



DOING
THE MOST
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Joins with Operation BBQ Relief & The Salvation Army to provide 720,000 Freshly Prepared, Pre-Packed Meals to Pennsylvanians in Need amid Covid-19 Crisis

Four-week deal is win-win for hungry Pennsylvanians and laid off workers

PHILADELPHIA (April 17, 2020) —In order to feed the growing number of Pennsylvanians who need help due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's emergency Feeding Task Force has tapped The Salvation Army (TSA) Eastern Pennsylvania/Delaware & Western Pennsylvania (PA) divisions to help get food into the hands of tens of thousands across the Keystone State. Operation BBQ Relief, a non-profit disaster relief organization, is once again partnering with The Salvation Army to get the job done. Under the terms of the four-week contract, Operation BBQ Relief is using a network of barbecue restaurants and food distributors across PA to provide 180,000 freshly prepared and pre-packaged meals per week to individuals, seniors and families in need. All meals will be packed in boxes that provide enough food for a family of four for four days. Salvation Army workers will distribute the boxes of much-needed food to those in need across the state.

With many living paycheck to paycheck, experiencing fewer hours on the job or even termination due to COVID-19, vulnerable Pennsylvanians lack the resources to stock up on essentials, including food. In these times of great distress, The Salvation Army is teaming up with community partners to ensure that the state's most vulnerable populations do not go hungry during this health crisis. Pennsylvania restaurants, forced to lay off workers and close their indoor dining rooms due to state-imposed stay-at-home orders directly related to COVID-19, have hired employees to assist with making meals for The Salvation Army to distribute. It's a win-win collaboration and working together is key.

"The economic impact of the COVID-19 public health crisis is creating significant disruptions, severely challenging families across Pennsylvania. In times like this, it is imperative that we mobilize to be a helping hand however and wherever we can," said First Lady Frances Wolf. "I am so deeply grateful to The Salvation Army and Operation BBQ for their work together during this difficult time and their shared willingness to help those who need it most."

"Many hands make light work. Operation BBQ Relief is connecting with closed restaurants, empowering them to open their doors and bring their staff back to work as partners in the newly established program Operation Restaurant Relief. We utilize the restaurant kitchens and staff to prepare meals for their local communities. We believe strongly in empowering good people to do great things," insisted Jarrod "Jay" Collins, Chief Programs Officer, Operation BBQ Relief.



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This isn't the first time The Salvation Army has partnered with Operation BBQ Relief. Since 2011, TSA has worked with Operation BBQ Relief in major disasters all over the world to ensure that those in need of a hot meal received it, no matter if the circumstance was flood, tornado, hurricane, fire or, in this case, a global pandemic. "The unique skill sets of Operation BBQ Relief personnel, staff and volunteers, combined with The Salvation Army's extraordinary distribution capabilities make us a mass feeding dream team," Collins asserted.

Operation BBQ Relief is overseeing the making of freshly balanced dinners that feature a protein/meat, vegetable and starch. The dinners will be frozen to ensure a longer shelf life. Operation BBQ Relief is providing dry-good breakfasts and lunches for The Salvation Army to distribute, as well. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is covering the cost for all food and is also providing refrigeration/freezer trucks to transport the food to six warehouses each week and remain onsite to store the frozen food until it is distributed. The six warehouses that will house the food are spread throughout the state: Philadelphia, Wilkes-Barre, Williamsport, Lebanon, Pittsburgh and Altoona.

Salvation Army workers from Corps Community Centers across the state will pick up the boxes from the nearest warehouse and transport them to their local Corps. Using a "Corps at the Door" approach at all Salvation Army feeding sites, workers will quickly distribute the food boxes to individuals and families who desperately need it in each local community. To mitigate the spread of COVID-19, Salvation Army workers across the state will wear masks, gloves and practice social distancing while distributing the boxes of food outside of Salvation Army facilities to limit person-to-person contact and comply with local and state government recommendations.

"At a time when we are seeing tremendous increases in unemployment and the need for food across the state, this partnership ensures that The Salvation Army can continue to be a beacon of hope and healing as we have for more than 150 years," said Lt. Col. Larry Ashcraft, Divisional Commander, The Salvation Army Eastern Pennsylvania/Delaware Division. "There is no quarantine from hunger. We thank the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Operation BBQ Relief for joining hands with us to get food into the hands and mouths of people who need it most, during these desperate times."

Videos from participating agencies are available at

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1c8ALQwNharYcCx3xM234-4bxNwcfDe3a>

To donate to The Salvation Army of Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware please visit pendelsalvationarmy.org.

About The Salvation Army:

The Salvation Army of Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware is a faith-based, comprehensive human service organization whose programs help individuals, families and whole communities lead healthier, safer and more productive lives. Since 1879, The Army has held a record of accomplishment stemming from its holistic approach to providing for the needs of the whole individual – physically, emotionally, economically and spiritually. The Army's programming serves every zip code through 48 community centers and a network of volunteers throughout Eastern Pennsylvania, Philadelphia and Delaware.



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Programs and services historically include: shelter, hot meals, counseling, early childhood development, recreational opportunities, music programs, after-school arts and educational programs, job training, activities for older adults, spiritual development, and drug rehabilitation.

For more information, please visit www.SalvationArmyPA.org

About Operation BBQ Relief

Operation BBQ Relief is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that was founded in May 2011 in response to a need for tornado relief efforts in Joplin, MO. Competitive pitmasters from eight different states answered the call to feed displaced families and first responders. Together, they were able to serve over 120,000 meals in a thirteen-day period. This experience of building a network to feed individuals in need has been the inspiration for Operation BBQ Relief. To date, Operation BBQ Relief has provided over 3 million meals throughout the United States and internationally following natural disasters and through The Always Serving Project, benefiting the homeless, first responders, veterans, and service men and women.

For more information, visit www.obr.org or follow on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram @opbbqrelief

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QUICK FACTS:

Operation BBQ Relief will provide:

- 120,000 meals a week for the next 4 weeks to EPA
- 60,000 meals a week for the next 4 weeks to WPA
- 720K meals a month across the state of Pennsylvania

Did you know?

- Each dinner tray will include a frozen, freshly prepared protein/meat (ex. chicken, pork, beef), vegetable (ex. corn, green beans, mixed veggies), starch (ex. rice, beans, pasta, bread)
- Each lunch tray will be pre-packaged and frozen.
- Breakfast will include items such as; muffins, instant oatmeal, fruit cups, cereal, and dry milk. Cases of breakfast products will arrive in pallets at TSA warehouse sites and TSA workers will pack the breakfast trays that will each feed a family of four.
- The State of Pennsylvania, through the Department of Human Services (DHQ) is covering the cost for all food, 12 refrigerator/freezer trucks, gas for the trucks and fuel for the generators to keep the trucks cold.
- Since 2015, when TSA and Operation BBQ Relief better aligned their strengths, the organizations have served over a million hot meals together during disasters, deployed 66 times in 26 states including; Hurricanes Florence and Michael in Panama City and Tallahassee, FL in 2018, Omaha, NE flooding in 2019 and a tornado in Nashville, TN just a month ago.



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KEY PARTNERS:

- Lt. Col. Larry Ashcraft, Divisional Leader, The Salvation Army Eastern Pennsylvania/Delaware Division
- Major Raphael Jackson, Divisional Leader, The Salvation Army Western Pennsylvania Division
- Governor Tom & Frances Wolf, PA Governor & First Lady
- Jarriid “Jay” Collins, Chief Programs Officer, Operation BBQ Relief

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