

## *Best Practices for Creating Safe & Dignified Experiences for Emergency Meal Guests*

### **Guidelines**

Meals are served in accordance with food safety standards

- Meal guests have access to hand washing/hand sanitizer and bathrooms.
- At least one person preparing and serving the meal is certified in food safety (2 hour free training via City's Environmental Health Services/16 hour ServSafe Food Manager training). All staff/volunteers involved with food preparation know safe food handling/sanitation practices.
- Food allergens/ingredient labels are provided for the meals. Alternate meals are available for individuals who have health and/or cultural dietary restrictions.

Meals are served in safe physical environments

- Guests are not exposed to harsh weather conditions (excessive heat/cold, sleet/snow, etc).
- Meals are served in well-lit environments and fire exits are clearly marked.
- Meals are served in close proximity to public transit.
- At least one staff/volunteer at the meal is trained in CPR/AED and first aid.
- At least one staff/volunteer has formal training in Mental Health First Aid, Trauma Informed Practice, and/or De-escalation trainings (or something similar).
- Any conflicts that occur will be addressed using verbal/non-physical de-escalation strategies. Only in situations where these strategies have not sufficed to maintain a safe environment will physical or law-enforcement strategies be used.
- Physical contact is initiated only after receiving permission.

Meals are served in structured environments

- There is someone supervising every meal service.
- Staff/volunteers have a plan for themselves and for meal guests if there is a safety incident.
- Clear rules guiding the meal are widely and consistently communicated to guests, staff and volunteers. Consequences for not abiding by rules are clear and applied equitably.
- All staff/volunteers have attended an orientation for the meal site.
- There is a consistent meal schedule; meals are served at same place and time each week.
- There is adequate food and other offered services so as not to deny services to anyone or create a sense of scarcity.

Meals are served in clean spaces, free of litter

- There are clearly labeled trash and/or recycling bins that everyone is directed to use.
- Outdoor areas are left clean once meal providers leave (adequate trash pickup/disposal).

Meals are served in a respectful manner to all those seeking a meal regardless of age, race, sex, national origin, religion, disability, medical condition, sexual orientation or gender identity.

- There are no prerequisites to receiving a meal, except safety concerns.
- Guests are not required to share personal information or identification.
- Guests can choose whether or not to participate in secular or religious services.
- Meals are accessible to individuals with physical, emotional and developmental disabilities.
- Chairs and tables are available for guests.
- Meals are hot and nutritious. When possible, guests are offered choices.

Meals are served along with connections to services such as housing, benefits enrollment (SNAP, Medicaid, etc), legal services, identification, behavioral health care and physical health care

- Meal providers engage with meal guests and work to build relationships with guests.
- Additional services are offered to meal guests either by the meal provider or through partnerships with other organizations.
- Meal providers make referrals to social and health service providers.

This document has been developed by the Food Access, Safety and Dignity subcommittee within the Shared Spaces Workgroup in April 2017. It will be reviewed twice a year.

## *Best Practices for Creating Safe & Dignified Experiences for Emergency Meal Guests*

- Businesses and cultural institutions located near areas where providers serve meals have adequate information regarding services available to individuals experiencing hunger and/or homelessness such as Project HOMES' where to turn guide and the Food Access Collaborative meal flyer. Businesses/cultural institutions attend trainings to raise awareness about resources.

This document has been developed by the Food Access, Safety and Dignity subcommittee within the Shared Spaces Workgroup in April 2017. It will be reviewed twice a year.