Thank you

The Minneapolis Health Department would like to thank the dedicated volunteers and staff working at community food distributions. You are doing amazing work that is vital for our community members experiencing food insecurity.

We recognize you are working to put practices in place to keep your food safe and stay COVID-19 safe. Here are guidelines to help you achieve both.

Community food distributions are considered emergency humanitarian relief.

When do you need a permit or food license?
You need a Community Food Distribution permit if you are giving away:

- Produce
- Vegetables
- Ready-to-eat food
- Other perishable food
- Shelf stable food

There is no fee for this permit.

If you plan to move your community food up distribution into a permanent space, you must get a food shelf license.

Keeping your food safe

- Keep food off the ground as much as possible.
- Put food in bags or boxes
- Accept shelf stable items.
- Only accept refrigerated and frozen items if you can properly store these items. Proper storage includes using refrigerated trucks or walk-in coolers or freezers.
- **Infant formula** - Do not accept donations of infant formula after its use-by date.
- **Eggs** - If you accept donated eggs, check the expiration date on the carton. Do not accept eggs if the date on the carton has passed.

Have a person onsite who knows basic food safety practices

- [Request a voucher code](https://www.minneapolismn.gov/foodsafety) to take a free online basic food safety training.

For reasonable accommodations or alternative formats please contact the Minneapolis Health Department at 612-673-2301 or health@minneapolismn.gov. People who are deaf or hard of hearing can use a relay service to call 311 at 612-673-3000. TTY users call 612-263-6850. Para asistencia 612-673-2700 - Rau kev pab 612-673-2800 - Hadii aad Caawimaad u baahantahay 612-673-3500.
Food package dates - You may see three different types of dates on food packages:

- **Sell-By date** - tells you how long the item can be sold or given out. The consumer should receive the product before the date expires.
- **Best if Used By (or Before) date** – refers to best flavor or quality. It is not a safety date.
- **Use-By date** - is the last date the item is at its peak quality. The manufacturer, packer or distributor of the product based on product analysis, tests, or other information, selects the use-by date.

The most important recommendations to protect community health are:

Physical distancing – Volunteers and customers should stay at least 6 feet apart.

Cloth face coverings – Minneapolis requires cloth face coverings be worn in indoor public places where people congregate. People are encouraged to wear cloth face coverings at other times. Some people are not required to wear a cloth face covering. They are:
- Children two years old and younger.
- Anyone who cannot wear a cloth face covering for medical reasons.

Frequent and thorough hand washing
- Wash your hands as often as possible with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- If you can't wash your hands, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- If you are wearing disposable gloves, make sure you remove and throw them away safely.

How to make a handwashing station

You can create a low cost, gravity fed handwashing station.
- Fill a 5 gallon insulated cooler with warm water.
- Water should be refilled before the level comes down to 2 inches above the spigot.
- Container must have a hand-free spigot that can be turned on and off.
- Supply liquid hand soap and paper towels.
- Have a catch bucket that holds at least 5 gallons of wastewater.

Distributing left over food

Before your distribution event, make arrangements with a food shelf or other community partner to take your left over food.

Be COVID-19 safe

- Give protective supplies to volunteers and staff. This includes cloth face coverings, gloves and hand sanitizer. The hand sanitizer should contain at least 60% alcohol.
- Provide hand washing station(s). Handwashing stations should have water, soap and paper towels. Depending on the size of the distribution site, you might need more than one handwashing station.

Stay informed

For COVID-19 resources, updates and other information [minneapolismn.gov/coronavirus](http://minneapolismn.gov/coronavirus).
For health questions, please email [COVID19@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:COVID19@minneapolismn.gov) or call 612-673-2301.