*News Release*

Connecticut Food Bank Offers Drive-Thru Pantry In Fairfield County

*The food distribution will be the largest single event in history of the food bank*

WALLINGFORD, CONN., May 6, 2020 — Connecticut Food Bank will offer a Drive-Thru Pantry in Fairfield County on Thursday, May 7, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM in the parking lot of Bass Pro Shops in Bridgeport. This event will be the largest one-day food distribution in the organization’s history. In conjunction with the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut Food Bank plans to distribute approximately 32 TONS of food at the event, enough to provide approximately 50,000 meals. There are no requirements to attend.

“We would like to thank Bass Pro Shops for supporting our efforts to help our community and providing us their parking lot to host this event. Further, I’d like to thank the Mayor and local civic leaders of Bridgeport as well as state representatives for assisting us in planning this event,” said Dan Gomez, Chief Operating Officer of Connecticut Food Bank. “We can support this event due to the generosity of our donors. This is in concert with our efforts to support our local member agencies, which is the primary mission at Connecticut Food Bank. Many of our partner agencies are being overwhelmed and it’s important we make every effort to provide as much relief to them as we can. Food supplies continue to be stretched everywhere and it’s important for people to understand that food insecurity has no boundaries. These drive-thru distributions are a way to immediately reach members of the community who are food insecure. The drive-thru model helps Connecticut Food Bank provide a significant amount of food in a safe, social distancing model, without putting a strain on our logistical support and staff.”

Police officers will be directing traffic toward the distribution from exit 28 for CT-127/East Main Street off I-95N and exit 29 for Seaview Avenue toward CT-130/Stratford Avenue off I-95S.

Gomez said he estimates between 1,500 and 2,000 vehicles will be served at the distribution. Attendees are asked to be in line for the distribution by 9:45AM on Thursday.

Attendees will make their way through the directed traffic pattern of the Bridgeport Police and will not leave the safety of their vehicle, Gomez said. Upon entering the food distribution area, drivers will be asked to open their trunks and volunteers will place the food inside and close the trunk. Drivers can then safely leave the event.

Participants will receive an assortment of food, including bread; yogurt; snacks; two varieties of prepared and packaged soup; and a 20-pound box of assorted fresh vegetables and fresh fruit.

“This process is anticipated to be slow, but ensures the safety of the volunteers and recipients, while protecting food from the elements,” Gomez said. “Drivers will not be allowed to get out of their vehicles. This helps keep everyone safe and complies with social distancing. Police are asking those in attendance to be patient, stay in their vehicles and listen to directions.”

“During this unprecedented time, Connecticut Food Bank is working with partners across the state to provide vitally needed food to our neighbors struggling with the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic,” Gomez said. “The need for emergency and supplemental food has increased significantly in the past months. We are grateful for the outpouring of support from individuals, organizations and companies statewide.”

In addition to the Bridgeport event, Connecticut Food Bank will offer additional Mobile Pantry distributions this week in Litchfield, New Haven, and Windham counties at the following locations:

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Page 2

* Wednesday, May 6, 5:30 PM – Faith Church – 600 Danbury Road #1, New Milford
* Thursday, May 7, 3:00 PM – The Rock Church – 513 Meriden Road, Waterbury
* Thursday, May 7, 11:00 AM – Danielson Veterans Coffeehouse – 18 Kennedy Drive, Putnam
* Thursday, May 7, 2:00 PM –East Haven High School, 35 Wheelbarrow Lane, East Haven

Future Connecticut Food Bank Mobile Pantry food distributions are posted at <http://www.ctfoodbank.org/mobilepantry>.

Gomez noted that Connecticut Food Bank “is doing everything possible to ensure the safety of our volunteers” through the following measures:

* All volunteers will be given a no-touch temperature check upon arrival. Volunteers with a temperature of 100.4 or above (the recommended threshold from the CDC) will be asked to leave.
* There will be several disinfectant stations. Volunteers should thoroughly wash their hands prior to arrival. Hand washing should last at least 20 seconds under warm water.
* Accommodations are in place to allow volunteers to perform their duties with reasonable social distancing.
* The food bank will provide disposable gloves and the city of Bridgeport will support providing masks for volunteers during their shift.

If members of the community are seeking opportunities to help their neighbors in need during the pandemic, they are encouraged to visit ctfoodbank.org to make a financial donation that will help Connecticut Food Bank purchase needed food and to register to volunteer at the Connecticut Food Bank warehouse in Wallingford to help package nonperishable food items for distribution to Connecticut Food Bank member agencies and through the food bank’s Mobile Pantry program. “Donations and volunteers power our work and are need to help our neighbors in this challenging time,” Gomez said.

*About Connecticut Food Bank:*

*Connecticut Food Bank is committed to alleviating hunger in Connecticut by providing food resources, raising awareness of the challenges of hunger, and advocating for people who need help meeting basic needs. Connecticut Food Bank partners with the food industry, food growers, donors, and volunteers to distribute nutritious food to people in need. Connecticut Food Bank distributes food through a network of 600 partners and programs in Fairfield, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven, New London, and Windham counties, representing more than 70% of the state’s population and where 65% of the state’s food insecure – nearly 270,000 people – struggle with hunger. Last year, Connecticut Food Bank distributed food to help provide 22.5 million meals. Visit us on the web at* [*www.ctfoodbank.org*](http://www.ctfoodbank.org)*, like us on* [*Facebook*](http://www.facebook.com/ctfoodbank) *and follow @CTFoodBank on* [*Twitter*](http://www.twitter.com/ctfoodbank) *and* [*Instagram*](http://www.instagram.com/ctfoodbank)

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