

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wolf Administration Reminds Pennsylvanians of Food Assistance Programs and Resources, Encourages Volunteerism to Keep Life-Sustaining Food Services Available

Harrisburg, PA – The Wolf Administration today reminded Pennsylvanians of food assistance resources available and what actions it is taking to ensure access to food does not stop in spite of the COVID-19 mitigation efforts.

“Life has slowed and it has changed, but it has not stopped for the millions of Pennsylvanians who depend on food assistance programs. We know that this pandemic has caused many people and families to find that they are suddenly food insecure and require assistance,” said Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary Teresa Miller. “The Wolf Administration is doing everything it can to ensure that everyone’s food security needs in the commonwealth are met during this uncertain time.”

Pennsylvanians who need help feeding themselves or their family should find and contact their local food bank or pantry through [Feeding Pennsylvania](#) and [Hunger-Free Pennsylvania](#).

DHS is continuing to process applications and benefit renewals for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Emergency SNAP applications can be expedited and issued in five days. Pennsylvanians can apply for SNAP online at www.compass.state.pa.us.

DHS will continue to process application and renewal benefits, so people should continue to send in paperwork as usual. But, for anyone currently on SNAP who misses a deadline, who is not able to submit the paperwork or complete an interview or provide verifications for any reason during this emergency, DHS will ensure their SNAP benefit continues. DHS submitted a waiver request to the federal Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to ensure this continuity in benefits.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has [provided resources](#) for Pennsylvanians to access emergency food assistance during COVID-19 mitigation, including locations of food banks and food pantries that are assisting individuals and families during this time. And to ensure that food banks and [community feeding organizations](#) remain operable with healthy volunteers, the department provided [guidance](#) for ways to limit contact while providing their essential services.

“Quite simply, no Pennsylvanian should ever go hungry. Especially during this disruptive time of COVID-19 mitigation efforts,” said Agriculture Secretary Redding. “We’ve worked hard to provide guidance to the agriculture industry to ensure that healthy food continues to flow to grocery stores and food banks; and guidance for those who

volunteer their time at banks to do so safely, protecting their health and the health of those who come for assistance.”

The Wolf Administration also asks that anyone who is healthy and able please consider volunteering with a local food bank or [registering for the State Emergency Registry of Volunteers in Pennsylvania](#), as this time is creating an incredible strain on charitable organizations’ efforts. [United Way of Pennsylvania’s 211 website](#) is also compiling organizations that need volunteers or resources so their work can continue.

Amidst Governor Wolf’s continued, aggressive mitigation efforts – including the state-wide closure of non-life-sustaining businesses and the recent Stay at Home order issued for seven Pennsylvania counties – the work being done by our food banks and their volunteers is life-sustaining and must continue. The orders do not prohibit food banks and their volunteers from offering food services, nor do they prohibit school districts from offering food services to children during the statewide school closure. Schools and school districts may continue to bring in essential employees involved in the preparation and distribution of meals for children.

The emergency Feeding Taskforce, which consists of state agencies, charitable food networks, food retailers, and other partners and stakeholders, is working to identify available resources and provide food and water to communities in need; including ensuring school age children, older adults and others experiencing food insecurity are provided with nourishing meals.

Businesses who have resources to help feed and shelter Pennsylvanians in need are encouraged to fill out [this survey](#) to assist the task force as they look to direct resources. Any Pennsylvanian who is suddenly in need of food should complete [this survey](#) so the task force can better understand where resources should be directed.

“We need to be sure our charitable food networks are able to continue their daily operations and meeting the need of their communities, so if you are healthy and able, please contact your local food bank to get involved and help you neighbors and community during this time of great need,” said Secretary Miller.

Visit the PA Department of Health’s dedicated [Coronavirus webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19.

Guidance to DHS providers related to COVID-19 is available [here](#). Information and guidance as it relates to agriculture during COVID-19 mitigation in Pennsylvania is available [here](#).