



Statement on Food Initiatives by the Public

Greater Lansing Food Bank and our food partners understand that many groups, organizations, churches, and even families want to help their neighbors by distributing food. We have no doubt their intentions are good, however, we ask that food initiatives or food drives are not attempted at this time for the reasons below. Instead please work with the existing food pantries and agencies so your efforts don't do more harm than good.

1. Under Gov. Whitmer's current "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Executive Order, unless the organization you're working with is already designated as an "essential food service provider," they are not allowed to do this type of work.
2. More than ever, product safety and keeping recipients safe is our #1 priority, especially those in vulnerable populations. Most people do not have food safety knowledge and have not completed food safety training for proper sorting or packing of food. (For example, at no time should food products be placed on the floor or re-packed into individual servings outside a licensed "clean room.") Food banks and our agencies go through strict safety compliance audits and are licensed and/or properly certified to do this type of work.
3. During this pandemic, the distribution of food by our registered food bank partners is very complex and coordinated; professionals are working together in coalitions to distribute as much food as possible to all populations without overlap to ensure food gets to as many people as possible.
4. Food drives are not recommended at this time since all donated food from the public must be sanitized before being distributed. Currently there is not enough time for that type of work and there is no food-safe sanitization product that kills the COVID virus anyway. Additionally, the governor issued a stay-at-home order, so people shouldn't be leaving their homes to donate food.

We are thankful for the caring organizations, religious groups and individuals in our community at this time. However, food safety, volunteer safety and the safety of our community is of the utmost importance so please let the professionals handle this work. If your group would like to help in some way, please consider donating funds by visiting our website at www.glfoodbank.org or by calling us at (517) 908-3680.