



**Indiana Family &
Social Services
Administration**



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FSSA and Feeding Indiana's Hungry sound call for Hoosiers to volunteer at charitable food network locations across Indiana

Volunteers may sign up at OperationFood.IN.gov

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration is joining forces with Feeding Indiana's Hungry to encourage Hoosiers to resume or start new volunteer service at one of Indiana's food banks and other charitable food distribution sites.

Volunteers will be urgently needed as members of the Indiana National Guard will end their temporary, six-month deployment to aid Indiana's food banks on Sept. 30, 2020. Since being deployed in early April, guardsmen served more than 36 million meals to more than four million Hoosiers.

"We are so grateful to the Indiana National Guard members who filled a critical gap and provided the workforce needed to keep Indiana's charitable food distribution network operating during the darkest days of the pandemic," said Emily Weikert Bryant, executive director of Feeding Indiana's Hungry. "As food banks continue touchless, drive-thru distributions with pre-boxed food in response to COVID-19 safety concerns, the work needed to make this happen has been, and will continue to be, much more than ever before. As the Indiana National Guard service ends, we look forward to seeing more of our friends who have volunteered in the past return – and we're excited to welcome new volunteers, as well."

The charitable food distribution network operates 13 regional locations across the state, which provide food for distribution to community-based pantries. Locations continue to face an increased demand for food by Hoosiers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hoosiers can volunteer by filling out a brief form at OperationFood.IN.gov. They will be contacted by their regional food bank to match them with volunteer assignments. Since the early days of the pandemic, food banks have seen dramatic drops in volunteers as Hoosiers stayed home, which was especially true among Hoosiers over age 60, who make up the bulk of food bank volunteers. Some



dedicated volunteers have returned to help on a limited basis, but food banks and pantries are now prepared to again use volunteers regularly to safely distribute food.

“Food banks have adapted their operations to prioritize the safety of volunteers and are experienced in providing food to those in need while following public health guidelines, so we are asking Hoosiers to answer the call to continue this mission to meet this critical need,” said Jennifer Sullivan, M.D., M.P.H., FSSA secretary. “Our team at FSSA worked alongside Feeding Indiana’s Hungry to make Operation Food a one-stop resource to find food at one of Indiana’s nearly 1,750 pantries, donate to help keep our neighbors fed, and now to connect Hoosiers to places where they can serve their communities in-person.”

Information from those who sign up to volunteer at OperationFood.IN.gov will be gathered by Feeding Indiana’s Hungry and shared with the charitable food network around the state. Potential volunteers may also reach out directly to [a food bank in their area here](#).

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