



Alexandria COVID-19 Proposed Food Security Plan

The impact of COVID-19 on the residents of Alexandria who are newly facing unemployment and those who lacked financial security prior to the pandemic has been significant. The demand for food and financial support has increased exponentially since the pandemic began. Some illustrations of these increases include:

- During the month of April, 845 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applications were processed. Last April, 297 applications were processed.
- The Lazarus Emergency Ministry provided just over \$108,000 in assistance for the entire year in 2019 and they have provided more than \$50,000 in the two months since the pandemic began.
- Unemployment claims went from just over 2,000 in February to more than 8,300 in mid-April.

We are fortunate in the City that there has been significant ongoing work being done to address food and economic insecurity by the City, ACPS, non-profit organizations and faith communities. Through ALIVE, the pantry network, emergency financial providers and the City, much has been done to respond to the emerging needs during this pandemic. The many organizations that focus on the well-being of individuals and families across the city have seen tremendous increase in requests that require more resources and shifts in how the resources are provided; examples include:

- ALIVE has responded in multiple ways to the shifting landscape by supplying food for quarantined individuals and families, increasing deliveries to seniors and providing food for the unsheltered homeless.
- Senior Services of Alexandria's Meals on Wheels program, in partnership with DCHS' Aging and Adult Services, has expanded its home delivered meals program to include older adults who are needing to self-isolate, with the numbers increasing each week.
- St. Vincent de Paul shifted its priority funding from rent to grocery gift cards when the requests from residents were dominated by food insecurity.

- Volunteer Alexandria has worked to assure that volunteers are screened, trained and equipped with masks and gloves during food distribution events.

The following actions are recommended in order to fully combat the issues of food insecurity during this pandemic. The strategies below build on existing systems that respond to the needs of Alexandrians, while increasing the frequency, the breadth and the scope of services. These costs are scalable based upon the amount of CARES funds available.

Approach/Frequency	Individuals Served	Cost
Large Scale food Distributions: 2 per month	8,000 people	\$56,000 monthly
Pop-up bag distributions in impacted neighborhoods/apartment complexes (considerations for locations below), weekly	1000 people per month (250 per week)	\$7,000 monthly
World Central Kitchen wrap-around service, weekly	1000 people (250 per week)	\$7,000 monthly
Support to 13 pantries (range of bags provided from 120 to 400, depending on capacity and need)	1,500+ households monthly	\$14,000 monthly
Home Delivery of 14 frozen meals for self-isolating older adults	100 people weekly	\$26,000 monthly
Home Delivery to individuals and families in ARHA and AHDC housing and in multiple non-profit programs (including Casa Chirilagua, Child and Family Network Center, ALIVE)	Serving 1,125 people monthly	\$12,625 monthly
Serving households under quarantine and maintaining a reserve	25 households and 20 in reserve	\$3,700 monthly
Grocery Gift Card Distribution ¹ through the Emergency Financial provider network/faith communities, non-profit programs and DCHS	1,000 families for \$400 per family	\$400,000 monthly
TOTALS	13,750	\$532,325

Sites for the distribution of food are being identified in order to serve the most negatively impacted during the COVID19 pandemic. The following include the data elements that are being reviewed in order to determine the most appropriate locations:

- Location of all residential households in Alexandria (demand)
- Sidewalk network (travel mode)
- Location of current food/financial assistance distribution providers in Alexandria (supply)

¹ May also include distribution of assistance by issuance of checks.

- CDC Social Vulnerability Index
- Families eligible for Free and Reduced Meals
- Families receiving SNAP benefits

If additional data elements become available, such as high concentrations of individuals who have applied for unemployment, they will be factored into the selection of future distribution sites.

In addition to the strategies above there continues to be additional food security work being done by ACPS and the newly emerging support from World Central Kitchen. While no additional funding is being requested for these efforts at this time, resources continue to be needed for the success of these efforts including, staff and volunteer hours, transportation, planning, and logistical support. These efforts will serve thousands of additional families.

With each distribution event, efforts will be made to maximize the opportunity with participating individuals to provide multiple resources, as well as information about services including rental assistance, unemployment benefits, SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid benefits and the locations of food resources.

Throughout the implementation of this plan, we will work to assess the effectiveness in all areas, including:

- Reaching individuals and families in greatest need
- Reducing exposure for impacted families
- Practicing health and safety practices
- Building longer-term economic security approaches
- Maximizing all resources to support the efforts
- Integration of service opportunities

These efforts will be successful through the utilization of strong partnerships across the community and through effective outreach and communication. These are essential as we work to assure that all impacted individuals and families receive the support that they need during this pandemic. The lessons learned through these efforts will inform our planning and possible service restructuring as we go forward.

Department of Community and Human Services

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