



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Oklahoma Food Banks in Support of Congress Expanding Universal Charitable Deduction**

**(Tulsa, Okla) – July 27, 2020** - The Oklahoma Food Banks support a proposed bipartisan effort to expand the Universal Charitable Deduction made available by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The bill would ensure that Americans who make financial gifts to nonprofits can deduct donations from their federal taxes at a higher level than the current deduction.

Sen. James Lankford leads a bipartisan group pushing for passage of the bill, which would make available an above-the-line deduction for charitable giving on federal income taxes valued at up to one-third of the standard deduction which is estimated at \$4,000 for individuals and \$8,000 for joint filers.

"Nonprofits are the safety net that helps millions of people both in Oklahoma and across the nation access food, shelter, clothes, employment assistance, and mental and physical health services without forcing them to wait on the government," said Lankford. "Nonprofits raise up Americans in our times of greatest need, and now it is time for Americans to support nonprofits in their hour of need. Including provisions to support nonprofits in any future coronavirus aid and economic relief package is one of my highest priorities, and I look forward to continuing our bipartisan effort to lend our voices to support our nonprofit community and the people they serve."

Lankford says that the proposal will incentivize additional giving during a time of crisis.

"We are very grateful for Sen. Lankford's support. During these challenging times, we rely heavily on our donors' support to ensure we are providing food assistance to a growing number of Oklahomans," said Deb Bunting, interim CEO of the Regional Food Bank.

The Oklahoma Food Banks, which consist of the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma and the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, were two of the more than 400 Oklahoma nonprofits to sign a letter in support of the Universal Charitable Deduction's expansion.

“The current COVID-19 pandemic illustrates why incentives for charitable giving is so crucial to the strength of our country,” said Lori Long, CEO of the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma. “The charitable sector is working as hard as possible to provide the essentials so many of our neighbors now struggle to attain. We applaud Senator Lankford’s efforts to bolster support of non-profits so they can fully engage in our public/private partnership.”

Joining Lankford in the bipartisan effort are Sens. Chris Coons (D-DE), Mike Lee (R-UT), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Tim Scott (R-SC), and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN).

The Oklahoma Food Banks urge residents to contact their legislators in support of expanding the Universal Charitable Deduction. Visit [okfoodbank.org/get-involved/advocacy](https://okfoodbank.org/get-involved/advocacy) to find your legislator.

#### **About the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma**

Founded in 1981, the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma is one of the largest, private hunger-relief organizations in Oklahoma. With branches in Tulsa and McAlester, it distributes food to people in need through a network of 730 Partner Agencies and direct service programs in 24 counties of eastern Oklahoma. Feeding programs include emergency food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, disaster relief, child and senior feeding programs, and veteran’s initiatives. In addition, the Food Bank helps raise public awareness about hunger and the role of food banking in alleviating hunger. For more information, visit [okfoodbank.org](https://okfoodbank.org); find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/okfoodbank](https://www.facebook.com/okfoodbank) or follow us on Instagram [@okfoodbank.org](https://www.instagram.com/okfoodbank.org).

#### **About the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma**

The Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma is leading the fight against hunger in 53 counties in central and western Oklahoma and envisions a state where everyone, regardless of circumstance, has access to nutritious food. Founded in 1980, the Regional Food Bank is the state's largest hunger-relief 501(c)(3) nonprofit that distributes food through a network of community-based partner agencies and schools. The majority of people served by the Regional Food Bank are chronically hungry children, seniors living on fixed incomes and hardworking families struggling to make ends meet. The Regional Food Bank is a member of Feeding America, the nation’s network of food banks. To join the fight to end hunger, visit [rfbo.org](https://rfbo.org).

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