



## Media Advisory

For more information, contact  
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Southeast Missouri Food Bank has been closely monitoring developments with Covid-19 and are taking action to ensure we are meeting the hunger needs of our 16-county service area. We are staying in closing contact with Feeding America and preparing for any operational changes that may be needed. Some keypoints:

- Our focus is on making sure we are handling food distributions in the best possible manner so that they do not contribute to the spread of the virus, particularly among older adults or those with comprised immune systems who are particularly vulnerable.
- We have already encouraged our pantries to schedule appointments to limit the number of people congregating at a pantry site at one time or host “drive-through” distributions where possible. Other suggestions include increasing pantry hours and giving clients twice as much food to that it lasts longer. We encourage only one representative from each family go to the pantry pick up the food.
- At congregate feeding sites, we encourage staff to establish hand washing/hand sanitizer stations and provide boxes of tissues, increase the intensity of your cleaning schedule and use disinfectants on surfaces including door handles, railings, and counters. “To-go boxes” and disposable flatware are encouraged where possible.
- People who need food are encouraged to visit our website or follow our Facebook page for announcements on schedule changes and announcements of special food distributions.
- We realize it likely is only a matter of time before schools suspend classes, which means there will be a large group of children who are missing out on the free breakfasts and lunches they receive at school. These children also may be in homes that are food-insecure meaning parents face an additional burden to try to feed their children.

***Southeast Missouri Food Bank* | Help More. Reach More. Feed More.**

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- The food bank also is concerned about people in low-wage jobs that may be temporarily out of work because the restaurant, retail outlet or other place of business where they work has temporarily closed or reduced its hours. While many families have stocked up on food and other necessary supplies in the past week, many of the people we serve don't have the resources to do that.
- Another concern is making sure we have enough volunteers to continue our mission to feed the hungry. Many of the volunteers in our 140 member pantries, soup kitchens and shelters are above age 60, putting them at-risk of coronavirus complications. We are asking younger people – particularly college students – who have available time to consider volunteering at their local food pantry. Anyone interested in volunteering or helping to deliver food boxes to senior citizens, may contact us at 573-471-1818 or email Heidi Boese. Please provide your name, age, place of residence, contact phone number, and hours of availability.
- While we may not know yet exactly what impact coronavirus will have in southeast Missouri, we do know it will take a financial toll. One of the best ways to help is to make a donation to help us stretch our already limited resources to ensure we can keep our vulnerable populations fed. Donations can be made on our website at [semofoodbank.org](http://semofoodbank.org). Thank you.

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