BEST PRACTICE FOR A FEEDING MINISTRY TO THE UNHOUSED

INTRODUCTION: Providing nutritious meals to unhoused and food insecure individuals as Jesus instructed his followers to feed the hungry. A feeding ministry is one of the most common ministries in local parishes. Preparing and providing a nutritious meal not only nourishes the individual's body but also builds hope, compassion and love for neighbor in all who are involved.

PURPOSE: As part of the Body of Christ we are called to seek Christ in everyone we meet, to work for justice and peace, respecting the dignity of every human being and loving our neighbors as ourselves. We will use our space (most likely parish hall and kitchen) to provide a prepared meal in an open and safe space for those who are unhoused to sit and eat.

REQUIREMENTS: *Describe what church assets (facilities, people, and budget) are needed for the ministry and what needs to be accomplished to work with the jurisdiction and neighbors. This is a critical section of the best practice as any church considering launching a ministry like this must be aware of what needs to be addressed prior to considering launching the ministry.*

Facilities:
- Carriers for liability and property insurance have been notified and are on-board.
- Adequate facility to serve the number of guests anticipated (expect number to grow over time as word of mouth spreads).
- Restrooms available with soap to be used by guests.
- Kitchen facilities, parish hall or any open space with preferably uncarpeted floors, and storage space for food, tables, chairs and other supplies.
- Increased garbage, recycling and food waste containers or pick up schedule.

People:
- Two or more parishioners and/or employees will provide leadership for the ministry who know the intricacies of the church facilities (lights, fuse box, first aid, safety) recruiting and organizing volunteers, ordering or finding donations of food and supplies, fundraising, and supervising meal preparation and serving.
- Minimum 4 volunteers from the church or wider community with food handler's permits will be needed to staff the meal while it is being served.
- Prep cooking by volunteers with food handler's permits is helpful in the days or hours before serving of food occurs.
- Number of volunteers needed for prep cooking, cooking, setting up, serving, and cleaning up will depend on the number of guests expected.

Budget:
- The budget for a feeding ministry might include church resources; grants from the Episcopal church and local community; Private individual, philanthropic organization, and corporate donations.
- One time funds to purchase equipment if not already present
  - Tables, chairs, ovens, fridge(s), freezer(s), dishwasher, commercial coffee maker, other kitchen appliances depending on the meal (toasters, slow cookers, bread slicer, etc...)
- Continuing funds for cleaning supplies (and perhaps janitorial services), increased waste management, increased utilities, food, and serving supplies (plates, bowls, cups, forks, spoons, knives, serving dishes, and serving utensils).

- The feeding ministry will need to decide how they will serve the food: buffet style or prepared plates/to-go containers. This will determine what supplies they will need to purchase. Even if served on washable plates and with silverware, expect there to be gradual loss and need for replacement.

Community:
- Annually notify city or county regulatory authority (ex. King County Public Health, Environmental Health Services Division) of the Donated Food Distributing Organization's food service activities.
- Community police liaison and local fire station notified as a courtesy.
- Adequate garbage receptacles outside for trash that comes from feeding ministry.

OPERATIONS: *How does the ministry function, who provides leadership, people required to staff, facilities used and times of use, security and safety. This portion of the best practice will be the most detailed and may take several pages to completely capture and describe the necessary information.*

Example:
People:
Facilities:

Security/Safety
- Will identifying or demographic information be collected? Pro for Yes and No:
  - Yes
    - Get to know names of guests easier.
    - Collected information can help in applying for government and secular grants.
    - Have a better understanding of how guests' demographics compare to community demographics.
  - No
    - Protects the privacy of guests
    - More welcoming
    - Less work for volunteers

- Background checks and Safeguarding trainings of volunteers who hold keys.
- Posted and enforced Code of Conduct required for guests to adhere to.
- Ministry is registered with local police and fire who are aware of its presence
- Police will discretely check on the parking lot a couple of times during the night
- Steps to take to de-escalate a stressful situation and when to call for help
- In the event of a problem notify ministry leadership, if the problem is life threatening dial 911 and report the problem
- Volunteers need to be present in the church to supervise use of restrooms, showers and kitchen
- Volunteers will open and lock up the church building for their respective shifts
- Emergency first aid supplies are located in the kitchen

Community

Models:

- Single Congregation's Ministry
- Shared Ministry in 1 location
- Shared Ministry in Multiple Locations, but centralized organization.
- Supportive role in ministry