
PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Zina Washington, Executive Director of Help Me Help You
Tel: (562) 612-5001
Email: zina@helpmehelpu.org

Celebrate Community: Local Food Pantry ramps up distribution

Long Beach, CA - Help Me Help You has discovered new ways to overcome challenges while responding to an increased need during the COVID-19 crisis.

Help Me Help You is a small nonprofit agency that has provided food pantry and food distribution services in the city of Long Beach since 2006. Pre-COVID, the agency operated 3 pantries at their client's location. When the COVID crisis hit, and the stay-at-home order was issued, clients halted pantry operations at their sites. "This really threw us for a loop," says Zina Washington, ~~the~~ [the](#) Executive Director. "Clients were calling for assistance and for the first time in 14 years, we were not able to help."

The agency decided to transition services to a drive-thru format which allows them to distribute food in a safe and efficient manner. They are now renting a 15-foot UHaul truck which allowed them to resume pantry services, and it doubles as a location from which to distribute the groceries. A number of churches, like San Pedro United Methodist Church, offered their location as a temporary bag-and-pack station. "We had to find a way to meet the needs of current clients and the needs of those affected by the crisis," says Washington.

Last week, on May 1st, food was given out at Revive Church in Long Beach from 1:00pm to 2:30pm. This new partnership was formed as a result of COVID. This week, on May 8th the agency will begin distributing food at Oropeza Elementary School from 11:30am to 1:00pm. And on the following week, May 13th, food will be distributed at Philadelphian church from 1:00pm to 2:00pm. Drive-thru pantry services are provided each week. Visit the agency's website at www.helpmehelpu.org for details on their full schedule. Emergency funding from the **Long Beach Community Foundation** and **United Way** allowed us to transition quickly, and meet the needs of the community, says Washington.

As an additional resource, the agency also enrolls clients into CalFresh benefits. Families and individuals may qualify for CalFresh even if they are still employed, or [are](#) receiving unemployment. Visit their website or call the office for details.

The agency is seeking volunteers to assist with food pantry services. [You](#) can send an email to info@helpmehelpu.org if interested in helping out. If anyone would like to donate to a worthy cause, the agency is also planning to purchase a 15-foot truck instead of renting one each week. Financial contributions to this project are welcomed. Find recent photos of drive-thru pantry services on the agency's [Facebook page website](#) at www.facebook.com/HelpLB.

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| Help Me Help You is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to uplift homeless and low-income families and individuals by increasing access to food, public benefits, economic security, and affordable housing. Our work reduces hunger and poverty, improves nutrition and health, and boosts family economic security. Programs target homeless and disadvantaged families and individuals, including seniors, disabled individuals, single mothers, veterans and youth.

Find more information on Revive Church at www.lifeatrevive.com.

Find more information on Philadelphian Church at www.phillysda.org.

Find more information on the Long Beach Community Foundation at www.longbeachcf.org.

Find more information on United Way at www.unitedwayla.org.