



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daphne Jordan

## Senator Daphne Jordan Advocates for Food Pantry Workers and Soup Kitchen Staff

DAHPNE JORDAN January 13, 2021

| ISSUE: **CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC; COVID-19; VACCINE DISTRIBUTION**

Dear Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Zucker:

I write on an urgent matter concerning the timely distribution of COVID-19 vaccines for food pantry workers and soup kitchen staff who continue providing an essential function during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

As presently constituted, New York State's guidelines for Phase 1B of the COVID-19 vaccine distribution specify that individuals working (paid or unpaid) in a homeless shelter where sleeping, bathing, or eating accommodations must be shared by individuals and families who are not part of the same household, in a position where there is potential for interaction with shelter residents are now eligible to schedule an appointment for vaccination. However, this designation would appear to exclude individuals working in food pantries or soup kitchens that are not located within homeless shelters.

Accordingly, I am respectfully requesting that the state immediately provide a wavier, or revise its guidelines, so food pantry workers and soup kitchen staff who do not work in homeless shelters can be deemed essential and thus be eligible to immediately schedule a

COVID-19 vaccination appointment.

Workers at food pantries and soup kitchens regularly interact with some of our communities' most vulnerable populations. These dedicated workers have been on the job providing an essential service and meeting the growing nutritional needs of our fellow New Yorkers since the onset of the Coronavirus outbreak.

As a matter of basic fairness, and in recognition of their faithful, selfless service, the state should immediately include food pantry workers and soup kitchen staff as essential workers in New York's Phase 1B COVID-19 vaccination distribution so they may begin scheduling vaccination appointments at the earliest possible opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely,

Daphne Jordan

State Senator, 43<sup>rd</sup> District