



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**GOVERNOR DEWINE DEPLOYS NATIONAL GUARD TO HELP FEED FAMILIES**  
*Ohio's foodbanks welcome National Guard members beginning March 23*

**COLUMBUS, OH** – On Wednesday, Governor Mike DeWine and Ohio Adjutant General MG John C. Harris Jr., at the request of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and in collaboration with the Ohio Association of Foodbanks and its 12 member Feeding America foodbanks, announced the deployment of Ohio National Guard members to help feed seniors, families, and displaced workers.

“Ohio’s foodbanks commend Governor Mike DeWine, Lt. Governor Jon Husted, Ohio Department of Health Director Dr. Amy Acton, Ohio Adjutant General MG John C. Harris Jr., and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services for their steadfast support and leadership,” said Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director for the Ohio Association of Foodbanks. “We welcome these National Guard members as part of our foodbank family and thank them for their dedication and diligence in the weeks ahead. We encourage our clients and community members to join us in welcoming them with gratitude and friendship as they assist us in our important work.”

Statewide, approximately 300 National Guard members will be deployed at the 12 foodbank warehouses across the state, which provide food to Ohioans in all 88 counties. The National Guard members will assist Ohio’s foodbanks in procuring, sorting, and packing food into bags and boxes; distributing that food through “no-touch” food distributions and deliveries; and supporting other logistical needs to protect public health and safety while maintaining foodbank operations.

"We have a responsibility to respond when our governor and fellow Ohioans need our assistance," said Maj. Gen. John C. Harris Jr., Ohio adjutant general. "We have a long history of supporting the state and nation during times of emergency. Our Guard members are coming from counties across the state to serve their own communities, ensuring their neighbors continue to receive food and pantry items."

Ohio’s foodbanks report that they have implemented several key changes to respond to need while protecting staff, volunteers and clients by minimizing person-to-person contact. Foodbanks, along with their 3,600 member food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters, have transitioned to “no-touch” food distribution using drive-through and delivery models, pre-packaged bags and boxes of food, and “to-go” meals.

"The action I've taken to activate the Ohio National Guard will provide support to food pantries that are low on staff and need help getting food to some of our most vulnerable citizens," said Gov. Mike DeWine. "By looking out for our neighbors and following proper health safety guidelines, we will make it through this together."

“The National Guard members serving at our foodbanks are our fellow citizens and neighbors,” said Hamler-Fugitt. “They are being deployed to reassure our community that they can continue to safely obtain the help they need to keep food on the table. We remain committed to being here to help and serve, and we thank the National Guard for their support and courage as we work as a team to weather this storm together.”

Ohioans looking to donate or volunteer or seeking help with food can visit [ohiofoodbanks.org/coronavirus](https://ohiofoodbanks.org/coronavirus) for more information.

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**About the Ohio Association of Foodbanks**

*The Ohio Association of Foodbanks is Ohio's largest charitable response to hunger, representing Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks and 3,600 member charities including food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. In SFY 2019, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute 230 million pounds of food and grocery items. Follow the association on [Twitter](#), stay connected on [Facebook](#) and visit them on the web at [www.ohiofoodbanks.org](http://www.ohiofoodbanks.org).*

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