

Guidance for Food Pantry Distribution during COVID-19 Outbreak

Food Pantries are essential to supporting vulnerable residents in the community during this crisis. Please follow these guidelines to reduce the risk of spreading the virus:

Assuring a Healthy Volunteer Group:

- Keep staff/volunteer numbers smaller than usual (or stagger shifts to accomplish) to assure social distancing guidelines (at least 6 feet between individuals) while packing/distributing food.
- Limit staff/volunteers to ages 18-60 years, and do not let individuals who have chronic medical conditions, are immunocompromised or pregnant participate to best protect these vulnerable populations.
- Be sure staff/volunteers know to stay home if they are sick or displaying any symptoms of illness.
- If possible, have a medical volunteer screen staff/volunteers for symptoms (i.e., cough, shortness of breath) and fever (over 100.4 degrees F) at the start of each shift.
- All staff/volunteers must wash their hands upon entering the Food Prep/Assembly Area with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and during their shift (especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing). If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Wash hands at the end of the shift before leaving.

Reducing the Spread of COVID-19 During Food Assembly:

- Choose an area to assemble food boxes/bags that allows ample space between volunteers.
- Encourage cleaning and disinfection of counters, cart handles (if using grocery carts), doorknobs, light switches before starting and at end of assembly and distribution with bleach-based solutions.
- Set up the assembly process to reduce the number of multiple touches by volunteers as much as possible (e.g., set up food in sections; each volunteer moves through each food section filling a box or bag with items, then sets that bag aside).
- Medical masks/gloves are NOT recommended for healthy workers. They can give a false sense of security, still become contaminated and use up precious medical supplies. Social distancing and hand washing are best. If workers would like to protect others if they themselves may be sick but asymptomatic, then a “face covering” (not N95 or surgical mask, not gloves) is allowable but do not use medical supplies.
- Coolers and insulated bags should be cleaned and sanitized at least daily if used.

Reducing Exposure to COVID-19 During Food Distribution:

- Omit food demos or cooking classes and refrain from offering food samples.
- Create an alternate delivery system such as a drive through distribution where a client pulls up in their car to a table, a volunteer places a prepackaged bag on the table and the client gets the bag and puts it in their own car.
- Spread out outdoor operations as well so staff/volunteers/clients maintain safe distances.
- Tell sick/feeble clients to stay home and ask a friend or neighbor to pick up their groceries.
- Adjust your client intake process: allow volunteers to fill out any paperwork on behalf of the clients. If clients must complete paperwork, have them do so in their car; do not provide clipboards or pens unless you can let clients keep these items.

Per the Governor's Executive Order on 4/2/2020, please see the attached link for a list of FAQs and 16 measures to mitigate the COVID-19 transmission:

<https://gov.georgia.gov/press-releases/2020-04-02/governor-kemp-issues-shelter-place-order>

Mindset for Staff/Volunteers: Wash Hands • Limit Touches • Social Distance of 6 feet or more