Governor Stitt Announces $6 Million In CARES Act Funds Approved for Food Banks

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OKLAHOMA CITY (Dec. 23, 2020) – Governor Kevin Stitt announced today $6 million has been approved in replenishment funding from the CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund to support food banks statewide.

These funds will reach each corner of the state by delivery through the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma and the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma. The funding will allow the two food banks to replenish their food supply after an unprecedented year that left many Oklahomans struggling to feed their families.

“Oklahoma’s food banks have been such a valuable partner in our state’s comprehensive response to COVID-19,” said Gov. Stitt. **"I’m proud to be able to deliver these funds to help replenish their supplies and ensure they have what they need to continue their important mission of feeding Oklahomans who need assistance.”**

Since COVID-19 was first confirmed in Oklahoma, there has been a drastic increase in need from

food insecure families across the state. The two food banks combined have distributed 7.3 million pounds more in 2020 than during the same time frame last year. Additionally, food banks have seen a 25 to 30 percent increase in the number of Oklahomans seeking assistance.

The Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma and the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma are part of the Feeding America network and support community food banks in all 77 counties.

What state leaders are saying about the CARES Act Funding for Food Banks Across Oklahoma:

Lori Long, CEO of the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma:

"With many avenues of securing donated food interrupted due to this pandemic, food banks have resorted to purchasing more food to meet the vastly increased demand. While hopeful for a quick recovery, we know the benefits of an improved economy will take longest to reach the people we serve. This funding will go a long way to help us secure the nutritious food needed for our most vulnerable neighbors."

Stacy Dykstra, CEO of the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma:

"The COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges including food insecurity for far too many Oklahomans. We are thankful to Gov. Stitt for providing CARES Act funding to help replenish funds that the Oklahoma Food Banks have had to use to ensure we could provide nutritious food for the growing number of our neighbors in need of food assistance."

Blayne Arthur, Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture:

"In agriculture, our goal is to produce food for families, and we understand the importance of feeding people. COVID-19 has made access to adequate food a challenge for Oklahomans in all areas of the state, from our largest cities to our smallest rural communities. These funds will help address that problem and provide much needed food for those that have been hardest hit by the effects of the pandemic."

Mark Gower, Director of the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security:

“Our Department works with both of our regional food banks nearly year around, both in disaster and non-disaster times, and we are constantly amazed at the work they do for the people of Oklahoma and the way they step up to support families in need. We have been especially grateful for our food bank partners during this pandemic and I’m so pleased to be able to help administer these funds to support their never-ending work.”

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