eNEWSLETTER // UPDATE

Irving Cares Response to COVID-19

A PROACTIVE RESPONSE

The growing COVID-19 crisis threatens to disproportionately affect low income households not only in the short-term, but as a devastating social and economic crisis for the upcoming months and years to come. Cases of the novel coronavirus in Irving has jumped to 1,517, making it the second hardest hit city in Dallas county, just behind the city of Dallas. In total, 19 Irving residents have died from the virus in recent weeks[1].

Irving Cares CEO, Kyle Taylor, says, "Irving Cares has worked tirelessly to provide essential services to those in need in a safe and efficient manner since the pandemic first emerged mid-March. We will continue to provide these services, not only in the short-term, but we're working hard to find creative solutions to expand our services to meet the long-term effects the pandemic will have on our residents and community." He notes that Irving Cares is "working not just for today, but for tomorrow's needs" and positioning themselves to be at the "forefront of economic empowerment and financial security, with the long-term goal of making tomorrow better for families who call Irving home."

Irving Cares is committed to continuing our operations and taking proactive measures to protect the health and well-being of our staff, volunteers and clients as we continue to serve our community's most vulnerable. We are closely monitoring developments related to COVID-19 and continuously reviewing guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO) and local entities including the Dallas County Health & Human Services (DCHHS). Until further notice, masks will be required for all staff, volunteers and any visitors entering the building for in-person services. Volunteers and visitors will be given a no-touch temp check upon arrival. Hand sanitizer stations are available at all entry and exit points in the building.

All in-person events and programs have been canceled until further notice. Irving Cares board member and committee meetings are being held virtually.

FOOD PANTRY

The food pantry remains open during the week with normal operating hours (closed on Wednesdays); however, we have made a few changes to our traditional methods of distribution to comply with social distancing guidelines and maximize safety. Visitors now enter through the lobby and are given a number to meet a food pantry volunteer at the back door.

[1] Sarah Bahari, "Irving cases pass 1,500 as Dallas County passes 15,000, plus other coronavirus updates" Dallas Morning News (Published March 16, 2020; updated June 19 at 10:15AM). www.dallasnews.com/news/public-health/2020/03/16/whats-closed-postponed-or-canceled-in-irving-because-of-coronavirus-and-other-updates



To maintain necessary safety precautions, the food pantry will distribute pre-packaged perishable and non-perishable items providing families with a week's worth of nutritious and well-balanced meals for every member of the household. Pre-packaged boxes will still include meats and eggs, as well as personal hygiene products, like toilet paper. We will continue to provide services on a first-come, first-served basis until the daily capacity is reached. All volunteers and staff who have direct contact with food, people or product are provided disposable gloves and required to wear them during food handling.

We ask families to send one representative from each household during intake and have their other family members wait in the car or outside away from others, if possible. As a reminder, all visitors will be required to wear a face mask to enter the building and must have a temperature below 98.6 degrees.

Our Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) team is available and will now assist Irving residents by phone. SNAP benefits, formerly known as food stamps, help ease access to food, groceries and other basic necessities. Since the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) was passed on March 18th, the program no longer has a 3-month time limit for participation from Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) in the program. Since April 1, the SNAP work requirements were also suspended and will not require ABAWDs to work 20 hours a week (or 80 hours a month) in order to keep receiving SNAP. ABAWDs are adults between 18-49 without children who are able to work. If you have questions regarding your case, please contact the North Texas Food Bank for more information (214) 269-0906.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Housing Assistance

Many community members are concerned with the financial impact COVID-19 will have on their ability to pay their rent or mortgage. Applications are now being accepted weekly on Wednesdays, as opposed to once a month, due to the increased demand for housing assistance. Qualified applicants will be eligible for up to the fair market rate in Dallas County ($989 for a one-bedroom apartment).

To start the pre-qualification process, call (972) 721-9181 and ask to speak with a Case Manager. Scheduled in-person meetings will be held in the lobby through plexiglass barriers, as recommended by OSHA and the World Health Organization. All surfaces, equipment and tools are thoroughly sanitized after each use and all visitors will be required to wear a face mask upon entering the building. As a reminder, we will also check temperatures upon arrival.

Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program

The Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) is a utility assistance program offered by the Dallas County Health & Human Services through Irving Cares. The program is designed provide

relief to qualifying low-income households. All services will now be carried out over the phone. To pre-qualify and schedule an appointment, call (214) 819-1848 or click here for more information.

EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

The Irving ISD's Adult Education Program is now offering virtual ESL and GED prep classes. Call (972) 600-6136 and ask for Delia Whatley to learn more.
HYPERLINK // Adult Education Program:

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The Invest in Yourself program is temporarily suspended as we work diligently with our technology partners to find solutions to better accommodate virtual experiences. We apologize for the inconvenience and hope to resume services soon.

2-1-1 TEXAS

2-1-1 Texas is a free, anonymous hotline from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission that provides information from state and local agencies providing health and human services through 25 Area Information Centers (AICs) across the state. Dial 2-1-1 anywhere in Texas or toll-free (877) 541-7905.

OPPORTUNITES FOR RELIEF

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) has been critical to shielding our communities from some of the harshest impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it will not be enough to stem the tide of increased need and call for assistance.

The need for help is growing, and the difficulty in providing essential services increases at the same pace. Support from you, our community, is necessary for us to succeed. Here are the many ways you can give to help Irving residents:

DONATE TIME

Irving Cares volunteers play a critical role in our mission, and their role is even more critical now amid the COVID-19 crisis. Out of an abundance of caution, all volunteer groups have been canceled and we are currently limiting volunteer shifts to 6 individuals per shift. To ensure the safety of our volunteers, front-line staff and clients, we are also requiring all volunteers to wear masks and gloves during their shifts. Volunteers with a temperature of 98.6 degrees or above will be asked to leave and reschedule their shift.

Complete and email the Volunteer Application form to Joyce, our community engagement coordinator at JoyceE@IrvingCares.org and get involved today!

DONATE FOOD

Our most needed items include peanut butter and jelly, boxed macaroni and cheese, canned vegetables, canned meats and canned fruit. We are still accepting food donation drop-offs between 9:30 am and 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday at 440 South Nursery Road. Call ahead to schedule a drop-off time or pull to the back of the building where the double glass doors are located. Call (972) 721-9181 for assistance upon arrival or push a red button to notify a team member. As a reminder, you will be required to wear a face mask to enter the building.

You can also schedule a donation pick up if you live within Irving city limits; however, please note limited availability due to increased demand. To do so, contact Joyce, our community engagement coordinator, at 972-721-9181 x202 or email JoyceE@IrvingCares.org.

While we always welcome drop offs of non-perishable food items, you can also donate digital food items or entire meals online 24/7 through our **virtual food drive**.

DONATE FUNDS

Right now, your monetary donation will stretch the furthest to support our relief efforts. Financial contributions allow us to quickly respond to changing needs, as well as support the local economy through the purchase of goods. Every dollar gives hope to those living in poverty during this pandemic. Your donations to Irving Cares help us serve the most vulnerable members of this community and our bulk purchasing power allows us to stretch every dollar further in providing food to families.

The CARES Act donation-regulation changes focus on driving support for U.S.-based nonprofits. Now, cash gifts are deductible up to 100% of adjusted gross income when granted to operating charities. For example, if it is within your means to make a $300 tax-deductible donation to take advantage of the charitable giving benefit offered through the CARES Act, you will be helping provide a week's worth of food for 40 families.

Click here to donate using your Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express card.

Venmo

We are now accepting donations through Venmo. You can send donations to @IrvingCares in the Venmo mobile app or at www.venmo.com.

Checks

Checks should be made out to "Irving Cares" and mailed to P.O. Box 177425, Irving, TX 75017-7425.

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