



MEDIA ADVISORY

April 6, 2020

Heroes on the Front Lines to Fight Hunger The North Texas Food Bank Calls on the National Guard to Support Food Distribution Efforts

Members of the Texas National Guard arrived in Plano this weekend with a simple mission: feeding our community's most needy people across the 13 counties that the North Texas Food Bank serves. The humanitarian effort will provide a helping hand to the Food Bank as they work to increase their distribution efforts to meet the growing need in our region. The Guard's highest calling is serving their fellow citizens. These men and woman are volunteer guardsmen who sacrifice spending time away from their families to instead be there for local communities in need.

The City of Plano and the team at the North Texas Food Bank would like to extend sincere gratitude to Governor Greg Abbott for allowing the guard to assist in this important mission. One of the side effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is an increased need at the North Texas Food Bank and their Feeding Network of Partner Agencies. Their support will ensure that the Food Bank can continue to safely meet their mission of closing the hunger gap in North Texas by providing access to nutritious food.

"The Food Bank and their member agencies play a critical role in North Texas," said Plano Mayor Harry LaRosiliere. "The support from the National Guard will allow for them to continue to meet their mission. We know that as the weeks go on, the need for support will only continue to grow."

Effective today, more than 250 members of the Texas National Guard will be mobilized in support of the North Texas Food Bank.

Guard members will be on-site initially for 30 days and will be applied in four areas:

Production line: Approximately 140 will be immediately put to work on the production floors, creating family meal boxes for distribution.

Mobile Pantry distribution: Approximately 30 will be deployed to expand our growing Mobile Pantry Distributions

Warehouse and Supply Chain: Approximately 30 guard members will be trained on our warehouse operations and 12 will be allocated as drivers.

Partner agency support: Approximately 50 will be available to assist our partner agencies who are also in need of support.

"The team at the Food Bank is thankful to all of our public leaders who helped to bring in these additional resources," said Trisha Cunningham, President and CEO of the North Texas Food Bank. "Our goal is to serve as many people as possible, as safely as possible. Support from the National Guard will allow us to have the manpower to make thousands of food boxes each week, making these available to our partners and via our mobile pantry program."

The Food Bank's mobile pantry efforts have seen an increased demand in recent weeks due to the pandemic, normal distributions served an average of 300 households. Distributions recently have surged from 1,000 to almost 2,000 households served.

"Our Texas Guardsmen live, work and train in communities across Texas," said Maj. Gen. Tracy Norris, the Adjutant General of Texas. "These Citizen Soldiers and Airmen are your neighbors and they are deeply invested in keeping our friends and fellow Texans safe."

The support the Texas National Guard is providing will also provide some needed relief for other local nonprofits. The Food Bank will work to transition the Get Shift Done workers that were serving at their warehouse locations to other local nonprofits who are also looking to meet the increased demand.

"This pandemic has brought uncertainty to our region, but it has also brought together a caring community. We will face this together and come out stronger on the other side. To each person that has donated food or funds, has worked in our warehouse or advocated for our mission, I thank you. We truly could not do this without you," said Cunningham.

About North Texas Food Bank

The North Texas Food Bank (NTFB) is a top-ranked nonprofit hunger-relief organization operating a state-of-the-art volunteer and distribution center in Plano- the Perot Family Campus. Last year, the Food Bank worked hard in partnership with member agencies from our Feeding Network to provide to almost 77 million nutritious meals across a diverse 13-county service area - this means more than 200,000 meals per day for hungry children, seniors, and families. But the need for hunger relief in North Texas is complex and in order to meet the need, the NTFB is working to increase our food distribution efforts. Our goal is to provide access to 92 million nutritious meals annually by 2025. NTFB is a member of Feeding America, a national hunger-relief organization.

About Plano

Plano, Texas, is the largest city in Collin County with a population of 283,700 as of January 2019. Incorporated in 1873, the city is located 20 miles north of Dallas. Niche and AreaVibes recently named Plano as one of the Best Cities to Live in America. Forbes designated Plano one of America's safest cities. The City offers a high quality of life that includes nationally recognized schools, award-winning parks, and sustainability initiatives and a wide variety of multi-cultural neighborhoods appealing to families, young singles and retirees. Plano is home to the headquarters or regional operations of major corporations such as Toyota, Liberty Mutual, JPMorgan Chase Boeing Global Services, Fannie Mae, FedEx Office, JC Penney, Rent-A-Center, Cinemark Holdings, Denbury Resources and Alliance Data Systems. Our dynamic community features excellent restaurants, vibrant shopping and entertainment venues, a lively historic downtown district and active local arts

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