Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 09, 2020

USDA approves Department of Social Services' request to distribute disaster food packages due to COVID-19

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved the Missouri Department of Social Services' request to use USDA foods to operate Disaster Household Distribution in response to COVID-19. Through May 7, 2020, Missourians in need can get a food package from mobile and drive-by locations through six Missouri food banks at over 200 distribution sites. Disaster Household Distribution expects to serve over 90,000 Missourians, including elderly households, households with health conditions, and the recently unemployed. Each food package weighs approximately 25 pounds and contains vegetables, fruits, pasta/rice/starch, protein, and dairy products. Only agencies that have proper cold/frozen storage facilities will distribute frozen meats and any perishables.

"More Missourians than ever are struggling to keep food on the table and we believe Disaster Household Distribution will help meet that crucial need so no one will go hungry," said **Jennifer Tidball**, **Acting Director, Department of Social Services**. "Our community partners will be working extremely fast to help get these food packages into the hands of those in crisis. Food bank and food pantry staff and volunteers are also able to maintain social distancing protocols to keep everyone safe, thanks to the USDA relaxing administrative requirements."

"The demand on Missouri food banks is unprecedented right now," said Scott Baker, State Director of Feeding Missouri. "Having this sort of flexibility to help families, many of whom are needing assistance for the first time, is a significant boost. We appreciate the work being done by the Department of Social Services to partner with us and ensure that Missourians in need can get help as soon as possible."

In some communities, the food packages will be available starting at the end of the week; in other communities, the food packages will be available starting next week. Missourians can call their area food bank to find out when food packages will be available in their community.

Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri:
Harvesters Community Food Network:
Southeast Missouri Food Bank:
St. Louis Area Foodbank:
Ozarks Food Harvest:
Second Harvest Community Food Bank:

(573) 474-1020
(816) 929-3000
(573) 471-1818
(314) 292-6262
(417) 865-3411
(816) 364-3663

For more information on food banks or food pantries, visit **www.feedingmissouri.org (https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.feedingmissouri.org&d=DwMFaQ&c=GSntNbUav5AC0JJIyPOufmfQT3u3zI7UKdoVzPd-7og&r=zdVjOHisu2tUFKmKL_BKFbz-ld3nutMqFVeayp1H31A&m=NDBCMgHCgLBwbac0CdRN6UauQQp3vhm9utUwj2LtEzI&s=5-Su_TBf5hXc938t-nJM3Ye89VrXxG-LjbUcfcdXeBc&e=)** or the **Missouri Services Navigator (https://mo.servicesnavigator.org/s4s/WhereILive/Council?pageId=1&lockla=true)**.

The **Missouri Services Navigator (https://mo.servicesnavigator.org/s4s/WhereILive/Council?pageId=1&lockla=true)** has information on over 2,000 programs and services available in the state. Missourians in need of information on Food Stamp, Medicaid, Child Care Subsidy, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefit programs can visit **dss.mo.gov (https://dss.mo.gov/)**. Missourians can also apply for those services 24/7 online by visiting **MyDSS.mo.gov (https://mydss.mo.gov/)**, or sending completed applications and verification documents by email to **FSD.Documents@dss.mo.gov (mailto:FSD.Documents@dss.mo.gov)**, or by fax to 573-526-9400. Missourians who have questions or need assistance can call 855-FSD-INFO or 855-373-4636 Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Please note on Easter Sunday, April 12th, the FSD Information Center will be closed.

The Department of Social Services is committed to serving the needs of Missouri citizens during COVID-19 pandemic. Information regarding the department's response to the pandemic is available online **https://dss.mo.gov/covid-19 (https://dss.mo.gov/covid-19)**.

The mission of the Department of Social Services is to empower Missourians to live safe, healthy, and productive lives. Visit **dss.mo.gov (https://dss.mo.gov/)** to learn more about the Department of Social Services and follow us on **Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/MOSocialServices/)** and **Twitter (https://twitter.com/DSS_Missouri)**.

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