

QC gov't issues guidelines for community pantries

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The local government of Quezon City has issued guidelines for those setting up or heading community pantries in the city to ensure the observance of health protocols and maintain peace and order amid the pandemic.

Mayor Joy Belmonte, in a memorandum signed Friday following her meeting with community pantry proponent Ana Patricia Non, urged organizers to submit a written letter to the barangay officials of the area where their pantry is located and identify those in charge of the operation.

Belmonte however clarified that no barangay permit or clearance will be required of them as long as the pantry provides free food to the public.

Under the memo, organizers and barangay officials may coordinate regarding reasonable crowd control measures, including setting a cut off time for persons in line, limiting the number of people to be accommodated in a day and using marshals to enforce health protocols and disperse overcrowding.

With the existing public safety hours, community pantries are also required to operate from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. only.

Belmonte also encouraged organizers to adopt a system to mitigate abuse following reports about several individuals exploiting the community pantry and taking more than their fair share.

“For example, the pantries have the option to impose item limits per person or household, or limit their patrons to bona fide barangay residents,” she pointed out.

Those lining up for the community pantry are also prohibited from eating or drinking within the vicinity of the pantry, while organizers are ordered to maintain cleanliness.

“They are also responsible for food safety. Food must be fresh or not expired, and no adulterated, spoiled or unsanitary foods shall be distributed,” Belmonte said.

Belmonte directed members of the city’s Law and Order Cluster, regulatory departments, and the barangays to strictly enforce her latest issuance.