

Hello Winter Relief Supporters-

September 2021

I wanted to give you the latest update about Winter Relief 2021-22 Season. We are looking to begin on October 25, with a male only site. I met with Dr. Nilesh Kalyanarama the Anne Arundel County Health Officer and he agreed and encouraged us to go forward with Winter Relief this season. He assured me that it would be safe for the volunteers, if we just put some simple safety protocols in place. He gave us some recommendations and some guidelines to follow but said it would be safe and appropriate to re-start Winter Relief this season. Here are some of the recommendations and policies we will put in place:

1. We will limit the number of clients we serve in the program to approx. 1/2 to 3/4 of the number of people they have served in previous years, and this will depend on the space and lay out of the church, and we can meet with each of you to go over what number we are both comfortable. We will also have only one or two sites.
2. Masks will be worn in all common areas, and at all times, and basically just not when they are eating, drinking, bathing, or sleeping.
3. We will require all participants to be vaccinated if they are not will require them to be tested regularly, most likely multiple times a week, we will most likely be using rapid tests (I'm still waiting to hear back on availability) or at home test kits and will test them at the Day Center.
4. Anyone that does test positive for COVID would be immediately removed from the site and would be placed in isolation at another location through assistance with Department of Social Services and the Health Department and would only be allowed to return if they test negative and are not contagious.
5. We will ask that all volunteers be vaccinated, and we limit the number of volunteers that interact with the program participants, for example we don't have a large group come and serve a meal or have a game night, etc...
6. Since we will reduce the number that we will be serving, we will try to make our vans available for transportation assistance, if a congregation needs to use them.
7. Showers, food service, smoking rules and other services provided at each site and congregation may need to be modified to each individual site to provide for social distancing and cleaning protocols.

I have attached a link to the sign up list for Winter Relief, if you can take a look and verify your week or sign up for a week that is not filled that would be great.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0448afa72ca02-winter4>

My staff is getting ready for Winter Relief and we will begin putting together packets, getting the WR database system online and set up, refining the policies and procedures and other details. I have hired Karen Johnson, some of you may have already heard from her to help assist with some administration duties for the program, she will also be contacting all the site and segment coordinators. We will also be planning an online meeting for Tuesday, October 5, at 7pm to go over these details and answer any questions you may have. I will be sending out a ZOOM invite next week.

Again I want to thank everyone for supporting Winter Relief and those that we serve, many of the people we serve would be out in the cold without you and your congregations support and commitment.

Thanks-
Mario Berninzoni
Executive Director