize the storage space we have.

We've said it before, and we'll say it countless more times – we have such a caring and wonderful community. Yesterday, we asked you all to join us in celebrating #GivingTuesdayNow, a special day of giving to help organizations continue their work during this time of uncertainty. We are truly blown away by our community's response to our call for action. Yesterday, we raised more than \$164,000 – which is the single largest day of online giving in the history of our Food Bank! Extraordinary times call for extraordinary action, and Northeast Ohio, you did not let us down. Thank you to everyone who supported us yesterday and continues to help make our work possible.

And if you weren't able to participate in GivingTuesday, or if you're looking for new ways to help, we have a challenge for you. WKYC Studios and Betsy Kling are calling all sewers to help us collect 10,000 washable masks to help our volunteers and network of partner agencies stay safe while we continue our essential work. As Ohio's stay-at-home order is gradually lifted, more of our program partners will be able to resume operations, and we will need plenty of PPE to help them stay safe. [Click here](#) to learn how you can get involved.

The support of our community means so much to us and to our network of partner agencies. We've been checking in with our partners to better understand how the current health crisis has impacted their organizations and to see what we can do to help them. Mr. Durham from Garden Valley Neighborhood House told us about some of the things he was hearing from clients:

"A lot of them complain about jobs lost and food shortage. That is why we gained more clients because they are not working, they have no money, but they have to have food. One thing about food, nobody can contend without getting food at some point. Maybe three days they may fast, but at some point..., they have to have food."

When asked what makes you get up every morning and continue to do the work that you are doing, Mr. Durham added, "The best thing you can do is help somebody." We know many of you probably feel the same way. Together we will persevere, and make sure our community has the nutritious food they need.

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