

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Gleaners Food Bank Struggles With Impact of New Tax Legislation on Charitable Giving – Asks Hoosiers to Act**

- New tax laws set higher limit for itemization leading to reduced tax incentives for charitable giving.
- Giving is down \$530,000 from 2017.
- Food banks and social services organizations are expected to feel the pinch of the tax changes more acutely than other non-profits, according to the Wall Street Journal.\*
- Indiana’s largest hunger relief organization supports 562 pantries, schools and community organizations feeding the hungry.

Officials at Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana, the state’s largest hunger relief organization, are expressing concern about end of year giving. The organization has been mindful of the potential impact of the new tax laws raising the limits for itemizing taxes and the potential to act as a disincentive to charitable giving.

“Until we entered this end-of-year period, we had no way to gauge the true impact of the legislation on giving,” said John Elliott, President/CEO of Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana. As of this morning, Gleaners is approximately \$500,000 below 2017 fundraising totals.

“End of year fundraising is critical for non-profits like Gleaners,” said Elliott. “Approximately 30% of our fundraising for the year occurs during October, November and December.”

Elliott noted that making up a \$500,000 shortfall would be a daunting task. Program funding, already lean, could be impacted, leaving the 311,600 Hoosiers who rely on Gleaners for assistance without vital nutrition, including fresh fruits and vegetables, meat and dairy items.

“People are hungry right now. End of year giving is the foundation we use to feed children, seniors and working families throughout the year. My appeal to those in a position to do so is to give now and give as generously as possible.”

In the spirit of encouraging fellow Hoosiers to pitch in, Sid Eskenazi and Dorsand Management Co., Inc. will give \$20,000 to match gifts from new donors this year.

In addition to supporting school children through BackSacks: Weekend Food for Kids, School-Based Pantries and Family Boxes for Holiday, Spring, Summer and Fall breaks, Gleaners provides food and support to 264 local agencies in 21 Indiana counties.

While the economy has improved and unemployment is low, working families are still struggling. A recent study by United Way found that more than 30% of working families in Indiana cannot afford the basics of food, shelter, healthcare, child care, etc. Nearly 2/3 of the families served by Gleaners has at least one member of the household who is employed. Despite working hard, they need help to cover the day-to-day necessities, including food.

In 2018, Gleaners has:

- Provided BackSacks to more than 7,500 children each weekend of the school year
- Distributed more than 33 million pounds of food; the equivalent of 28 million meals
- Operated 248 mobile pantries in 13 counties
- Served more than 60,000 children and their families through school-based pantries
- Provided more than 1.1 million meals to 35,000 senior citizens through senior mobile pantries and senior shopping days
- Operated two food pantries: Cynthia H. Hubert Community Cupboard at the Gleaners warehouse, and the Hamilton County Cupboard at the Ivy Tech campus in Noblesville.
- Assisted nearly 1,500 people with SNAP applications
- Served 270,000 people, including:
  - 168,021 children
  - 52,936 senior citizens
  - 8,989 veterans

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\*Rubin, Richard. "Charities Brace for Tax-Driven Dip in Year-End Giving." *Wall Street Journal* 27 Nov. 2018

### **About Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana, Inc.**

On a yearly basis, hundreds of thousands of hungry Hoosiers depend on food and other critical grocery products provided by Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana. Gleaners supplies items to hunger relief agencies and schools throughout 21 counties in central and southeastern Indiana.

Gleaners was founded in 1980 and is a member of Feeding America the nation's food bank network. Both the Better Business Bureau and Charity Navigator have recognized Gleaners for fiscal management and accountability. Since its inception, Gleaners has distributed over 450 million pounds of food and critical grocery products through over 550 hunger relief agencies, schools and community partners serving needy Hoosiers. In addition to food distribution to agencies, we serve our most vulnerable populations, seniors and children, through specialty programs such as the *BackSacks: Weekend Food for Kids*, *School-Based Pantry*, *Mobile Pantry*, *Summer Meals for Kids*, and *Senior Hunger Initiative* Programs. To learn more, visit [www.gleaners.org](http://www.gleaners.org).