



March 16, 2020

Dear Friends,

As JFS navigates the rapidly changing landscape of COVID-19, we are evaluating our services on a daily basis. We continue to balance service continuity for our clients with protecting the health of staff, volunteers and the greater community.

Many JFS clients are especially vulnerable. They will be severely and disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. We know the situation may threaten their abilities to pay rent, utilities, and access food, as well as take a toll on mental health.

In spite of the uncertainties and challenges, we are confident we can provide compassionate assistance through this crisis, albeit altered for the realities of COVID-19. Our staff have shown great dedication, care, and flexibility in getting us to this point, and I am deeply grateful for their commitment and hard work.

As of this writing, you can expect the following changes:

- **Kesher KC/Food Pantry:** The food pantries have suspended shopping appointments and beginning today will transition to drive-up boxed groceries only. We will continue to make deliveries to homebound clients. KesherKC, our enhanced social work services, will only be accessible on an as-needed basis. We are quickly building inventory to maintain a 2+ month supply of key staples as we anticipate a surge in food needs.
- **Older Adult Services:** Per best-practice recommendations, we are prioritizing tele-care management and suspending in-home visits. All clients will be contacted to ensure they have at least a two-week supply of food, medicine, and other essentials. We will maintain regular phone check-ins to assess needs and provide social support.
- **JET Express** rides will be prioritized for medical appointments, prescription pick-ups, and grocery shopping. **Help@Home** services that are elective may be delayed as we cover essential repairs to ensure client health and safety.
- **Mental Health Services:** Therapists will provide telephonic or video sessions, offering in-person sessions when clinically indicated. Clinical staff will be available to consult or respond to clients who may need extra support.

- **Chaplaincy Services:** We are working closely with our healthcare partners and elder care facilities to adapt to the current environment. Spiritual Care visits have transitioned from personal visits to telephone calls and notes. Rabbi Jonathan Rudnick remains available for consultations and phone calls.
- **Bikkur Cholim** (Visiting those in Need): We plan to offer this program virtually on March 24 with Rabbi Rudnick. He will discuss remote ways to provide comfort and support to family, community and strangers during this unique time. We are finalizing the technical aspects, so watch for an email with details on how to connect for this program.
- **Volunteers:** Volunteers will receive ongoing communication from the Volunteer Department regarding changes in shifts or policies. We will operate with as few staff and volunteers as possible to limit the size of groups. All volunteer shifts are voluntary, and we completely understand cancellations and the need for social distancing. We want all volunteers to do what is best for them and their families.
- All **group volunteer projects** and the *Older Adult Sensitivity Training* scheduled for March are postponed until a later date or will be conducted virtually. Please watch for additional communication or contact the **Volunteer Department** with questions.
- **Programs and Events:** While we highly value gathering in-person, events will either be canceled, postponed or go online for the foreseeable future. Please refer to our **website** for specifics.

Staff who do not work directly with clients in person have begun working remotely. We will leverage our Voice over IP phone system, Zoom video conferencing, a virtual private network and other technologies to offer services that are as close to our current services as possible.

Many of you have reached out, asking how you can help. Thank you for your concern and willingness to step up. We are assessing the impact of program changes and trying to get a handle on the scope of need. Undoubtedly there will be increased demands on the food pantries and other challenges our clients will face. Please watch for our email later this week with ways you can support and partner in this important work.

In these challenging times, be well and remember to take care of one another.

Don Goldman
Executive Director & CEO