



CROSSVILLE / CUMBERLAND COUNTY
Emergency Management Agency
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Rick Williams, Director
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In response to the ever growing and ever changing needs of this county during the Covid-19 pandemic, Rick Williams, Emergency Management Director, has coordinated a task force of local officials, agencies, churches and others to see how emergency needs can be handled in the most efficient and safe way possible to meet crisis needs among the residents of the county. Cumberland County Mayor Allen Foster and Crossville Mayor James Mayberry are an integral part of this team offering advice and keeping everyone informed of incoming information and guidelines. Mayor Foster stated, "Our EMA is a vital resource to the citizens of Cumberland County during times such as this. Resource coordination is an essential need and our EMA is working hard to help the people of Cumberland County."

Weekly conference calls are being made to determine the community needs and the response necessary. VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Assisting in Disasters) has been activated to offer community outreach for assistance with food relief and crisis intervention. Cumberland Good Samaritans is the responding agency handling the casework and outreach with volunteer assistance offered by the Cumberland County Rescue Squad and vetted volunteers of several local churches who are VOAD members. The CGS office and property is closed to the general public at this time with staff here for VOAD response only.

A hotline number is available for residents to call if you or someone you know is in need of food relief or crisis intervention. The number is (931) 787-1033 and will be manned by Good Samaritans staff Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. VOAD Chairman, Doug Scarlett stated, "VOAD, as always, is prepared to respond to the emergency needs created by this pandemic, no different than when we have had destruction from an ice storm or tornado. This county has always stepped up in a big way to take care of each other and we are confident this event will be no different."

The VOAD Relief Account at the Bank of Putnam County has also been activated in order to receive monetary donations in order to take care of expenses incurred through this crisis. Emergency food relief is the concentration at this time with crisis intervention being discussed on a case by case situation. Executive Director Mickey Eldridge states, "Cumberland Good Samaritans is privileged to serve in the capacity of being a hub for VOAD during a disaster. The bank account is vital in making it possible for us to respond to the needs of our friends and neighbors in crisis during the unprecedented time. This organization handles the bookkeeping, expenditures and provides the paper trail to EMA and FEMA for accountability, as is necessary. It is important to note that 100% of the proceeds received in this account go directly to relief aid in Cumberland County. We are grateful to all who are working the front lines and to those who cannot, but are willing to offer a donation to the account no matter how big or small. It will go a long ways in buying food, paying rent or utilities for a family whose world has been turned upside down."

Director Williams wants to remind everyone that only emergency food relief and crisis intervention needs are being handled through this phone line only. He states that VOAD is advising him that the resources are limited and will be targeted towards at-risk citizens and those disabled who have no other helps or transportation. The purpose is to help those with immediate emergency food needs and crisis intervention. The hope is that if someone has a need they will be reaching out first to family or their church home.

There is a process when a call is received by the hotline. Case work will be done with questions asked and verifications made by phone. No face to face contact will be made. Assistant Director and Social Services Coordinator, Melanie Phillips, states that, "Unfortunately we have already had several requests that turned out to be non-emergency and weeded out. For example, to call to ask for extra meat, or more food to stock up because someone couldn't get 4 or 5 weeks worth when they were in the store, does not meet our definition of emergency food need. We will do our best to acknowledge those with a true emergency need and do what we can to help." The agency is relying on vetted only volunteers through the Rescue Squad and several churches in the area. Once it is determined that there is a food need, a volunteer will come to pick the food up at Good Sam's by appointment only. Confirmation will be made that the client will be home when delivery is made. Food will be placed on a porch with no direct contact of any kind being made with a client or entry into the home. Other requests for crisis intervention will be dealt with by phone only. Physical donations or unvetted volunteers are not needed at this time.

If you, your church or organization wants to know more about how to get involved with VOAD, please contact Cumberland Good Samaritans by email at mphillips@cumberlandgoodsamaritans.org or through the hotline.