

PANDEMIC BENEFITS AND THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

My fellow members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. I have volunteered to come up with a plan to explain to you the relationship between the pandemic benefits and the SVDP Society.

As a result I will do my best to try to put together a blizzard of benefits in some order to help us further our role as missionaries to our brothers and sisters in need.

In order to have some clarity we have to define the plan to put things in some order. So this is the plan.

First of all we have pandemic benefits to help us during this difficult time of our lives. The pandemic benefits we are presently experiencing will hopefully be temporary.

The other benefits which have been in existence for a number of years we will call the basic benefits.

The plan is to focus primarily on the pandemic benefits. However, if you want to go back to the basic benefits you can refer to the book I prepared on July 13, 2017. If you do not have a copy of this book, please give me a call and I will make sure you get a copy. My telephone number is 610-359-9394.

Now to the pandemic benefits. There are a huge number of these benefits. Instead of my typing out all of these benefits I am going to refer you to the best articles I have encountered.

I will start with the federal benefits. I suggest you open "Coronavirus Bulletin Board". The site is set forth below.

<https://www.aidslawpa.org/coronavirus-bulletin-board/>

Then turn to page 7 and you will see all of the federal laws as set forth in the CARES ACT.

If you read over the remaining pages you will get a good outline of what the federal government has declared for our assistance.

Please note you do not have to remember all of the laws set forth.

Just get the big picture and then, if needed, go back and review what is stipulated on the printout.

Now we will go down to the next level. The next level is the Pennsylvania laws. They are set forth on pages 1 through 11.

Now we will go down to the next lower level which are the laws set forth by Delaware County.

There are two condensed versions of the pandemic laws for Delaware County. The first version is “COVID – 19 Resources for Delaware County, PA”. Its site is <https://helpmlp.org/covid-19-resources-and-information/covid-19-resources-for-delaware-county-pa/>

The second version takes little different approach. It is called “Resources for the Community”. Its site is:

www.delcopa.gov › ich › resourcesforcommunity

It should be noted the next level down are cities. The only city in Delaware County is Chester City. Chester City pretty much follows the pattern of Delaware County.

And finally there are municipalities, boroughs and townships. Sometimes they may provide some additional benefits. You would have to check the location of our neighbor to see if any benefits are provided.

HOW DO THE PANDEMIC BENEFITS HELP OUR VINCENTIANS TO ASSIST OUR NEIGHBORS?

Generally the pandemic benefits help our neighbors by relaxing the requirements so more of our neighbors can qualify.

The following are some of the areas where we help our neighbors:

FOOD

Delaware County is a top source of food assistance. There are many food banks. There are also many churches that have their own food bank. In order for us to help our neighbors with food, I would suggest we consider looking at some of the following websites.

One of the top websites is the **Delaware County Interfaith Food Assistance Network**. Click on this site and you will see where our neighbors can get assistance. www.delcohsa.org › adultfamily › DIFAN

You can also check the website of the **Family & Community Service of Delaware County (FCSDC)**. This is an organization that is setting up home delivery of food boxes for low-income Delaware County residents who have been quarantined by their medical provider and have no other means of getting food.

I also suggest you check the “**Free food pantries in Delaware County**”

https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/food_banks_delaware_county.html.

They are also a good source of food.

Food Gift Cards – Many of our conferences have gift cards which are given out for the purpose of buying food. They are free to the recipient.

Philabundance Program – This is a wonderful food program with a mission to prevent hunger and malnutrition. They are based out of Philadelphia. However, they function in Delaware County. They give free perishable food to those in need. The locations in Delaware County are Upper Darby, Sharon Hill and Chester.

They also give a free box of nutritious food to eligible seniors.

Philabundance is an excellent source of free food that we as Vincentians have not seriously considered over the years. I submit

we should keep Philabundance in mind for our neighbors. For more information call Philabundance at 215-339-0900.

WIC Program – Its mission is to increase food security and reduce hunger by providing children and low income producing people access to food, a healthy diet and nutrition education in a way that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence. They can be contacted by typing in WIC program or at [WIC documents](#)

In view of all the food resources set forth above, there should be no food shortage in Delaware County.

Snap Program -The SNAP program was previously known as the Food Stamp Program. It provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of needy families so they can purchase healthy food and move towards self-sufficiency.

The Snap program has relaxed their requirements to make it easier for our neighbors to qualify during the time of the pandemic.

Every time we help our neighbor we should ask them if they contacted the Snap program. This should be one of the very first things our neighbor should do if they lost their employment or were unable to work for any reason. It is easy for them to apply.

PECO AND THE PANDEMIC

PECO has expanded its assistance programs to support all customers during the Coronavirus pandemic. They will continue this program until July 1, 2020. Remember they could expand the date.

This includes suspending service shutoffs and waiving new late fees. For more information go to “PECO Expands Assistance Programs to Support All Customers During Coronavirus Pandemic” or their website

<https://www.peco.com/News/Pages/Press%20Releases/PECOExpandsAssistanceProgramstoSupportAllCustomersDuringCoronavirusPandemic031320.aspx>

PECO has been very supportive of the SVDP society for a number of years. Over the years I have dealt with a man in the CARES division

by the name of Larry Singleton (215-841-6557). He has always been very helpful and cooperative.

LIHEAP

LIHEAP is also helping out during this period of the pandemic. Starting Monday, May 18, 2020 they are accepting applications for its new LIHEAP Recovery Crisis Program. This is a wonderful opportunity for our neighbors to consider. The program will last until all of the funds are spent.

We should check with our neighbors to see if they would qualify. They could get a grant up to \$800.00.

For more information on this program go to

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/providers/Providers/Pages/LIHEAP-Recovery-Crisis-Program.aspx>

RENT

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ordered no evictions through June 1, 2020. The Cares Act stops some evictions for non-payment of rent until July 25, 2020.

That is a good benefit because it gives our neighbor an opportunity to get reoriented. However, it does not excuse our neighbor from paying the rent or mortgage.

From a Vincentian point of view, rent and mortgages are always a difficult matter to resolve. For example, what happens if we pay our neighbors rent for a month or two and then it turns out our neighbor does not have the funds to make further payments? They are evicted after the moratorium is ended. We may not then have the funds to help them find a new home.

Finding a new home for our neighbor could be challenging because of the prior eviction.

This is the time when we invoke the Holy Spirit to guide us on our decision.

During the pandemic, we have to again rely on the Holy Spirit because we may or may not have an opportunity to sit down with our neighbor and evaluate our neighbor for truthfulness and the reasons why they are in their present situation.

This leaves us with another problem. Especially now during the pandemic, what happens if we become part of a scam? For example, one person calls and says they are in need of rent immediately and you can call my landlord for verification. The landlord you call is part of the scam. You pay the rent and then they split the proceeds. You did not have an opportunity to see a lease, you were just taken over.

My suggestion is before you pay any rent you go to the Delaware County website and see who is listed as the owner of the property. To get this information click the public access website. Then click real estate tax system. Click search by address and then put in the address of the property that is rented and then you will see the owner of the property and the taxes paid over the years.

UNEMPLOYMENT

It is my understanding that most of the jobs are filled by networking. Consequently, our neighbor should reach out to everyone he or she knows. It is not a time to be bashful.

Recently, I heard a number of food stores like Acme and Giant are looking for help.

I would suggest you contact an organization called “Joseph People”. It is totally free. I know people they have helped in every aspect of the job search such as resume, how to present yourself, etc. The closest chapter could be in Aldan. You can read more about them by visiting their website named “Joseph’s People”

josephspeople.org

Another source sponsored by the Delaware County Chamber of Commerce is “Coronavirus Delaware County Impact” and its site is <https://www.delcochamber.org/coronavirus.html> On page 5 it refers to the

Pandemic Unemployment assistance program which could add an additional \$600.00 per week in addition to the regular benefits for all unemployment recipients.

Another organization is 'Indeed.com'. It is an American worldwide employment related search engine for job listing. Its site is:

www.indeed.com

You can also consider contacting Pennsylvania CareerLink and PathWays PA.

There are also jobs available for taking up the census at \$19.50 per hour. Also the government is looking for thousands of people to help tracing coronavirus.

What is our role as Vincentians in reference to unemployment?

I submit our role is to build up our neighbors spirits by taking care of their immediate needs such as food, shut off notices and then coming up with a plan. Then we can start to help them with their job search to the best of our ability. If we are not knowledgeable in this area, possibly we may know someone who is knowledgeable and be willing to assist our neighbor.

It is crucial that we give our neighbor hope. It is also important that they build up their confidence. An employer wants to know that he or she is capable of doing the job and relating well with other employees.

CREDIT CARD DEBT

Because of the pandemic and the loss of jobs, many people are having trouble paying their bills. They then start to panic and decide they will just hope no one bothers them. That is just the opposite of what they should do.

They should address the creditor and ask them for some type of reduction or accommodation until they get back on their feet.

If the amount owned is not a large amount the SVDP conference could be of some assistance.

Another alternative would be to offer to pay a reduced amount as full payment. If the creditor agrees, our neighbor should realize it may affect their credit score. If you overlook telling our neighbor it may affect their credit score, our neighbor may get upset.

If our neighbor has a huge amount of credit card debt, a different approach would have to be taken. There are consumer credit card counselling services that are very helpful for this purpose.

Our neighbor has to be very careful what credit card counselling service they select. Some agencies are planning their own future and not the future of our neighbor. They should only select a Hud approved credit card counselling service. To obtain a list of the approved agencies go to www.hud.gov.

So what is the lesson that our Vincentian could learn from giving advice in certain areas. I submit the lesson to be learned is not to give advice in a particular area if you are not skilled in that area. In the case I described above, our neighbor could have gotten upset by our Vincentian not telling them by paying a lesser amount as payment in full could affect their credit score.

For more information in this area, please read the article which I have attached called "What to Do If Your're Having Trouble Paying Bills". The site for this article is

<https://www.consumerreports.org/personal-finance/trouble-paying-bills-coronavirus-pandemic/>

HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is a very sad situation. The people who are homeless are our neighbors and as neighbors they are all made in the image and likeness of Christ. That means we have to treat them with the same love, kindness and compassion as we do everyone else.

We should pray our world will do a lot more for the homeless. I remember when I had occasion to help some homeless neighbors, I found many of the shelters were filled to capacity.

I have attached an article called “Delaware County Emergency Shelter Recourse Directory”. Its link is [Delaware County Shelters](#)

CHILDREN

Our children are our future. How we train them will be their future. Are we satisfied we are doing a good job teaching them to be the very best version of themselves?

I would hope and pray our children understand they are growing up in a very mixed up world in which we presently live. Hopefully they will recognize this and reform our present world into a society that recognizes God as our Creator.

I have attached a very good article pertaining to “Supporting Families During COVID – 19”. The site for this article is

<https://childmind.org/coping-during-covid-19-resources-for-parents/>

LIVING WITH WORRY AND ANXIETY AMIDST GLOBAL UNCERTAINTY

There is a wonderful article pertaining to the above title. It is worth reading. The link for the above article is: [Living with Worry and Anxiety](#)

There is an additional article from Governor Wolf pertaining to where a person with anxiety can get assistance from the state. The link for this article is

https://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/DHS_details.aspx?newsid=513

One may think what does this have to do with the SVDP Society? The answer is it has a lot to do with the SVDP Society. Our mission is to help all those in need and not just those who are financially impoverished.

We help those who are spiritually and/or emotionally impoverished. The only caveat is we should not delve into an area where we are

not qualified. We should encourage our neighbors to contact qualified professionals.

CONCLUSION

My fellow Vincentians, there are a lot more benefits from all various sources. I tried to give you a sampling of some of the benefits that would help us in our mission as Vincentians.

After reviewing a lot of these benefits I started to ascertain what the impact of the pandemic benefits meant to me.

I am certainly immensely sorry for our neighbors who are suffering and those who have died. In many cases they died alone without the support of their loved ones. Then after the death of the loved one, only a few family members are allowed to go to the service.

However, on the other hand, I am so very grateful for all of the wonderful people, corporations, all governmental agencies, first responders and many others who are going way out of their normal routine to reach out to their brothers and sisters in need.

Then I came up with one word that I think says it all. The word is:

LOVE

Christ has said it all when He called us to love Him, love our neighbors and love ourselves. He also said:

Do this in COMMEMORATION of Me

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