



March 4, 2021

Chairman Roemer, Ranking Member West, and Members of the Ohio House Finance Committee Health and Human Services Subcommittee,

My name is Julie Chase-Morefield and I have had the honor of serving as President and CEO of the Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio since 2004. Second Harvest serves individuals and families in Crawford, Erie, Huron, and Lorain Counties with a mission to grow hope in our region by creating pathways to nutritious food.

It is impossible for me to overstate the overwhelming nature of the past year - being on the front lines of responding to the crisis with our dedicated team and our incredible Ohio National Guard soldiers and airmen - working hard every day to exercise creativity, move nimbly, and robustly respond to the need for our help. Far too many families reached out for help for the very first time, with the need for food skyrocketed in our four-county territory to over 154,000 unduplicated people - nearly one-third of the residents of our region.

Throughout my career, I have witnessed many personal tragedies – illness, job loss, cold winters with high utility bills, more expensive rent with the same income, seniors faced with choosing between food or medicine – and have extended healthy food and a friendly smile as a tool for meeting basic needs and serving with empathy. The past year has brought too many new, though similar, stories of our fellow Ohioans struggling to put food on their table. I have heard the story of a father, who lost one of his two jobs, sitting in his car at Ely Stadium in Elyria with his young child to receive food at a drive-thru mobile pantry to ensure he can feed his family. I have personally dropped off food to a mother recovering from COVID, stepping around two tiny bicycles to reach to her doorstep, to ensure she had enough food for her young daughters. I have spent time packing food boxes into the trunks of cars driven by families desperate to keep their homes, keep their jobs or find a new one, keep hunger at bay for their kids another day.

Throughout the pandemic, the Second Harvest team has done everything within our power to ensure our emergency food distributions are accessible, seamless, and safe. Launching an online pre-registration tool to allowed families in need to sign up for upcoming food distributions, hosting hundreds of drive-thru mobile pantries in all types of weather and locations and keeping our inventory moving on our trucks to families as quickly as possible. We continue to work closely with local school districts, municipalities and community partners to deliver food across our entire region, especially for families with children and the immigrant families in our area that have often been left out of federal COVID-19 relief.

This monumental effort would not have been possible without extraordinary support from the State of Ohio for the Ohio Association of Foodbanks. Along with our sister foodbanks throughout the state, we have not seen this crisis let up – it's drained us but we know we must keep at it.

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We're proud of how we do it – working with local farmers and growers to rescue and redirect healthy, perishable foods to the families we serve, procuring Ohio-produced protein and dairy to supplement what our seniors are able to afford on their limited incomes, partnering with schools, libraries, community colleges, faith-based organizations, health care providers, and more to meet people where they're at. But we will absolutely need more help in the months to come. Dramatic increases in food insecurity were the first signs of the economic pain to come a year ago, and from my years of experience, a decrease in food insecurity will be the last to arrive as we work together to recover and bring families back to stability. That's why I'm urging you to support an increase in funding for Ohio's foodbanks and our hunger relief network in the 2022-2023 biennial budget:

- \$45 million per year, to provide \$40 million per year for the operation of the Ohio Food and Agricultural Clearance Programs, \$4 million per year to purchase, transport, store, and distribute essential non-food items, as well as \$1 million per year to support capacity building for local food pantry and anti-hunger organizations.
- \$12 million in one-time, pass-through federal CARES Act funding to support the purchase and distribution of emergency foods, including Ohio-grown fruits and vegetables, Ohio-raised protein, and Ohio-produced dairy, as well as shelf-stable items and essential non-food items such as personal care and personal hygiene products, household paper goods, and household cleaning items throughout 2021.

The Ohio families we serve, and those served by our sister foodbanks across the state, need more help, and the State of Ohio has a chance to invest in their health, well-being, and recovery. On behalf of the Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio, the 150+ hunger relief programs we represent, and the people we serve throughout our four-county region, thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to working with you to ensure no Ohioan suffers from hunger in the next biennium.

Most Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Juliana Chase-Morefield', written in a cursive style.

Juliana Chase-Morefield
President & CEO