

## COVINGTON OUTREACH ASSOCIATION

### MEIJER SIMPLY GIVE GROCERY SHOPPING PROGRAM

We kindly ask for your consideration of others, and offer these shopping guidelines to ensure the success of our food pantry program:

Plan to arrive at the Troy Meijer store with plenty of time to complete your grocery shopping by the pre-arranged check-out time, usually 1:30 p.m. on Fridays. It is very important that you are ready to checkout no later than 15 minutes after the predesignated checkout time (usually 1:30pm). If you are unable to meet that time frame, please reschedule for another week. A text will be sent to you by a COA volunteer between 1:15 and 1:30 to let you know they have arrived at the store and where you may find them. Our volunteers will usually be near the first open checkout line past the self-checkout registers and will be wearing their name tag on a red COA neck strap.

If you are unable to keep your scheduled appointment for Meijer shopping please give us as much notice as possible so that we may schedule another family in your place. We only schedule so many appointments each week. We only offer Meijer shopping on the 2nd and 4th weeks of each month, so please plan accordingly. We also do not schedule shopping the week of Thanksgiving or the last two weeks of the year. Please remember our food assistance program exists to assist in emergency situations and is not intended for continuous use. We ask that each family **limit usage to 8 visits per year** (one visit per month, at least 4-5 weeks). You are not required to use the Meijer shopping program each month. You may want to spread your visits out over the year, scheduling every 6-7 weeks between visits if possible. We do offer a list of additional resources in Miami County to help with food assistance such as additional food pantries, soup kitchens, free community meals and such.

We ask that you calculate or estimate the cost of your groceries as you are shopping in order to stay within the COA budgeted amount. We want to be responsible guests of Meijer and do not want to put back a lot of food that has been taken off the shelf.

If you should happen to exceed the budgeted amount by more than a few dollars, you will be asked to pay for the overage, or your benefit will be reduced the next time you shop. Please help us stay on track of our budget so we can assist every Covington family that reaches out to us. Our volunteers only have so much in Meijer Simply Give cards with them each week and we want to make sure every family is taken care of.

Please remember our Meijer Simply Give gift cards are **FOOD ONLY. NO TAXABLE ITEMS**, please see the list of restricted items on the reserve side. However, baby supplies such as diapers, baby wipes, baby food and baby formula are permitted.

**Healthy Spending Guideline:** We ask that families limit the amount of unhealthy “junk” foods to no more than \$20 each shopping trip. This includes but is not limited to: cookies, candy, ice cream, pies, cakes, donuts, potato chips, and other overly sugary and salty foods. Please do your best to plan meals that include fresh fruits and vegetables as well as lean meats.

If you need assistance with shopping or placing your groceries in your vehicle, please bring someone along to help.

*Continued disregard for the guidelines could result in a reduction of allowance or suspension of your enrollment in our Food Assistance Program.*

Thank you for being considerate of others!!

**The following items or categories are taxable items and are not permitted to be purchased with our Meijer Simply Give gift cards.**

**No Alcohol** or food/beverages containing alcohol

**No Tobacco** products, nicotine or vaping products

**No Personal Care** products including but not limited to shampoo, conditioner, body wash, soap

**No Paper Products** including but not limited to toilet paper, paper towels, paper plates

**No Cleaning Supplies** including but not limited to laundry detergents, Lysol, Clorox

**No Kitchen Supplies** including but not limited to foil, storage bags, plastic wrap

**No Pet Supplies** including but not limited to pet food, kitty litter, treats, medications and toys

**No Soft Drinks** including but not limited to Pepsi products, Coke products, 7up Products. No carbonated products!

**No Sports Drinks** including but not limited to Gatorade, Poweraid, Monster, RipIt, Red Bull. This also includes Pedialyte and other drinks containing electrolytes and sugar.

**No Hawaiian Punch or individual servings of juice** including but not limited to Sunny D and Capri Sun or Clamato juice. Only full family size bottles of Apple, Grape juice and such

**No Powdered Flavored Water or water flavoring products** including but not limited to Country Time, Kool-Aid or other drink enhancers. No carbonated beverages including waters.

**No Artificial Sweeteners** including but not limited to Stevia, Splenda, Equal, Sweet-n-Low

Other items may be taxable that we have not listed here.