



OFFICE OF  
CATHOLIC CHARITIES &  
SOCIAL CONCERNS

## DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

2110 Broadway • Sacramento, California 95818 • 916/733-0200 • Fax 916/733-0215

### Memo

To: Pastors, Parochial Vicars, Administrators, Deacons, School and Parish Staff  
From: John Watkins  
Date: March 26, 2020  
Subject: Pastoral Guidance on Parish Food Closet ministries

Dear Pastors, Parochial Vicars, Administrators, Deacons, School and Parish Staff,

Please note that parish food distribution (i.e. food lockers/food pantry ministries) are considered essential work activities under Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-33-20 and are therefore, **not required** to shut down during this current public healthcare crisis.

Parishes choosing to continue to operate food distribution ministries during this period should provide safe social distancing procedures to ensure safety for volunteers and clients.

#### Distribution Recommendations:

- Consider temporarily adopting either bagged or drive-through distribution.
  - Bagged distributions:
    - Pre-bag all products to reduce the amount of shared surfaces.
    - It is recommended to include the basic staples:
      - Grains
      - Canned fruits/vegetables
      - Canned proteins
      - Cereal
      - Ready to eat meals/soups/ stews
  - Drive through distribution: Where clients pull up in their cars and volunteers deliver a prepackaged bag to their car.
- Require staff and volunteers that are not feeling well to stay home.
- Modify distribution hours and waiting areas to ensure proper social distancing.
  - Create lines that allow for social distancing (six feet between people).
  - Extend distribution hours so clients can be spaced out. This is particularly important for parish sites that have 10 or more clients at a given time.
  - Limit the number of volunteers/staff/clients in an enclosed food pantry space to no more than 10 at a time.
  - Consider line management options, such as



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- Using disposable deli style tickets
  - Adopt an appointment system to limit the number of clients on a given time.
- Modify distribution layouts to ensure social distancing.
- When possible, move distributions outdoors and space out products as much as possible.
- Reduce shared surfaces and implement procedures to speed up distributions:
  - Remove ID requirements and distribution requirements
  - Temporarily restrict clients from using onsite bathrooms
  - Pre-bag produce
- Maintain a clean distribution environment
  - Increase frequency and intensity of cleaning and sanitizing. This should include routinely disinfecting frequently touched surfaces (e.g. door handles, tables, railings, shared keyboards, phones, etc.).
  - Have distribution and intake volunteers wear gloves. Make sure individuals wash hands prior to putting on gloves.

If you have any questions, please contact John Watkins at 916-733-0254.

Respectfully,

John Watkins  
Director, Catholic Charities & Social Concerns  
Diocese of Sacramento