



For Immediate Release

Contact: Sonya Warwick
(505) 349-8682 – office
(505) 269-4775 – cell

**Food Bank Continuing to Monitor Impact of
Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Distribution Capabilities
Food Bank Ask for Volunteers To Prep Food
Food Bank Will Continue to Remain Open At This Time**

Albuquerque, NM (March 18, 2020) – Like so many in our community, food banks and others that provide emergency, critical services to low income people are being cognizant of the impact on the state's poor. Roadrunner Food Bank's distribution center will continue to remain open as long as possible and provide emergency food to its statewide network of hunger relief organizations. There are still many food distribution sites continuing to receive food product from the food bank and as long as they remain open, deliveries to each location will continue.

The food bank has been working with its partner food distribution locations and encouraging each site to alter how food distributions occur. Currently, the food bank is encouraging drive thru food distributions to minimize interpersonal contact as a prevention measure. Many of the sites have shifted their distributions to this new model in the last week.

Mag Strittmatter, president and CEO of Roadrunner Food Bank said, "The statewide hunger relief network has had to get creative in how we look at ways to continue providing emergency food while protecting the health of clients being served, and the volunteers and staff at each site. New Mexicans facing hunger simply don't have the funds to go out and buy 14 days' worth of food. It's been important we continue to balance health safety precautions established by state and federal agencies while ensuring our neighbors in need have access to food."

It's meant the food bank needed to alter how it preps food delivered to distribution locations too. In recent years, most of the food was palletized for placement on tables and clients to select and choose from items that work for their household. Now, the food bank is shifting to a boxed food model to limit interpersonal contact. Boxes will be pre-prepared at the food bank's warehouse with a variety of food items for each household. This method reduces interpersonal contact significantly while ensuring low-income families have access to emergency food.

It's also meant the need for volunteers at the five food banks across the state and each of their affiliated distribution sites.

Strittmatter said, "So much of our work is thanks to the helping hands of volunteers. They are key in helping us prep food for delivery by our drivers. We encourage any member of the community in good health to schedule a time to volunteer with us, at one of our sister food banks across the state or at a food pantry or similar location in their local community."

Volunteer projects have been set up with social distancing top of mind. Staff will require volunteers to frequently wash their hands and regularly clean equipment and surfaces they are working on and with while in the facility.

-more-

Any person who is experiencing any symptoms or illness will be asked to reschedule their volunteer shift. Any volunteer who has traveled to areas including China, South Korea, Iran, Italy or Japan in the last few months will be asked to reschedule their volunteer shift at the food bank.

Other Ways the Community Can Help

- **Give Funds** – Financial contributions go much further in moments like these, and support will help to provide funding to obtain what is needed most.
- **Give Time** – Register for a volunteer shift through the food bank website at rrfb.org, or call 505.349.8841 or 505.349.8837 during business hours Monday – Friday from 8 am to 4 pm, and Saturday's from 8 am to 2 pm.
- **Give Food** – Non-perishable food donations will be accepted at the food bank during business hours. Community members who are ill or experiencing any symptoms of an illness should arrange for another person to deliver food donations to the food bank. As the food bank fleet must remain focused on delivering food, food pick ups will not be available.
- **Looking for Food Assistance Help?** Use the Online Food Finder at www.rrfb.org/find-food. Scroll to the bottom of the page, enter your zip code and click Search Now twice. Food locations in your community will populate under the map. ***It is imperative to call the site prior to visiting. Locations may be altering their operations with potential additional restrictions due to COVID-19.***

New Mexico is ranked as one of the hungriest and most poverty stricken states in the nation. Roadrunner® Food Bank, a Feeding America member, is the largest non-profit dedicated to ending hunger in New Mexico and operates locations in Albuquerque and Las Cruces. Last year, the Food Bank distributed 34 million pounds of food through its own programs, a statewide network of partner agencies, and regional food banks helping 70,000 children, seniors, families and adults weekly. The Food Bank also rescued more than 20 million pounds of food last year keeping food out of landfills.

###