

Best Practices for Food Pantries During Covid-19

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- **Communication:** Consistent, accurate messages to your clients are essential. Set a daily updated message on your answering machine. Physically post any new procedures, but email or post your updates to any online platforms you may use as well. If you are requesting that sick clients do not visit the pantry, let them know how they can still receive food (e.g. via proxy) and provide specific directions. If you need to close, let your clients know how you will let them know when you open again. Finally, please update any service changes with [2-1-1](#) and share the [Racine/Kenosha Covid-19 Food Resource list](#).
- **Volunteers:** Consider having volunteers sign a volunteer health statement or sick policy ([example shown here](#)). Make sure volunteers are healthy (with no underlying health conditions including heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, or weakened immune systems). With any signs of illness, require them to stay home. Though pantries rely on many senior volunteers, make sure for the health of everyone that yours are 64 or younger (65+ may be able to do some administrative tasks or remote tasks). Further, we should ask that they not volunteer if they are living with someone 70+ or someone that is immunocompromised.
- **Working: *Everyone*** needs to stay 6ft apart (use colored masking tape, if needed, to mark workspaces or proper distances to keep in line). Reorganization of spaces may be necessary. If possible, extend hours to spread out client visits and volunteer work, or even better, use appointments. Increase sanitizing and handwashing (soap and water is best, when available, hand sanitizer when necessary; put up visual signage for reminders). Contact the health department if you have questions about sanitizing your space. Make hand sanitizer available throughout your warehouse area, as well.
- **Delivery:** While TEFAP pantries **must** use a no-contact method of distribution, all pantries *should try to do so* for the health of everyone involved. Use outdoor distribution whenever possible. Clients should not directly handle anything. Do not require clients to share a pen. Sign for them and have pantry personnel complete simplified paperwork.

Resources:

CDC. (n.d.) *Coronavirus (Covid-19)*. Retrieved March 26, 2020, from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Feeding Wisconsin. (March 20, 2020). *Wisconsin TEFAP operators: Food pantry protocols for operating during Coronavirus COVID-19* [PDF file]. Retrieved March 26, 2020, from https://feedingwi.org/content/WisTEFAPInstructionPANTRIESduringCOVIDrevised3.20.2020_1.pdf

Northern Illinois Food Bank. (March 23, 2020). *Northern Illinois food bank volunteer and visitor health statement*. [PDF file]. Retrieved March 26, 2020, from https://solvehungertoday.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Northern-Illinois-Food-Bank_Volunteer-and-Visitor_Health_Statement_FINAL.pdf

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