

Dear Friends,

Along with “strengthening food access,” Channel One Regional Food Bank’s mission is also “to help build healthy communities.” Like many other organizations involved in keeping our communities healthy, we at Channel One Regional Food Bank have been keenly following news of the outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

As the coronavirus situation develops, we are closely following updates and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and state and local authorities. We will continue to update our response and communication with our stakeholders and partner agencies as news develops.

Moreover, we recognize that our clients and agency partners depend on Channel One Regional Food Bank to provide consistent food delivery and quality service, and we are working hard to minimize the potential for disruption to our business operations during this outbreak.

Thus far, Channel One has implemented the following specific measures:

- Posted and circulated information to all employees and volunteers on best practices to avoid the spread of virus.
- Created additional safety measures to ensure food safety and safety of food shelf clients
- Reinforced and distributed hygiene supplies and instructions throughout our facility, including the food shelf.
- Established protocols for frequent disinfecting throughout the building.
- Opened the Foodshelf on Saturday, March 14th from 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. so that food insecure people can prepare for a quarantine or social isolation
- Recruited volunteers to help assemble emergency food boxes
- Worked with the Minnesota Food Banks to advocate for our clients with State and National Government and to source food
- Reviewed and emphasized sick leave policies for staff to prevent unnecessary contact with individuals who may have been exposed to the coronavirus.
- Put contingencies in place to enable staff to work from home or to bring healthy children into the office in the event of quarantines or school closures
- Channel One has no large group events or activities scheduled for several weeks. We will evaluate the prudence of holding these events as the dates approach.

Our volunteers are crucial to support our mission, and we need to maintain healthy volunteers. We understand that many of our volunteers may be considered in the high-risk category for contracting COVID-19 and are worried about being around large groups of people. Channel One staff has implemented the following new procedures to help our volunteers, clients, and staff remain healthy and safe:

- Hand washing signage around the Food Shelf/Bank, hand sanitizers available around the building and Glove procedures that require all volunteers and staff to wear disposable gloves

- Daily and weekly cleaning schedules to sanitize and clean the Food Shelf & Bank
- Limiting groups to no more than 15

In addition, during pandemics and natural disasters, those facing food insecurities will only continue to grow and Channel One needs the help of the community. We look to those that are considered low-risk of contracting COVID-19 and those feeling healthy to continue to volunteer and fill in any gaps left by individuals who choose to practice social distancing.

Also, to help fill the growing need, Channel One is asking for monetary donations. \$25 can provide 100 meals to those in need. You can make a secure online donation at <https://www.helpingfeedpeople.org/donate/donate-paypal/>

Thank you for your understanding and continued support as we work to ensure the safety and health of our employees and clients. If you have any questions about Channel One's response to the coronavirus situation, please don't hesitate to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,
Virginia Merritt, Executive Director