

COVID-19 Talking Points – last updated 3/17/2020

General Statements

- West Ohio Food Bank has been adopting new policies and practices to ensure the health and safety of our clients, volunteers, staff, and partner agencies who are on the front lines of serving youth, families, seniors and individuals who may find themselves in need of emergency food assistance as a result of temporary loss of income.
- We remain focused on limiting the risk of spreading the virus, adhering to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for keeping employees, facilities, and the food that is distributed clean and safe. Employees, volunteers, vendors, and donors who are not feeling well have been encouraged to stay home. Continued community support during these uncertain times will be critical.
- We have a responsibility to take the strongest actions possible to protect the individuals we serve, the volunteers who help us achieve our mission, and the employees who work tirelessly every day to fight hunger and provide healthy, nourishing meals to those in need. We fully recognize that this unfolding situation has everyone anxious. Each of our partner agencies continue to monitor the situation, relying on state and federal updates, while employing the most effective measures to keep our communities safe. As a foodbank, we are skilled at disaster and emergency response. We are coordinating with local agencies and disaster response teams to activate the strategies that will help us mitigate hunger in the weeks to come.
- This unique and extraordinary situation has also required our pantries to significantly modify and adjust the way they work. Many of our pantries have gone to a “no-touch” delivery or drive-through models similar to how West Ohio Food Bank has offered their distributions in the past 4 years.

Need for Volunteers

- We are taking every precaution in our sanitizing and cleaning practices at the food bank and during our food distributions to lower the risk of transmission of the virus.
- Anyone who is healthy and able and wants to help is encouraged to reach out to our local food pantries or West Ohio Food Bank to volunteer.
- We encourage all of our volunteers, just as we do our staff, to stay home if they are sick or exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19 or if they have reason to suspect they may have been exposed to the virus.

Need for Donations

- West Ohio Food Bank is encouraging "virtual food drives" seeking financial donations so we don't drain our grocery stores with so many shelves already empty. We know from prior food drives, people go through their home pantries and donate food products,

Linda Hamilton, CEO
419 222 7946 X 202
WestOhioFoodBank.org
1380 East Kibby Street
Lima, OH 45804

many times unknowingly, donating outdated shelf-stable food products that has to be thrown away. Because West Ohio Food Bank is a part of the larger food supply chain, we are able to purchase food directly from food manufacturers and in most instances at a more economical cost.

- People can donate directly to West Ohio Food Bank on our website at www.westohiofoodbank.org or mail a donation to West Ohio Food Bank, 1380 East Kibby Street, Lima, OH 45804
- We are working to source items like boxes, plastic bags, take-home food containers, disposable silverware, and other equipment that can help facilitate no-touch distributions to limit the risk of spread at our food distributions, food pantries and hot meal programs.

Upcoming Food Distributions – to keep updated go to our website at www.westohiofoodbank.org or join our Facebook Page

- Contact your local pantries in your community to confirm their open hours.
- Wednesday, March 18, 2020
 - Leipsic at Leipsic High School from Noon – 2:00pm
 - Ottawa at the Educational Service Center from 2:00pm – 4:00pm
- Saturday, March 21, 2020
 - CHOPIN Hall at Vanlue Park from 8:30am – 10:00am
- Tuesday, March 24, 2020
 - Delphos at the Eagles from 2:30pm – 3:30pm
 - West Ohio Food Bank from 9:00am – 2:00pm - pre-registration required
- Tuesday, March 31, 2020
 - Celina at the Galleria (Old Big Bear) from 1:00pm – 3:00pm
- Thursday, March 19, March 26 and April 2, 2020
 - Produce Distribution held at West Ohio Food Bank sponsored by St. Mark's Church from 10:00am – Noon