

HELP of Ojai COVID-19 Social Distancing Plan of Action Update as of April 14th, 2020

HELP of Ojai continues to take COVID-19 very seriously, as most of our clients and many volunteers would be considered “vulnerable populations” based on age, preexisting health conditions and other health issues. We have reduced and modified programming in an effort to protect our clients, the public, our volunteers and staff and to reduce any possible spread of the virus directly or indirectly.

We are following all recommendations and mandates from the City of Ojai, Ventura County, the State of California, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization. HELP of Ojai will continue to modify our Social Distancing Plan of Action as more recommendations and mandates as they are put forth.

COVID-19 symptoms

The virus can make people sick, usually with a mild to moderate upper respiratory tract illness, similar to a common cold. COVID-19 symptoms include a runny nose, cough, sore throat, possibly a headache and maybe a fever, which can last for a couple of days. For those with a weakened immune system, the elderly and the very young, there’s a chance the virus could cause a much more serious lower respiratory tract illness like pneumonia or bronchitis.

How it spreads

When it comes to human-to-human transmission of the virus, often it happens when someone comes into contact with an infected person. Transmission can happen through a cough, sneeze or handshake. The virus can also be transmitted by touching something an infected person has touched and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes. Caregivers can sometimes be exposed by handling a patient’s waste, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Donations

Thank you to everyone who have made donations to HELP of Ojai during COVID-19. If you would like to donate perishable or non-perishable food items, you can do so by calling 805-646-5122 to arrange a drop off time at Little House. If you would like to make a monetary donation, you can do so on our website at helpofojai.org or by mail at PO Box 621, Ojai, CA 93024.

Public

HELP of Ojai closed to the public for all “non-essential programs” beginning Monday, March 16th, 2020. We do not have a reopen date at this time due to the direction of Ventura County Public Health in regard to COVID-19 and it’s spread. HELP will continue to operate essential programs. Please contact us via phone at 805-646-5122 or megant@helpofojai.org for any questions or community needs.

Office hours and practices will be posted on the windows of all locations and on social media.

Supplies

We continue to work to increase and then maintain stock in the food pantry and food for senior nutrition. We anticipate the food pantry to be able to handle increases in qualified demand for 30-45 days.

Volunteers

We are currently operating with staff, two board members, and food box assistance with the CREW. We

continue to recommend volunteers be a part of our Neighbor-to-Neighbor program if they would like to volunteer.

Staff

Megan Telfer is the point person for the agency-wide work. Unless staff has underlying health issues or has a family situation requiring them to work from home, all staff will be working from their offices in an effort to answer the phones and fill in gaps of other programs. This in an effort to fully serve critical need clients. Staff is wearing gloves and masks.

We have identified our most vulnerable clients and have expanded and shifted those programs, while decreasing and redirecting staff away from non-essential programming. Simultaneously, we are working in ensure we minimize our own possibility of transmission.

Programs:

NEW PROGRAM: NEIGHBOR-TO-NEIGHBOR We began the Neighbor-to-Neighbor call program. We have assigned seniors, some of whom are vulnerable, with community members to connect over the phone. This allows us to continue to be responsible in our social distancing, but also recognize the importance of human connection. To volunteer or to refer someone to the program, call (805) 646-5122.

Senior Nutrition Program (SNP)

Effective 3/16/20 HELP of Ojai discontinued congregate lunches. For all seniors (60+), we are offering to deliver home-delivered meals each day. Others will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Staff will use masks and gloves while driving routes. They will leave meals at the doorstep and practice social distancing.

Staff or a volunteer will stay in contact with home-delivered meal recipients at least 1x per week.

Community Assistance Program (CAP)

The CAP office suspended daily food distribution effective 3/17/20. Food boxes will be distributed by appointment in 15-minute time slots on specific days of the week. Local residents can have a food box delivered if they are over 60 years of age or home-bound by reason of disability. For more information on the CAP office and for their distribution hours, please call 805-640-3320.

Case Managers will work with clients via phone and email. HEAP forms, rental assistance, etc. will be mailed or emailed and processed as normal.

Case managers have continued to suspend site visits to hospitals, nursing homes, and to the homes of clients who have recently been to the doctor or hospital.

Case managers Whitney Nunes and Jayn Walter worked to place the most vulnerable homeless clients in the County Hotel. As openings become available, they work to continue to place homeless clients in the County Hotel. We continue with homeless lunches, have distributed refillable hand sanitizers, and continue to monitor our homeless population for signs of COVID-19.

Activities Program (Little House)

Effective 3/16/2020 we have cancelled all group activities at Little House and off campus locations for

the duration. When we re-open activities, we will work with our instructors on a schedule for classes and notify the students and public. We will also use our social media pages to alert people that activities are canceled and ongoing status.

We will keep the loan closet open for people who will need durable medical equipment. They will need to order over the phone at (805) 646-5122.

Kent Hall rentals by third parties are cancelled for the duration.

Utilities

The Utility payment process is open. Payee will drop off their utility payments in the drop box at the driveway entrance to Little House. You can receive the receipt by leaving a self-addressed stamped envelope with your payment. No change will be given, and all cash payment will be applied to the bill with a credit balance as determined. Bills and payment will be processed with gloves. HELP of Ojai staff will check the utilities throughout the day. Please note that all other utilities drop off boxes have been discontinued until further notice.

Transportation

Transportation will be limited to doctors' appointments and grocery stores on a case by case basis. Drivers will wear masks and gloves while transporting clients. Transportation vans and drivers will participate with all other programs to best service our clients, including:

1. Food/water delivery
2. Pharmacy delivery
3. Home delivered meals

2nd HELPings Store/Oak Tree House/Donation Center

2nd HELPings Store, the Donation Center, and Oak Tree House remained close for the duration of COVID-19.

We are not accepting donations at the Donation Center at this time, please do not leave donations outside the gate or at 2nd Helpings Store.