



CATHOLIC CHARITIES STEPS UP THE BATTLE AGAINST COVID-19 AND STANDS STRONG WITH THE POOR AND VULNERABLE THROUGH THIS CRISIS.

Spokane, Wash., March 18, 2020 – Catholic Charities Eastern Washington is an organization that has served our community for over 100 years. We are caretakers of the poor. Sitting on the sidelines during this COVID-19 crisis is not an option for us. We have a sacred obligation and duty to continue this work, as best we can, even in this current Coronavirus world. Social distancing does not mean that we forget about our clients. We put forth every effort to ensure our clients know we are here for them. In these difficult times, Catholic Charities has developed new outreach methods to serve, responsibly and compassionately, the most vulnerable in our community during this pandemic. We will always answer the call to serve.

The poor and vulnerable will be the hardest hit by this global pandemic and Catholic Charities intends to be there for them, while at the same time protecting our staff and our organizational needs. As this is a fluid situation, we continue to work with local, state and federal officials to provide necessary services to the most vulnerable members in our community.

WHAT WE ARE DOING FOR OUR SENIOR & HOUSING CLIENTS DURING COVID-19

SENIORS: We are providing the seniors who live in our Catholic Charities housing complexes with guidance and support from the Spokane Regional Health District to help them protect themselves from infection. Additionally, Catholic Charities team members increased frequency of cleaning/disinfecting for community spaces in all our 1300+ apartments, elevators, common restrooms, and surfaces.

- **SENIOR CITIZEN FRIENDLY CHAT PROGRAM:** This new communication program will allow us to reach out to seniors who have been asked to shelter in place due to their underlying medical vulnerabilities. Staff and volunteers will make daily phone calls to seniors to ensure they have food, supplies and just to chat so that they know that someone cares about them!
- **SHOPPING ANGELS:** We have created a volunteer program encouraging the community to fill a bag of non-perishable food items while they shop for themselves, and then drop their donation off at the drive in at our headquarters. We will deliver this food to seniors who are unable to leave their home and shop for themselves.
- Staff continue to work with residents on an individual basis to ensure they have all that they need.

WHAT WE ARE DOING FOR FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS DURING COVID-19: We have created detailed protocols to respond to the various levels of

infection if and as they arise in our programs. We created extensive systems a few years ago when we experienced a norovirus outbreak at the House of Charity and as a result, we have become very proficient in managing infectious outbreaks in our shelters. We are prepared to mobilize our staff from all over the Catholic Charities world to work within our shelter programs where needed in order to maintain essential services without disruption. We have emergency supplies on site and have increased and expanded cleaning protocols at our shelter sites to decrease the risk of exposure and community spread. We are working in close partnership with Regional Health Districts throughout the 13 eastern Washington counties in our service area to be the best partners possible. For example, we have developed program and community response plans for The LOFT Teen Shelter in Walla Walla and are working with regional providers to coordinate their community's plan in that region.

- **House of Charity**

- Over recent years, Catholic Charities has built specially equipped quarantine rooms (with showers) into our new permanent supportive housing complexes to be used in the event of an outbreak. These specialized units will now be operationalized to allow us to continue to serve the homeless even should they become ill.
- We are incorporating CDC and Spokane Regional Health Department recommendations for social distancing.
 - We have re-located the Women's Sleeping Program to the common area spaces at both Donna Hansen and Jacklin Haven.
 - We have increased the distance between individuals in the Men's Sleeping Program to 6' and 50 or less individuals per room.
- We are frequently cleaning and sanitizing highly trafficked areas.
- Our staff are well informed in ways to prevent the spread of sickness and self-care strategies are being addressed. In addition (where feasible/applicable) we have implemented a simple health screening form that will be used at intake to ensure that we are assessing clients for health-related symptoms and providing referrals to virtual/medical screenings as needed.

- **At St. Margaret's Shelter, Rising Strong family shelters and The LOFT in Walla Walla**

- Our pandemic protocols provide clear guidance on implementing isolation and distancing interventions, as well as ways to ensure meals can be accomplished while distancing themselves as possible from other families in the shelter.
- In addition, we have implemented a simple health screening form that will be asked at intake to ensure that we are assessing clients for health-related symptoms and providing referrals to virtual/medical screenings as needed.

FOOD SECURITY: Many of our clients have seen the lines at Costco in media stories and realize they have neither a Costco card nor the funds to stockpile groceries even if they wanted to. Vulnerable families, children, seniors and others are worried where their next meal may come from.

- Many of our programs have food pantries that will continue to serve clients with essential help from Second Harvest Food Bank.
- Providence is supplying food for the House of Charity as well as two additional property sites
- Women and Children's Free Restaurant & Community Kitchen has donated frozen meals to our homeless shelters, warming center and our Rising Strong program.
- Catholic Schools and parishes have donated canned food to our programs for distribution.

WHAT WE ARE DOING FOR OUR STAFF

- We have increased cleaning and sanitation of highly trafficked areas and surfaces. We are using a Clorox 360 Electrostatic machine to disinfect in all our commercial buildings and residential common area spaces weekly to sanitize and disinfect all surfaces.
- Staff are supported and encouraged to stay home if they are feeling sick with any symptoms, not just COVID19 symptoms.
- At the same time we are encouraging our nearly 400 staff to remember that they are essential caregivers and we want them to stay involved and in service as much as is possible.
- Human Resources is frequently notifying staff of agency and governmental updates.
- We have enacted leadership continuity plans for a small number of senior leaders to work remotely to ensure agency stability should other leaders become ill.
- We are also encouraging staff to work with our community partners and businesses in this time of need.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Be a Shopping Angel and provide essential nonperishable food items to our seniors who are unable to leave their homes. Drop them off at our Catholic Charities Family Services headquarters building drive through located at 12 East 5th Avenue.
 - Oatmeal
 - Cereal
 - Milk
 - Bread
 - Canned soup
 - Any fruit, canned or fresh
 - Cereal
 - Cheese
 - Eggs
 - Peanut butter
 - Canned chicken, tuna or ham

- Any lunch meat
 - Any pet food
 - Crackers
 - Macaroni and cheese
 - Bread fresh or frozen
 - Microwave food meals
 - Pasta
 - Tomato sauce, spaghetti sauce
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- Donate Emergency Items to any of our fourteen programs throughout Eastern Washington serving 60,000+ children, families, seniors and individuals experiencing homelessness each year.
 - Diapers
 - Kids OTC medications
 - Sensitive Baby Formula
 - Baby Wipes
 - Liquid soap for shower dispenser & hand washing
 - Hand Sanitizer
 - Disinfecting wipes
 - Bleach
 - Adult Ibuprofen
 - Clorox Commercial Solutions Total 360 Disinfectant Cleaner

For more information on current needs please visit our website at <https://www.cceasternwa.org/covid-19>.

Catholic Charities has been here for our community for 108 years and we will be here doing this same work 108 years from now. Catholic Charities is proud to serve Eastern Washington. We will not shy away from this fight. We will stand with the poor and vulnerable in this time of great need for them and for us all. We will get through this together.

About Catholic Charities Eastern Washington

Catholic Charities Eastern Washington affirms the dignity of our most vulnerable neighbors by offering collaborative and innovative solutions to the complex challenges facing Eastern Washington. Carrying forth Christ's love, we ease the suffering of individuals and families in crisis, we stabilize lives by connecting clients to housing and their communities, and we advocate in hope to help people make progress in their own lives.

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