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**Now More Than Ever, the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas Needs Support From
Northeast Arkansans in the Fight Against Hunger**

*Feeding America Network Food Banks across the Country Unite
for Hunger Action Month Amid COVID-19 Pandemic*

Jonesboro, September 1, 2020: – Hunger impacts people in every corner of the country, including 71,800 of our neighbors in Northeast Arkansas. And given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas has seen the lines at food distributions grow this year.

That’s why the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas joins Feeding America® food banks nationwide this September to take part in Hunger Action Month and inspire people to take action and bring attention to the reality of food insecurity in America. This year’s campaign comes at a critical time when the COVID-19 pandemic has hurt millions of people living paycheck to paycheck. Due to staggering unemployment rates, Feeding America estimates an additional 17 million people could be food insecure in 2020 as a result of this crisis, bringing the total up to 54 million people.

“Hunger was an issue in Northeast Arkansas long before the pandemic started. Our state consistently ranks in the top 5 states with the highest rates of food insecurity in the nation. Unemployment and school closures earlier in the year due to COVID-19 further hurt families who were already struggling to make ends meet,” said Christie Jordan, CEO for the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas. “But this year we have also met many families who had to seek food assistance for the first time ever.”

According to Jordan, this year’s Hunger Action Month theme is “Every Action Counts.”

“We ask that anyone who is concerned about hunger and food insecurity in Northeast Arkansas to commit to participate in one activity in September to take action against hunger,” said Jordan. “Every action counts, no matter how large or small.”

The Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas has a list of Hunger Action Month ideas and activities that will be posted on their website and on social media throughout September. Some ideas include:

- Wear orange on September 10 in honor of Hunger Action Day;
- Visit FoodBankofNEA.org and sign up to receive the Food Bank’s newsletter; and
- Create a Facebook Fundraiser and invite your friends to join in the fight against hunger.

“We need your help now more than ever,” said Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, CEO of Feeding America. “Hunger in this country existed long before COVID-19, but the pandemic has thrust

more and more of our neighbors into food insecurity, and food banks are responding to a sustained, increased demand. With support of the community, together we can end hunger one helping at a time.”

September marks the thirteenth year the Feeding America network has organized this annual call to action. To learn more about the Food Bank and other ways you can get involved for Hunger Action Month in Northeast Arkansas, please visit www.foodbankofnea.org or HungerActionMonth.org. You can also join the conversation by posting photos or stories to social media with #HungerActionMonth, @foodbankofnea, and @FeedingAmerica.

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The Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas provides hunger relief to people in need by raising awareness, securing resources, and distributing food through a network of non-profit agencies and programs. The Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas provides the equivalent of 119,000 meals each week to people facing hunger. The Food Bank works in partnership with 140 non-profit partner agencies and programs in 12 counties in Northeast Arkansas. These counties include: Clay, Craighead, Crittenden, Cross, Greene, Jackson, Lawrence, Mississippi, Poinsett, Randolph, St. Francis, and Woodruff. Additionally, the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas is a member of Feeding America, a national network of food banks. Through our many partnerships, every \$1 donated can help provide 4 meals. For additional information, please visit our website www.foodbankofnea.org. You can also find the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas on Facebook @FoodBankofNEA, Twitter @foodbankofnea, and Instagram @foodbankofnea.