COVID-19 Emergency Response Impact Report

Founded in 1983, Miriam’s Kitchen’s mission is to end chronic and veteran homelessness in Washington, DC. Our approach to ending homelessness begins with a fresh, healthy meal surrounded by community. We help our vulnerable neighbors improve health, increase income, and obtain housing through a range of programs and partnerships, while collaborating with leaders city-wide to make instances of homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring.

One month ago, Miriam’s Kitchen mobilized quickly in response to COVID-19: ensuring continuity of services for our neighbors experiencing homelessness and stepping up in unique ways that bridge systemic gaps.

On March 12, Miriam's Kitchen completely shifted on-site operations: canceling volunteer shifts, serving meals in to-go containers, and rapidly installing tents and portable bathrooms with sinks to move services outdoors. From providing on-site services to our guests (individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and complicating health risk factors) to supporting our residents (those who have a safe place to call home), we continue to think critically and creatively across programs to adapt and safely continue our essential services.

The coronavirus reminds us of our deep interdependence and that our entire community is at risk when just one of our neighbors is unwell. Yet thousands of our neighbors experiencing homelessness lack a safe place to call home and face challenges to basic hygiene. In response, our emergency efforts are intensely focused on food security, healthcare, and housing, reflecting our commitment to protecting the health and safety of our vulnerable neighbors, staff, volunteers and larger community.

We are grateful for the caring community of supporters who have made our COVID-19 emergency response possible. This report details your impact.

Learn more by visiting miriamskitchen.org/covid-19-response
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Your support has helped tackle food insecurity
- 5,758 healthy, fresh, hot meals served in to-go containers
- 358 frozen meals delivered to residents
- 200 no-contact deliveries of groceries and essentials to residents so they can shelter in place
- 938 meals delivered by Street Outreach across nearly half of DC
- Only high-quality ingredients used for every meal

Your support has helped prevent the spread of COVID-19
- 400 masks, 514 bottles hand sanitizer, and other hygiene products distributed
- 290 sleeping bags and blankets to individuals who don’t have a safe place to call home
- 503 screenings for COVID-19
- 61 health screenings provided on-site, in partnership with Unity Health Care

Your support has helped provide safe, permanent homes
- 4 people moved into housing
- Continuing to navigate the housing system with guests awaiting their housing placements
- Supporting 216 residents so they can safely shelter in place
- 18 phones purchased for residents so they can access case managers and other support systems while staying inside
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Your support has helped build community and connection

- Providing art therapy through self-care kits and remote one-on-one sessions
- Helping guests navigate a world that has suddenly moved online—from accessing food stamps to obtaining stimulus checks
- Supporting our Speakers Bureau (advocates with lived experiences of homelessness) with connectivity, skill-building, and empowerment

Your support has helped bridge systemic gaps

- Coordination with government and landlords so people can obtain housing by virtually visiting apartments, signing leases, and passing inspections
- Advocating so our neighbors without a home have safe quarantine options and policymakers are scaling investments in life-saving, healthcare solutions—like housing
- Educating as to why systemic inequality makes it so communities of color are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and homelessness
- Securing additional resources so that we can strategically deploy our efforts as needed

Your support has helped make our mission possible

- Impacting our local community and leading with kindness
- Supporting our most vulnerable neighbors
- Creating sustaining partnerships that accelerate systemic impact
- Ending chronic and veteran homelessness
Some highlights of Miriam's Kitchen in recent news

- ABC: John Gonzalez reports live from Miriam's Kitchen on their coronavirus response efforts
- The Atlantic: Who will run the soup kitchens?
- BBC WorldNews: Balancing need with risks
- The Chronicle of Philanthropy: Big changes for nonprofits that rely on volunteers
- The Kojo Nnamdi Show: How is D.C. Protecting those Facing Homelessness from Coronavirus?
- NEWS4 at 11: Shomari Stone spotlights Miriam’s Kitchen’s COVID-19 response
- PBS NewsHour: Why ‘closing was not an option’ for this charity organization
- The Washington Post: ‘No way I’m going into a shelter’: Will coronavirus put more homeless on the streets?
- The Washington Post: Review by food critic, Tom Sietsema – 'At Miriam’s Kitchen, a great mission starts with a good meal’