

Quezon City strongly urges community pantries to coordinate with barangays

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MANILA --- The **Quezon City government** issued Friday guidelines for community pantries within the city to ensure public health protocols are followed and peace and order is maintained.

No permits are required to set up a community pantry in the city, but those who do want to organize one are “strongly encouraged” to inform in writing and coordinate with the barangay where the pantry would be located.

The guidelines say that pantry organizers and barangays may coordinate with each other regarding crowd control measures, like setting a cut-off time for persons in a queue, limiting the number of people served each day, using marshals to enforce health protocols, and delineating locations for queues.

Barangays are asked to provide assistance through its tanods and/or barangay health emergency response team, the latter of which may provide standby ambulances or medical facilities if available.

“If a pantry organizer opted not to coordinate the concerned barangay, the pantry organizer may be deemed to have assumed sole responsibility for any incidents arising from pantry operations,” the guidelines read. Community pantries may operate from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m., following prevailing curfew hours in Quezon City. It also states that law enforcement shall refrain from intervening in community pantries except in cases of “manifest breach of health or safety protocols.”

Among these health and safety protocols is the mandate for pantry attendants, staff and patrons to at least wear face masks. It also suggests for the pantry to implement a “no face mask, no service” policy.

The guidelines also state that patrons are prohibited from eating or drinking within the vicinity of the community pantry.

It also says that community pantry operators must keep the pantries clean and that the food being offered to people is not spoiled or unsanitary.

It suggests further that community pantries adopt a system to curb hoarding, like imposing item limits per person or household, providing service only to bona fide local residents, using a points system, stubs or coupons to apportion goods, or limiting the use of sacks or containers.

The guidelines were issued following the death of balut vendor Rolando dela Cruz, 67, who passed out while lining up at a community pantry organized by actress Angel Locsin. He was declared dead upon arriving at a hospital.

Locsin has apologized and vowed to extend assistance to his family.