

TSA spreads the love to PDX employees during COVID-19 pandemic

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Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers at the Portland International Airport (PDX) are lending a helping hand to airport employees through a voluntary program they call “TSA Gives Back.”

On Friday, April 10, TSA employees at PDX contributed money to purchase meals for airport employees who are keeping the airport operational, as it remains a critical resource for air cargo operations and flights that help people connect with family members who are struggling or transport medical workers to where they are needed right now.

For TSA workers in Oregon, the decision to give back was an easy one. They remember the many ways PDX rallied in support of TSA employees who worked without paychecks during the government shutdown in early 2019, which lasted 35 days. Airport employees and the broader PDX community donated gift cards and diapers, and filled a pantry full of food.

“It seems so insignificant, but it really meant that somebody really understood what we were going through right then. And that meant the world,” said TSA employee Maggie Teerath.

About 300 meals from Jersey Mike’s were provided to PDX airport employees, but they quickly ran out by noon. Not to be deterred, a team of TSA employees jumped into their cars for a Taco Bell run and came back with plenty more food for the remaining set of grateful airport employees.



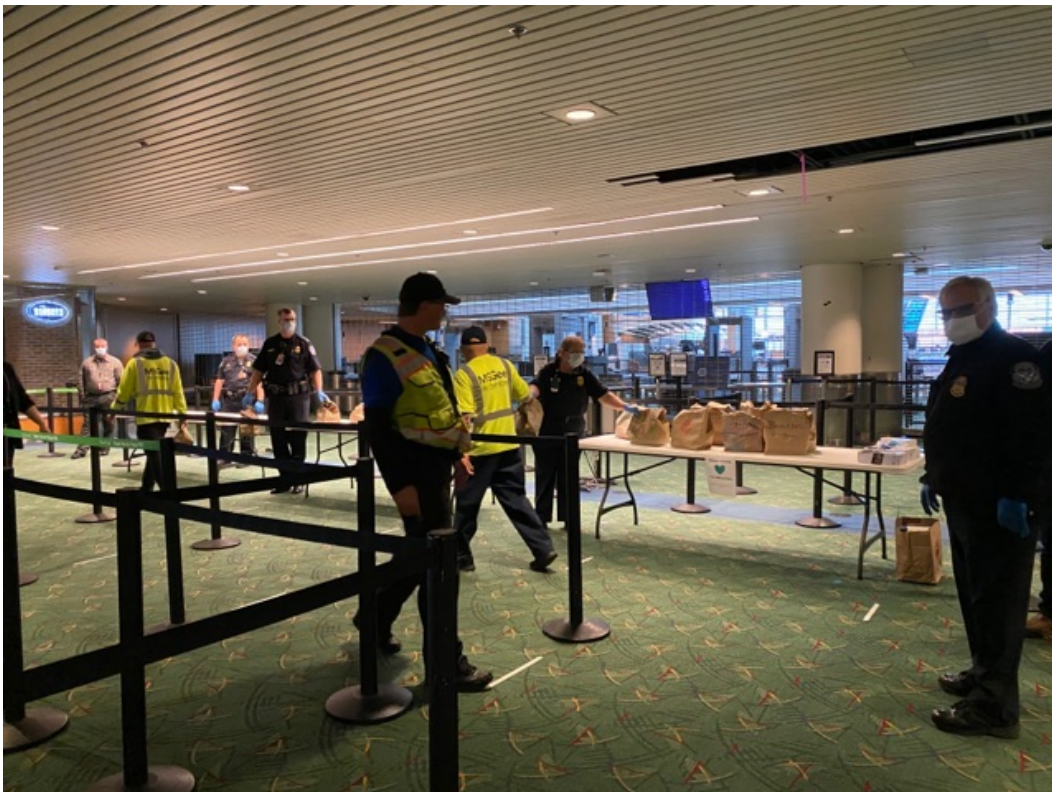
“I feel so blessed to be a part of this PDX family! Time and time again, we prove that we are here through the good times and the bad,” said TSA Program Specialist Francesca Becker. “So many have been affected by this pandemic, and we all at TSA decided to rally and help out in whatever ways we could. We love PDX and are thankful for everyone in the airport community!”

PDX isn't the only airport feeling the love from our TSA partners. As part of “TSA Gives Back,” airports across the country are **receiving lunches** and **other support** from their TSA families. It comes as a critical time, as airport employees struggle with reduced work hours after air travel dropped dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/eV9NeK7nlag>

“These are tough times for our airport community, but moments like this remind us how much love and support there is out there right now. We’re so grateful for our TSA partners and for all the incredible people at PDX,” said Dan Pippenger, chief operating officer at the Port of Portland.



The love continued, as TSA and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) employees provided another complimentary meal for any PDX employees working on Tuesday, April 21. More than 300 employees stopped by to enjoy a catered lunch from Beaches, which included creamy pasta with veggies, garlic bread, cucumber salad and their delicious popcorn.

TSA, Customs employees donate lunch, supplies to help PDX employees.

<https://t.co/dAh8k7qfjO> pic.twitter.com/dr39SI4G4m

— Fox12Oregon (@fox12oregon) [April 22, 2020](#)

After organizing these free meals, TSA and CBP team members raised the bar once again – this time organizing a pantry event for airport employees in need of food and supplies during the coronavirus pandemic.



Thanks to generous donations from airport colleagues, the pantry was fully stocked with more than 1,000 cans and jars filled with pasta sauce, vegetables, fruit, peanut butter, jam, chili and tuna; 200 bags and boxes of dried pasta, mac 'n' cheese and ramen; hundreds of miscellaneous shelf stable items like rice, beans, oatmeal, cereal, granola bars, dried fruit and nuts; as well as diapers, baby items and personal hygiene products. The most popular pantry items? People were especially glad to see more than 200 rolls of toilet paper and a wide array of cleaning products.



“Each employee that came through the line commented on the thoughtfulness of the donations, as most of these items are so hard to find in stores,” said event organizer Kathleen McDonald of TSA. “I echo airport employees’ emphatic thank you to everyone who contributed to the pantry event. Together we made lives a little easier for our PDX People today.”

