



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Statement on USDA Approval for Ohio Disaster Household Distribution Program
Media Statement from Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director of the
Ohio Association of Foodbanks

“After weeks of bureaucratic haggling and red tape, the Ohio Association of Foodbanks is relieved that staff, volunteers and members of the Ohio National Guard and Ohio Military Reserve working and serving at Ohio’s foodbanks and food pantries have won approval for a program that will better protect their health and safety and meet the needs of struggling Ohioans during this crisis.

“The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) [has approved a request](#) from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services for a Disaster Household Distribution Program. This will allow Ohio foodbanks to distribute disaster food boxes to residents impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. Importantly, this program will also allow us to serve the large number of first-time clients seeking our help during this crisis without requiring close person-to-person contact to collect items like name, address, and household demographics. As our response has been elevated to disaster status across the state, we need the tools and flexibility to respond in kind.

“By shifting to no-touch services like mass drive-through distributions, foodbanks are using every disaster response tool we have to respond to the need for help with emergency food and supplies, while mitigating community spread and protecting the health of our limited and essential workforce.

“We want to thank the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services for its leadership in seeking this flexibility for Ohio’s hunger relief network. We also want to thank the following members of Ohio’s congressional delegation, who [urged FNS to approve this request](#) and protect hunger relief agencies while we continue to carry out our vital missions: Senator Sherrod Brown; Senator Rob Portman; Congresswoman Marcia Fudge; Congressman Michael Turner; Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur; Congressman Robert Latta; Congressman Anthony Gonzalez; Congressman Tim Ryan; Congressman Steve Stivers; Congresswoman Joyce Beatty; Congressman David Joyce; Congressman Steve Chabot; Congressman Brad Wenstrup; and Congressman Troy Balderson.

“Along with Feeding America, we continue to urge USDA to permit and encourage states to apply this flexible feeding program as broadly as possible, as millions of Americans join the ranks of the jobless each week and will turn to the national hunger relief network as their emergency safety net.”

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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 nearly 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.

Contact: Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, Executive Director for the Ohio Association of Foodbanks
614-271-4803 (cell) – or – lisa@ohiofoodbanks.org

Joree Novotny, Director of External Affairs for the Ohio Association of Foodbanks
614-273-5818 (cell) – or – jnovotny@ohiofoodbanks.org