



# Low-To-No Contact Distributions: A How-To Guide

## Why Implement a Low-to-No Contact Style of Distribution?

In response to the outbreak of COVID-19, MANNA Partner Agencies are encouraged to continue offering food assistance to communities across Western North Carolina. However, the safety of all persons involved in each food distribution is of the highest priority, particularly given that we often serve the most vulnerable populations through our work. MANNA has been working with Partner Agencies to streamline low-to-no contact distribution methods that will place the emphasis on the health and wellbeing of food recipients, volunteers, partner agency members, and MANNA staff alike during these turbulent times.

## What to Expect

The goal of Low-to-No Contact Models is to, as much as possible, limit person-to-person contact by embracing social distancing within the context of a food distribution. During a drive through style distribution or other form of Low-to-No Contact distribution, you can expect the following guidelines to be in place in order to ensure the safety for all participants involved:

- a. **Avoid all forms of personal contact, including shaking hands, passing meals or boxes directly, and touching cars. In addition, avoid touching your face, eyes, nose, and mouth as they are the easiest points of access. Please practice good social distancing by doing your best to stay at least 6 feet away from other people.**
- b. **Cough or sneeze into your elbow, rather than your hands. If your cough/sneeze is persistent, we encourage you to wear a mask for the safety of those around you.**
- c. **Temporarily suspend client choice shopping. All food should be pre-boxed and delivered to the client's vehicle. We suggest placing the pre-boxed food directly into the client's trunk to further reduce contact.**

By adhering to these guidelines, we are able to better ensure that we can continue getting food out to clients during these turbulent times, while also keeping everyone involved safe.

## Here's What's Involved:

### Keys to Organizing Successful Low-to-No Contact Markets

#### 1. *Types of Low-to-No Contact Distributions*

- **Drive Through Distributions:** With this style of distribution, food recipients will ideally remain in their vehicles while volunteers work to get them checked in. Once checked in, food recipients' will be asked to open their trunk or car door. The appropriate number of pre-packed food boxes given the number of people in their households will be placed on the curbside or curbside table. The client will load the food box into their own car and are free to drive home. If the client is not physically able to lift their food boxes ask that they open their trunk or car door, step aside, allow a volunteer to place the food boxes inside the car, and then the client close their own trunk/door. This style of distribution is MANNA's recommended style during the COVID-19 outbreak as it can significantly reduce the opportunity for spreading the virus through person-to-person contact or person-car-person contact.
- **Home Deliveries:** Though they may take more effort to coordinate, home deliveries can be an effective way to distribute food in a no contact manner to those most in need. As the name indicates, home deliveries involve taking the appropriate amount of pre-packed food boxes directly to a person's front door. Person to person contact can be minimized and/or completely eliminated with this approach, but it takes intentional planning ahead.
- **Low Contact In-Person:** These markets are ideal for distribution locations that cannot accommodate a drive through style and have a significant number of participating food recipients who do not have vehicles (i.e. urban areas or populations that are largely housing insecure). As is the case with the Drive Through Distribution model and Home Delivery model, food recipients will receive pre-packed food boxes/bags. The priority is implementing a structured approach that ensures good social distancing is being practiced.
- **Combination of Low Contact Models:** There is a high probability that you will find yourself combining two or more of the distribution styles outlined above. The most likely combination is the Drive Through model in conjunction with the Low Contact In-Person model. It is important if you are doing a combination style to think through the logistics involved with maintaining good hygiene and social distancing practices.

#### 2. *Plan Ahead and Prepare*

- Coordinating with MANNA
  - **Confirm date/time.** If pre-packing on site, ensure that you allow for ample time pre-distribution to prepare boxes (1-2 hours before distribution) with your volunteers. Many clients have high levels of stress and anxiety so ensuring that



the actual distribution time aligns with the advertised distribution time can prevent potential issues.

- **Location:** Ensure that your location is prepped and set up appropriately prior to distribution. This includes considering traffic flow, entrance/exit locations, flow of clients, social distancing, and safety/security precautions.
  - **Volunteers:** Confirm number of volunteers that will be on hand during the distribution and ensure that all volunteers understand their role and the flow/structure of the distribution prior to clients arriving.
  - Please let MANNA know about **any changes** with your schedule or distribution methods as soon as possible so that we can communicate those changes to the community.
- **Getting the Word Out**
    - Advertise as you normally would, but make sure you add this detail:
      - “In order to keep everyone as safe as possible, our usual client choice shopping method of distribution is being temporarily suspended. We will be offering pre-packed food boxes during a      [insert type of low contact distribution]     . If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us. We thank you in advance for your patience as we navigate these trying times.”
      - We highly recommend using social media as a means of spreading the word. Here are some examples of Facebook pages that we recommend:
        - County DSS Page
        - County School Systems Page
        - County Library Systems Page
        - County Parks & Recreation Page
        - County/Community Forum Page(s)
        - Other Community Based Pages

\*If you would like a more comprehensive list of media outlets in your area, we would be more than happy to send you a county specific media guide.
    - As a reminder, we recommend advertising well in advance of scheduled distributions. However, in light of current circumstances, we recognize that we are in uncharted territory, and with that comes a degree of uncertainty with what to expect day to day. Because of this uncertainty, distributions may have to be rescheduled or cancelled. We just ask that distributions continue to be advertised as well in advance as possible, and that any updates with regards to rescheduling and/or cancellations be promptly communicated through advertising, and to MANNA.
    - Of course, note any changes in date/time/location in your advertising.

- Recruiting Volunteers
  - Recruit volunteers as you normally would with these additional guidelines:
    - Ideally, volunteers are in the low-risk population. Prospective volunteers who are 60+, have immunodeficiencies, and/or have other factors that make them more likely to be high risk should be encouraged to take necessary health precautions. Volunteer roles associated with food distributions are not ideal for people in the high-risk category. Information about risk levels can be found here:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>
  - Please let MANNA know about any changes and/or if you need any assistance with volunteer recruitment.
  
- Planning for the “Flow” of a Drive Through; Questions to Consider:
  - Questions to Consider: Drive Through Distribution**
    - Can your usual distribution space accommodate a Drive Through style of distribution? If not, what are some other possible spaces that could be used that are nearby?
    - How can you use the space to create an organized Drive Through flow? What are some things working in your favor? What are some potential challenges?
    - Ideally, food recipients will not be leaving their vehicles during a Drive Through style of distribution. What are things that need to happen in order to ensure this?
  - How does this effect check in or arrival?**
    - How can you effectively indicate the flow of traffic and distribution changes as your clients arrive? Do you need to create signage? Do you have access to traffic cones, temporary fencing, or caution tape to mark traffic flow?
    - How will you deliver boxes to your client’s car? If client’s cannot place boxes directly into their own car what is the best way for a volunteer to assist without touching the client’s car?
  - Questions to Consider: Low-to-No Contact In-Person Distributions**
    - For Low-to-No Contact In-Person Distributions to work, it is crucial that social distancing is adhered to as much as possible. Can your usual distribution space accommodate this need?
    - If your space can feasibly accommodate a Low-to-No Contact In-Person Distribution, what strategies can you employ in order to ensure that social distancing is adhered to? Think about people waiting in line, being checked in, receiving food boxes/bags, etc...

**Questions to Consider: Home Deliveries**

- What planning will you do ahead of time in order to carry out a Home Delivery style of distribution? Will you call food recipients ahead of time to coordinate a drop off?
- Roughly how many stops will you be making? What resources (volunteers, vehicles, etc...) will be needed to make this happen?
- Ideally, food recipients will not come outside until after the drop off has been made and volunteers are away from the drop off location. What are ways that this can be ensured and/or at the very least social distancing of at least 6 feet is being adhered to?

#### **Questions to Consider: ALL Low-to-No Contact Styles**

- What are some ways that you can manage larger numbers of food recipients? What can be done to avoid overcrowding/congestion?
- This heightened time of need will undoubtedly translate into higher levels of stress and anxiety at food distributions. What measure can be taken to help **maintain a calm and welcoming environment.**
- How will you safely collect food recipient data? (# in household)

#### **Supplies Checklist**

- Empty Boxes (for pre-packing)
- Bags (for produce packing)
- Gloves
- Face Masks
- Lysol Wipes (or CDC recommended bleach solution)
- Hand Sanitizer

\*Note: Please let us know if you are having trouble sourcing any of these items. While we will do our very best to accommodate, MANNA's inventory for these types of items is low right now.

### **3. *Host a Safety Briefing at the top of Every Distribution***

Before a food distribution be sure to orient all staff and volunteers with a safety briefing. This is an important part of all food distributions, and should be incorporated ongoing for every distribution.

- Safety Briefing should include:
  - Pointing out where hand sanitizer, gloves, masks or other PPE is located
  - Point out any posted rules around safety and sanitization
  - Clearly spell out how often staff / volunteers should be washing hands, hand sanitizing, and when to change gloves
  - Confirm all safety rules
    - Do not shake hands or touch clients / volunteers / staff
    - Remain 6 feet away from everyone during this distribution
    - Do not touch client's cars during a drive-thru distribution

- Do not hand food boxes or meals directly to clients, instead place on table and ask that they pick it up as able
- Review the flow of the distribution
- Designate Agency Leader to bring up issues or ask questions around safety and the distribution. Welcome safety feedback from every volunteer / staff person throughout the distribution.

#### **4. Pre-boxing on site before the Distribution**

Note: Anyone touching/handling food or anything that will go into food recipient vehicles **MUST be wearing gloves!**

- Expected Number of Food Box Recipients
  - Roughly how many boxes will you need to provide enough food for anticipated numbers.
- Creating a Good “Mixture” of Items
  - Please see the document “Packing Emergency Food Boxes” for details.
  - Emphasis on protein rich options, if at all possible.
  - It is best to pack heavier items towards the bottom; try not to overpack or allow boxes to get too heavy
- Bagging Produce
  - Create a good mixture of produce, if possible.
- Time Estimates on Pre-boxing
  - We recommend 1-2 hours for pre-packing boxes prior to the start of your distribution.

#### **5. Distribution: Flow & Troubleshooting Pointers**

- Adapting to Your Site’s Space/Finding Another Site (If Needed)
  - Refer to the brainstorming questions listed above in the “Planning for Flow” section ahead of your first drive through style distribution. These questions can also be good to reflect on after each distribution.
- Possible Volunteer Roles
  - Site Coordinator(s)
  - Traffic Control Volunteer(s)
  - Food Box & Produce Bag Packers
  - Sign in/Greeter Volunteer(s)
  - Car Loaders
  - Home Delivery Volunteers
  - Volunteer(s) dedicating to explaining the situation/guidelines in a calm, friendly manner.
- Overall Flow

- Again, it is highly recommended that you think through what the flow of the distribution will look like before the day of the distribution. Refer to the Planning Questions listed above as you plan logistics for the Drive Through.
- We recommend contacting local law enforcement for help with traffic flow.
- Maintaining a Fair and Consistent Food Box Distribution Approach

**For Shelf Stable Food Boxes**

- 1 box for households consisting of 1-3 people
- 2 boxes for households consisting of 4-6 people
- 3 boxes for households consisting of 7+ people

**For Bags of Produce**

- 1 bag for households consisting of 1-3 people
- 2 bags for households consisting of 4-6 people
- 3 bags for households consisting of 7+ people

Note: This is one approach- not an end all be all. If resources are more limited, you may want to consider, for example, 1 box for 1-4 people, 2 boxes for 5+ people.

- Tips for Maintaining a Low-to-No Contact Distribution
  - If hosting a drive through style distribution, try to limit people getting out of their vehicles as much as possible.
  - At any distribution, you may want to have one or two people dedicated to letting the public know what is going on by calmly and kindly communicating guidelines and explaining said guidelines.
  - Make sure that “Notice to Visitors” sign is posted and visible throughout the distribution site.

## 6. Health Safety

- What MANNA is doing
  - As the situation with COVID-19 is one that is continuously changing, MANNA is constantly monitoring for local, regional, and national updates. To keep up-to-date with the measures we are taking to keep people safe as well as learn more about changes that have an impact on our operations, please sign up for our daily email: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/uDQQJRq>
  - For even more detailed up-to-date information on all that MANNA is doing in response to the COVID-19 Crisis, please visit the following link: <https://www.mannafoodbank.org/agency-access-and-information/covid-19-for-agencies/>
- **On site guidelines**, which are stated above in the “What to Expect” section, should be upheld.
- The COVID 19 Notice to Visitors Signage is to be used in the field
  - This notice includes the onsite guidelines outlined in this guide.



- Please reach out to a member of the Agency Relations Department if you need an electronic copy of the COVID 19 Notice to Visitors signage in English and Spanish. These can also be found on the COVID-19 agency page at the following link: <https://www.mannafoodbank.org/agency-access-and-information/covid-19-for-agencies/>

## 7. *Other Safety Concerns*

In these turbulent times, we need to keep **safety** in mind in addition to social distancing measures. Many people in our community are experiencing high levels of stress and/or anxiety around food insecurity or the health of loved ones. Unfortunately, crisis can bring out the best and worst in people. It's imperative that you are proactive and create a safety plan considering but not limited to the possibility of the following:

- Crowd management
- Traffic flow management during drive-through distributions
- Other concerns unique to your community or location

We recommend putting together a plan before one becomes necessary. Consider reaching out to local safety resources such as law enforcement or emergency responders for advice or day-of-distribution support. For more information and to seek support from your local Sheriff's/Police departments, among other resources, refer to the attached document "MANNA FoodBank Emergency Recommendations for Crowd Management" or click here for a full list of Partner Agency Resources.

**\*\*Please contact a member of our Agency Relations team for further questions or support\*\***

### **MANNA Zone Coordinator Information:**

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## 8. *CDC Resources*

- [CDC, General Information on COVID-19](#)





- [CDC, COVID-19 Guidelines & Updates](#)
- [CDC, Bleach Cleaning Solution Guidelines](#)

### *9. Additional MANNA Resources*

- [MANNA FoodBank's COVID-19 Agency Resource Page](#)
  - We will be updating this page daily with updates to our operations, listing additional agency resources, and adding to our FAQ section.
- Sign up for [COVID-19 Daily Updates from MANNA](#)
- Join our Partner Agency text alert system to receive communications right to your smart phone: **Text APPLE to (828)348-5883**

### *10. Additional Support for your Clients*

Your clients may have requests or food needs that your agency alone is unable to fulfill. We want you to know that is ok and your food bank is not alone in impacting the lives of your clients. We are a network of food pantries and meal sites working together to end hunger across Western North Carolina. As your clients have additional needs we have the below resources that you can share with your clients.

- **MANNA's Food Helpline: 1-800-820-1109**
  - The Helpline is available from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday with both English and Spanish voicemail channels available off hours so we clients can always at least leave us information for follow-up the next day.
  - The helpline can connect the community to food distribution sites, MAANA Community Markets, school meals and community meals.
  - Helpline staff and volunteers are trained to help determine Food Stamp eligibility, and complete applications or recertifications over the phone.
  - Starting on 3/30/2020 the Helpline will begin assisting the community with the process to file for unemployment.
- [Online submission form for MANNA Helpline Food Stamp assistance](#)

### *11. Thank You*

Last, but certainly not least: Thank you for your dedication and commitment to serve and provide food for people who need it most in your community. We count ourselves very fortunate to have such incredible community partners. As always, we welcome your feedback and questions. We are learning and growing together every day.