



## COVID-19

# BEST PRACTICES FOR OUTREACH MINISTRIES

As parishes consider whether to resume feeding ministries that can help address the surge in food insecurity, Bishop Provenzano has asked that we outline the essential guidelines and health regulations that must be followed.

We ask you to please review the protocols below and call upon EMLI for support and guidance in moving forward safely and responsibly. We are here to help...

### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider new ways of providing the resources and care that those you serve have come to rely upon. Please note some of the new models that have been spurred by the need for social distancing and avoiding the spread of germs:

- Drive-Thru Pantry Bag Pick-ups placed in car trunk
- Seniors-Only Distribution Hours/Days
- Pre-packaged/Meals-To-Go
- Home Deliveries

Be mindful that these changes may continue for the foreseeable future and make long-term plans for sustainability of this effort in order to maintain consistency with your community.

We suggest you limit the number of volunteers and create smaller “working teams” that can be better supervised and supported throughout this period of uncertainty. Find other ways for non-qualified or vulnerable people to contribute - monetary donations, remote administrative support, purchasing supplies, writing letters, etc.

### MANAGING AND CARING FOR VOLUNTEERS

- Volunteers should be carefully selected and pre-screened.
- In general, people with the following criteria should not be allowed to volunteer at this time: ***Anyone who has traveled or been with someone who has traveled in the past 21 days, anyone who has been in contact with a healthcare worker, anyone who has been ill or who has been with someone who is ill, anyone who has an autoimmune condition, anyone who is living with persons who are vulnerable.***
- Volunteers should be widely spaced apart. The CDC recommends a distance of at least 6 feet apart.

- Consider creating staggered work schedules so that the fewest number of people can be in the space at any given time in order to maintain distance safety requirements.
- Volunteers should wear masks and gloves while working - particularly when handling food.
- Handwashing instructions should be explicitly communicated and reinforced with posted flyers.

## **FOOD DISTRIBUTION**

If possible, food distribution should occur outside or in as large and unconfined a space as possible.

All surfaces that clients and volunteers come into contact with should be regularly washed and disinfected. See specific guidelines below:

### ***Food Pantries***

- Pantries should pause “client-choice” operational models and move to pre- packed/ pre-selected kits or use a remote choice system (choices can be made online or by phone to limit contact between people and with food.)
- Think creatively about getting food distributed safely: can you create a makeshift drive-thru? Home delivery? Pick-up appointment times?
- Shift to pre-made grocery bags which can be picked up from a table outside or which can be easily placed in a car trunk to avoid touching.

### ***Meal Programs***

- Shift to pre-made “To-Go” meals, which can be given out to clients; picked up from a table outside or easily placed in a bag/box to avoid touching.
- Feel free to include other supportive items including hand-written notes of encouragement or materials that you believe may be helpful or wanted by your population.

## **CLEANING AND DISINFECTING**

Strict adherence to cleaning and disinfecting protocols is critical to safe operations. Be sure to carefully review, distribute and post protocols. Two good resources:

[DOH “Stop the Spread” Guidelines for Cleaning & Disinfecting for Food Facilities](#)

[NYC Health Department Guidelines for Cleaning & Disinfecting for Non-Health Care Settings](#)