

Please take a moment to read this information

Dear Agencies,

I spoke to the County Health Department to get recommendations about our various pantries and meal sites and how we can mitigate against the spread of COVID-19. One of the main takeaways from that conversation was the reminder that CHOW pantries and community meals are considered Essential Services, so therefore ought to remain open. Like a hospital that must stay open to get medical care to those in need, we are administering “nutritional care”, if you will, to those in need. In other words, the community needs us now more than ever!

So our hope and expectation is that your pantry and meal site remain “open for business” and follow these basic guidelines from the Health Department to help mitigate the spread of the disease.

- **Hand washing and sanitizing** – use good hygiene when it comes to handling food and people
 - Hand washing and sanitizing area – observe that it’s been done
 - Don’t touch your face after touching food or surfaces and vice versa – again, use good food handling practices
 - Clean surfaces regularly
- **Social Distancing** – this is the toughest because our services are all about meeting people where they are at. Here are a few recommendations:
 - 3 feet between people at meals – the distance for spreading the virus is around 3 feet; so consider spacing seating between folks, next to and across.
 - “Take Out” meals – consider preparing meals to go for folks you may suspect are ill or who don’t want to stay.
 - Limit the number of people in your pantry – consider preparing bags for pick up or filling orders for people while they wait outside

In addition to these recommendations, we are also asking that you:

- **Know your clientele** – in the event that people who regularly access your pantry and/or meal cannot get to you
 - Create a list of those who are most likely to have limited access
 - Check in on them via phone and find out what they need.
 - Please forward those lists to us, so if you are unable to reach them, we can make sure someone gets to them.
- **Be prepared to deliver food** – not all our agencies have this ability, but for those who do, that list will come in handy.
 - For those who cannot deliver, we will do our best to ensure they get what they need.

We know this is all a very unique situation and you will probably have to get creative to keep your operation running smoothly. Again, this is a very fluid situation and as more information comes in we will do our best to communicate it to you. And if you need anything, please let us know.

We are doing our best to prepare for the worst, while hoping for the best. We are ordering in extra food, trying to get our hands on disinfectant items and building contingency plans. But it’s times like this where we and the community see the importance of what you do – so thank you.

In this together,

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