



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 7, 2020

USDA Approval for Ohio Disaster Household Distribution Program
Safe Food Distribution to Families in Time of Emergency

Lorain – Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio received notice that 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 regional food banks to distribute emergency food boxes to residents impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak under disaster status. This program will allow Second Harvest to serve the large number of first-time clients seeking help during this crisis without putting workers or recipients at risk. During standard distributions, food banks are required to register all first-time users requiring close person-to-person contact to collect items like name, address and household demographics and more.

The response has been elevated to disaster status across the state. This will give food banks the tools and flexibility to carry out their vital mission safely and effectively. By shifting to no-touch services like mass drive-through distributions, foodbanks are using every disaster response tool available to respond to the need for help with emergency food and supplies, while mitigating community spread and protecting the health of limited and essential workforce.

Julie Chase-Morefield, President & CEO, “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. With so many people out of work, lack of food is a new reality for them. We are here to provide that emergency help, and now we can offer help without putting these families or our staff, site volunteers and the National Guard at risk.”

Second Harvest distributed a record 1.1M LBS of food during the month of March which was up 67% from March 2019. No-touch food distribution events are planned through the end of April throughout the four-county area that is served.

###

About Second Harvest:

As the area’s largest hunger-relief organization, Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio Grows Hope in our community by creating pathways for nutritious food and visions a bright future for all by cultivating a healthy, hunger-free community.

Second Harvest secures and distributes over 9.5 million pounds of food and grocery products annually; and works in partnership with 110 member agencies and 8 school districts including food pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, School Pantries, after-school programs, Backpack Programs, Kids Cafes, Mobile Produce Pantries and Mobile Pantries. With nearly 1 out of 6 people in our region receiving emergency food assistance from one of Second Harvest’s agencies in Crawford, Erie, Huron and Lorain counties, the need for support has never been greater. Help bring the most basic of needs – food – to the table by visiting us online at www.secondharvestfoodbank.org.

Contact: Susan Bartosch, Second Harvest Food Bank, (440) 444-0692 office, (440) 396-2731 mobile, sbartosch@secondharvestfoodbank.org