

CSJ Ministry Responses to COVID-19

Ministry: St Joseph Worker Program

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1. Is your ministry responding directly to those affected by COVID-19? How?

As a year of service program, our St Joseph Workers continue to respond to the needs of the communities they serve. Three of the Workers are serving from home, and one is still serving in person to meet the needs of the women and families at the emergency shelter, St Anne's Place and Next Step at Haven Housing.

2. Have you altered your mission and/or operations in any way as a result of COVID-19? How?

In following safety protocols, all SJW staff are working from home and we are continuously checking in with our volunteers to make sure they are safe and serving from home as possible. We have been offering resources to support their emotional, physical and mental wellbeing and keeping up to date about their changing realities with their sites as well. We have been connecting multiple times a week with our national Catholic Volunteer Network colleagues, St Joseph Worker Program network, AmeriCorps sponsored program and our Regional Year of Service/Mission community to figure out best practices, check in on evolving realities with current volunteers and applicants and offer support to each other. One major way that COVID-19 is affecting the program is that our current applicants are mostly seniors in college, whose lives, like most of the population, have been very disrupted by this current pandemic situation and response measures. Universities have moved to online classes, moved all of the students off campus and are deciding whether or not an in person graduation ceremony is possible. This disruption has pushed our application process later and added an unknown variability to our applicants' discernment process and timeline.

3. Has COVID-19 affected your financial condition? How? Explain how revenue has declined and/or expenses increased over a "normal" year.

While much remains uncertain at this point, our current placements have given us no indications that they will not be able to complete their scheduled payments for the remainder of this year.

We have also been in touch with each of the agencies where we are looking to place Workers for the 2020-21 year. As of today, all of them are still committed to providing an SJW role. However, as the weeks go by their ability to pay the placement fee might change. If a site would be unable to pay all or a portion of the placement site fee, this would have a significant impact on our budgeted income.

At this point we don't know the impact of the pandemic on our individual donations and grant opportunities. Unemployment or underemployment could mean that our monthly donors are no longer able to give us that support. The availability of grants may also shrink. Finally, we are at the beginning stages of discussing if we would be able to hold our SJW Alum Community planned fundraiser, Brewing Change, this year.

4. How much, specifically, do you need in emergency funding, and what would you use it for?

At this time, we don't see a need for emergency funding. If we are able to maintain our income streams from the Province, the Ministries Foundation and our placement sites we would be able to manage through the end of this fiscal year.

5. How has COVID-19 affected your staffing?

Currently, all staff are working from home and connecting with our current volunteers, SJW Alum Community, applicants and networks through video conferences and mobile check ins.

6. Have you determined how your ministry will return to “normal” when that time comes?

Many of the “normal” things we do as part of our ministry, we are able to continue in some way virtually. The biggest need or way that we can return to normal is in our ability to be physically together. It is much harder to create community between staff, Workers, province community and ministries when we need to be socially distant. Returning to normal for us includes being able to collaborate and partner with other ministries, SJW placement sites and local government and organizations for training, activities and events.

7. What lingering effects do you expect to see in the populations you serve once the crisis itself is greatly reduced or over?

We believe that many of our current group of placement site partners are seeing an increase in their work and the need for their services. Subsequently, this increases their need for someone like a St. Joseph Worker. The potential for high numbers of people who are unemployed increases the needs for people on the margins. Homelessness, access to health care, and the need for resources for the marginalized will linger long after the current crisis subsides.

There will continue to be many needs for young adults as well. Uncertainty regarding future employment, student loans, physical health and the health and safety of friends and family will continue to linger. This will have an impact on a young person's ability to find employment, housing, etc.

8. Add any additional information you think our donors need to know:

The St. Joseph Worker Program continues to provide professional experience in a non-profit or direct service roles, personal and career path growth opportunities, support and a community in our current difficult times.

We believe that SJWs can be a community of stability and support in a changing and uncertain moment in our world's history. We believe that crisis can create times of opportunity and that we can help young women seize this opportunity to create social change that makes a more just world. We stand ready to courageously step into this new reality with young women and embolden them to lead us into a better, more just and equitable future.