FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 8, 2020

Statement on USDA Approval for Ohio Disaster Household Distribution Program

Media Statement from Matt Habash, President and Chief Executive Officer, Mid-Ohio Foodbank

Mid-Ohio Foodbank, the major asset of the Mid-Ohio Food Collective, is deeply appreciative of the USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) approval for an Ohio Disaster Household Distribution Program. This approval, through April 30, will allow Mid-Ohio Foodbank staff and members of the Ohio National Guard and Ohio Military Reserve serving those newly in need of assistance to do so in a safer manner.

This approval most importantly waives the household verification and income eligibility requirements normally connected to The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). It will allow us to serve the large number of first-time customers seeking our help during this public health threat without requiring close person-to-person contact to collect items like name, address, household demographics and income verification.

The declaration also increases to the maximum amount allowable under law monthly allocations for SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) recipients. While it does not increase the food supply, including additional food boxes, flowing to food banks it does provide needed additional support to families who rely on SNAP for enough food to make it through the month.

Last month, The Foodbank saw a 28 percent increase in total distribution to our agencies compared to March of 2019. From March 23rd to April 3rd alone, the Foodbank distributed 2,517,195 pounds of food, which is a 14 percent increase compared to the same time period last year. Additionally, on March 28th, we served 645 households, 188 (29 percent) of whom were making their visit to our Kroger Community pantry for the first time.

In particular, we are incredibly grateful to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services for its leadership in seeking this flexibility for Ohio’s hunger relief network. Additionally, we extend our thanks to the following members of Ohio’s congressional delegation, who urged FNS to approve this request and protect hunger relief agencies while we continue to advance our priority to feed our community: Senator Sherrod Brown; Senator Rob Portman; Congresswoman
Marcia Fudge; Congressman Michael Turner; Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur; Congressman Robert Latta; Congressman Anthony Gonzalez; Congressman Tim Ryan; Congressman Steve Stivers; Congresswoman Joyce Beatty; Congressman David Joyce; Congressman Steve Chabot; Congressman Brad Wenstrup; and Congressman Troy Balderson. Ohio’s state and Congressional leadership continues to pave the way for the nation.

**About Mid-Ohio Food Collective**

*Mid-Ohio Food Collective is the umbrella organization that packages all five of our assets, Mid-Ohio Foodbank, our anchor asset, Mid-Ohio Farm, Mid-Ohio Markets, Mid-Ohio Farmacy and Mid-Ohio Kitchen.*