

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****January 4, 2022**

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SUBJECT: DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD AND CLOTHING ALONG EAST LANCASTER AVENUE

On November 16, 2021, we issued Informal Report (IR) 21-10706 regarding homeless camp abatement and cleanup. This IR mentioned that 20 to 25 percent of the debris collected in these cleanups is attributed to the over-distribution of tents, sleeping bags, blankets, clothes, shoes, and food from the public. In response to that IR, Council requested additional information on efforts to educate the public on the most effective ways to assist those experiencing homelessness and the names of organizations providing food and other goods on East Lancaster.

The Code Compliance Department's Consumer Health Unit, the Fort Worth Police Department's HOPE Team, and Directions Home unit have all made efforts to educate the public about the most effective ways to help our homeless population. Examples of education include the following:

- Providing information about existing resources (meals and services)
- Providing examples and contact information about better ways to serve (i.e., creation of welcome baskets for the newly housed and volunteering at permanent supportive housing projects)
- Connecting with the Tarrant County Homeless Coalition

Often individuals and groups see people experiencing homelessness and want to help and the response is often food and other necessities. TCHC can inform individuals and groups about existing resources and how to access the current system without duplicating services. Many individuals and groups have connected with existing resources (e.g., Union Gospel Mission, Presbyterian Night Shelter, and the Salvation Army) to assist those organizations with food and goods without contributing to litter along the East Lancaster corridor.

CleanUP USA began ministry in 2020 on the streets surrounding East Lancaster and was assisted by City officials in collaborating with TCHC. The organization has explored improving collaboration efforts and more efficient utilization of resources. CleanUp USA now offers regularly scheduled services at Casa de Esperanza. TCHC suggestions appear here: <https://ahomewithhope.org/give/>.

Tracking organizations that repeatedly engage in street feeding has been difficult for several reasons: the groups and individuals come and go, some are not from Fort Worth, and many decline to provide their organization's name. One group that has been urged by Code Compliance multiple times to participate in other ways is Under the Bridge Ministries.

For more information, please contact Directions Home Manager Tara Perez at Tara.Perez@fortworthtexas.gov or Code Director Brandon Bennett at Brandon.Bennett@fortworthtexas.gov.

David Cooke
City Manager