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## **Critical food bank operations in Coachella Valley to be supported by California National Guard**

Much needed regional food bank operations in the Coachella Valley will be supported by 25 men and women from the California National Guard starting Monday.

The county and FIND Food Bank partnered with the state to locate support for essential services at FIND, the regional food bank that serves the Coachella Valley Desert. FIND is experiencing a loss of over 70 percent of their volunteer workforce at a time when their services are needed the most.

“We welcome the National Guard’s assistance with the distribution of food and pitching in for FIND Food Bank, whose senior citizen volunteers are no longer able to come pack food boxes,” said Riverside County Board Chair and Fourth District Supervisor V. Manuel Perez. “I want to thank the National Guardswomen and men who do what they have always done, answer the call and report for duty to assist our communities in times of need.”

The California National Guard will serve as FIND’s volunteers to work alongside FIND employees to pack food bags, load food into trucks and deliver bags of food at mobile food markets. California National Guard will not perform any law enforcement activities.

“We are incredibly thankful for the partnership and support of Supervisor Perez, and the entire county team, to help us secure National Guard support,” said Debbie Espinosa, President & CEO of FIND Food Bank. “The National Guard will be instrumental to make sure we have enough people to process the millions of pounds of food that usually feed 90,000 people each month. We expect to feed even more now with the economic impact hitting our community so severely. Our goal is to ensure that everyone knows where their next meal is coming from and no one gets left behind.”

FIND Food Bank supports more than 120 feeding sites throughout the desert region, including 22 free mobile markets, homeless shelters, community feeding sites and food pantries.

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