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**STATEMENT FROM CARLOS M. RODRIGUEZ, PRESIDENT & CEO OF THE COMMUNITY FOODBANK OF NEW JERSEY, ON
THE EXPIRATION OF CARES ACT UNEMPLOYMENT PROVISIONS**

State's largest anti-hunger, anti-poverty organization anticipates increased food insecurity rates if enhanced federal unemployment benefits are not extended

HILLSIDE, NJ—July 31, 2020

More than 750,000 of our New Jersey neighbors are now faced with the loss of the enhanced federal unemployment benefit that has been providing unemployed workers with an additional \$600 per week to help them make ends meet through this unprecedented health and economic crisis. While the pandemic continues, this critical relief has expired – leaving approximately one in six New Jerseyans who would otherwise be working without this lifeline. We at the Community FoodBank of New Jersey (CFBNJ) call on Congress to ensure that the next stimulus bill extends the \$600 weekly federal unemployment benefit to keep unemployed workers and their families from unjustly struggling with hunger. In addition, we ask our Senators to support an increase of SNAP benefits in Congress's next coronavirus relief package.

Unemployment is the single largest predictor of food insecurity, and if our Congressional representatives fail to act, they will be putting our neighbors at risk of hunger. In fact, according to Feeding America, New Jersey is already projected to see a 56% increase in food insecurity directly related to COVID-19. This is significantly higher than projections for the US as a whole and for any of our neighboring states.

While the response from New Jerseyans has been tremendous as CFBNJ has worked around the clock to help our struggling neighbors, charity alone will not be able to fill the need caused by the pandemic. Our elected representatives must step in with the effective and proven solutions that we know will reduce and prevent hunger. These solutions not only include extending the enhanced federal unemployment insurance benefit but also leveraging the power of SNAP to reduce hunger and stimulate the economy.

SNAP is our nation's frontline defense against hunger, effectively and efficiently rising to meet the need during economic shocks and financial crises. We saw, during the last recession, that a temporary increase to SNAP benefits actually reduced food insecurity, despite occurring during what had been the greatest economic downturn of recent history. For every dollar spent on the SNAP program, \$1.70 was generated in the economy. SNAP is vital to CFBNJ's work. Last year, we provided enough food for over 66 million nutritious meals across our 15-county service area. Yet, for every meal provided by the Feeding America network, of which CFBNJ is a member, SNAP provides nine. SNAP is an efficient and cost-effective way to mitigate hunger, and New Jersey families need it now more than ever.

All sectors of society must work together to ensure that families nationwide – many of whom are facing hunger for the first time due to this pandemic – are not forced to choose between putting food on table or paying for other essentials. CFBNJ stands ready to work with our government partners to ensure a final stimulus bill includes the extension of enhanced federal unemployment, a boost to SNAP benefits, and other measures that will help those facing hunger in our state and around the country.

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The [Community FoodBank of New Jersey \(CFBNJ\)](#), a member of Feeding America®, has been delivering food, help and hope across the state for 45 years. Last year, CFBNJ provided nutritious food for over 66 million meals through its network of more than 1,000 community partners including pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, mobile pantries, and child and senior feeding programs. For our hungry neighbors, the Community FoodBank of New Jersey is the powerful agent of change that fills the emptiness caused by hunger and provides resources that are essential to earning a sustainable living.