

Best Practices for Safe Distribution of Food

These may be novel ideas and potential approaches. You know your facility, volunteers and clients best and should decide what will work best.

Host “drive-through” pantries - where residents drive a vehicle through a distribution line or park in a lot and wait for service in their cars.

- Registration can take place through a car window without exchange of paper or pens (see details below)
- Food can be placed in trunks or back seats by volunteers

Schedule appointments or use a time slot assigned by first letter of the last name to limit the number of people congregating at a pantry site at one time.

- If you have cellphone or email information for clients, www.calendly.com is a free online scheduling tool that could be adapted for this use.
- An example of time slots by name (notice the time allowed in between) =
 - If your last Name begins with A-F, come between 12-1 pm
 - If your last Name begins with G-M, come between 1:30 – 2:30 pm
 - If your last Name begins with N-S, come between 3-4 pm
 - If your last Name begins with T-Z, come between 4:30 – 5:30 pm

Increase the time allotted for each section based on the total number of families you expect to serve.

When serving people in person consider adopting the following precautions:

- Ask people in line to leave plenty of room between themselves and the person in front of them.
- Prop open doors and remove objects that would be repeatedly touched by many attendees. If something must be re-used or touched by many people (i.e. carts) consider disinfecting between uses and/or offering hand sanitizer to individuals before use.
- Increase space between clients and volunteers/staff who are registering/signing people in. Eliminate requirement for signatures and client completion of forms. (see details below)
- If using a client-choice/self-service model, arrange multiple lines or rows of food with space between so that clients only need to touch the food item they are taking for themselves.

- Ensure volunteers/staff are symptom free and follow safe handwashing practices or have access to hand sanitizer when sinks are not accessible.
- Recruit new/additional young and healthy volunteer force. Encourage elderly volunteers with existing health conditions, volunteers who are caregivers to at-risk individuals (elderly, ill, immune-compromised) should be encouraged stay home as well.

Paperwork reminder:

Clients who previously have received food distribution since July 1, 2019 do not need to complete a self-declaration of need form. Forms can be completed on behalf of new clients via verbal interview with volunteer/staff, using the following steps:

1. Ask the questions necessary to complete the form (name, address, household composition and income). Ask to see, but do not touch any necessary documentation (i.e. proof of address).
2. Read the following authorization to the client: "Do you agree to give me (insert your name) permission to sign your Self-Declaration form. Please indicate yes or no."
3. If the client authorizes the staff/volunteer to sign, the staff/volunteer should read the attestation/certification language provided on the form to the client and ensure that the client is aware that if they allow the staff member to sign on their behalf, they (the client) are attesting or certifying to the truth of the information provided.
4. The staff member will sign their own name on the signature line of the application, and then write: "Signature Authorized by (client name) (via phone or in-person) on (date/time)."