



Western Reserve

Area Agency on Aging

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**WESTERN RESERVE AREA AGENCY ON AGING
RECEIVES STATE SUPPORT FOR CIRCLE OF FOOD PROGRAM**

(Cleveland, Ohio, November 25, 2020—) **Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging (WRAAA)** is pleased to announce that Governor Mike DeWine has again allocated funds to provide much-needed assistance to underserved Ohioans during this pandemic. WRAAA will receive \$100,000 out of the \$13,285,000 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds earmarked for the fiscal year 2021.

The extra funds will help maintain WRAAA's Circle of Food, a local, grassroots food preparation and distribution program, which has currently distributed more than 50,000 hot and hearty meals to underserved members of the community. The program results from collaboration among Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging (WRAAA), EDWINS Leadership & Restaurant Institute, and Gordon Food Service (GFS). TownHall restaurant was added as a new partner to the program with the goal of serving an additional 50,000 more meals before the end of 2020.

The Circle of Food provides hot meals and utilizes surplus food items that would otherwise be thrown away. It provides jobs and work opportunities to the restaurant industry when they need it the most. "While COVID-19 surges, the TANF funding comes at the most opportune time as we continue to fight food insecurity," said WRAAA CEO Douglas Beach. "Until we receive the vaccine, the funds will be a shot in the arm to help us continue our successful Circle of Food program and provide other support services within our five-county area."

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Cuyahoga County, led by County Executive Armond Budish, was an early Circle of Food funder. “It is vital to look after the needs of our seniors, who are often the most vulnerable population, especially during a crisis,” said Budish. “The county has always been supportive of programs like the Circle of Food, that provide essential services for our cherished elderly.”

“Receiving this state assistance underlines Gov. DeWine’s commitment to helping Ohioans stay healthy and safe during the pandemic,” said June Taylor, WRAAA Chief of Performance Management and Quality Improvement. “Our governor, along with our county officials, have again stepped up to the plate to provide extra assistance for millions of Ohioans who are struggling to feed themselves and their families every day. We are witnessing a true crisis in food insecurity and are fortunate to live in a state where these problems are being addressed.”

If you would like to donate to support the Circle of Food Program, please visit <https://give.areaagingsolutions.org/circleoffood>.

WRAAA is actively recruiting providers who can register recipients and distribute meals for the Circle of Food program. Non-profit organizations with clients who may benefit from an additional meal, please call **Vera Hibler** at 216-543-7262 or send an email to: vhibler@areaagingsolutions.org. The hot and hearty meals will be dropped off at a requested site where provider team members are registered recipients and will distribute the meals.

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