



Service Responses During COVID-19

03/12/2020

The Greater Chicago Food Depository continues to monitor the developments related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). We have been tracking and following recommendations and practices emerging from trusted leaders, including the Chicago Department of Public Health, Cook County Department of Public Health, Illinois Department of Public Health and Feeding America our national food bank partner.

This communication is to offer you support and options to consider as you plan to best serve your clients.

Please note: Evolving guidance provided by Chicago Department of Public Health and Illinois Department of Public Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and your local public health departments will take precedence over the information provided here. We recommend monitoring these authoritative sources regularly.

As partners we know you are committed to serving our neighbors in need, who are even more vulnerable now during this time of uncertainty. We know you are carefully considering how to best serve the community while protecting the health and safety of everyone involved in food distributions. To that end, we offer the following adjustments for your consideration.

Food Pantry Distributions

- During this time, pre-packed bags or boxes of food can be used to support quick service and minimize the amount of human contact between people and items. We recognize this is a temporary break from the preferred model of client choice.
- At intake, volunteers and/or staff can verbally ask for pantry guests name and household size and capture this information for the guest visit, without requiring any further information or signature from the guest. We ask staff/volunteer to ensure this is entered into your electronic intake system and at the point of data entry the staff/volunteer entering the data can initial/verify the interaction.
- All programs who have capacity to provide home delivery services can do so during this time. We ask to please ensure above documentation occurs and you track you home delivery activities.

Hot Meal Programs/Soup Kitchens

- Programs that prepare and serve hot meals may choose to prepare to-go meals. Meals do not need to be served in a congregate setting at this time.

Benefits Outreach

- Clients who need assistance with SNAP or Medicaid benefits can avoid a trip to their local Department of Human Services (DHS) office by calling the Food Depository's benefits hotline at 773-843-5416 or by visiting the DHS website at <http://abe.illinois.gov/>

Protect Your Health

For our network of community partners, we continue to encourage all volunteers and staff to protect their health and the health of people we serve together with some necessary steps:

Know Your Symptoms: Coronavirus, Flu, and strains of cold can all show symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath, or in some cases, difficulty breathing. Again, these are signs to watch for and to treat with rest, or with a visit to a clinic or healthcare provider if they do not improve or if they get worse.

Reminders and Important Tips:

- **Wash your hands** frequently, especially after handling items touched by others and before eating.
- **Cover your cough.** Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue; be sure to dispose of used tissues properly.
- **Get plenty of rest, exercise, drink plenty of water, and eat healthful foods.** These activities will help support a robust immune system.
- **If you're not feeling well, stay home.** Consult a health care provider if you have a temperature, a cough, or trouble breathing.
- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick;** handwashing before and after meetings and social occasions are also helpful.
- **Reduce human touches like handshaking and hugs.** Elbow bumps, fist bumps, smiles, and waves are friendly ways to greet and reduce the spread of germs.
- **Perform routine cleaning of your space.** Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.

Our region's public health departments continue to provide up to date information and resources, including printable flyers and posters. Please visit these information source regularly for up to date information and guidance.

Chicago Department of Public Health:

https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/cdph/provdrs/health_protection_and_response/svcs/2019-novel-coronavirus--2019-ncov-.html

Illinois Department of Public Health: <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/>

Cook County Department of Public Health:

<https://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/novel-coronavirus/>

If you have questions, please contact us at communityrelations@gcfd.org.

Thank you all for your work and commitment to the people we serve!