

**News Release**

November 21, 2017

**Help Those in Need the Right Way This Holiday Season**

*Donate, volunteer via existing organizations—don't serve people experiencing homelessness on your own*

(SALT LAKE CITY)—With the holiday charitable giving season upon us, the Salt Lake County Health Department (SLCoHD) encourages good Samaritans to utilize existing social service agencies rather than conduct direct outreach on their own, especially when it comes to serving food to the homeless.

“It’s wonderful when people give back, especially this time of year,” said Gary Edwards, executive director of SLCoHD. “And we want to make sure that people’s charity is received by those in need in the best—and safest—way possible.”

Several excellent organizations in our community provide meals to people in need. Together, **these organizations already serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner nearly every day of the year**, and they rely on donations and volunteers to do so.

“Providing assistance through these existing programs is the best way to give back to your community,” Edwards continued. “These organizations have a structure in place to utilize your time, goods and money in the safest and most efficient way possible.”

Homeless-assistance organizations available to receive volunteers and donations include:

St. Vincent De Paul Dining Hall  
801-363-7710  
[ccsutah.org](http://ccsutah.org)

The Road Home  
801-359-4142  
[theroadhome.org](http://theroadhome.org)

Rescue Mission of Salt Lake  
801-355-1302  
[rescuesaltlake.org](http://rescuesaltlake.org)

Salt Lake City Mission  
801-355-6310  
[saltlakecitymission.org](http://saltlakecitymission.org)

For people still interested in providing their own independent food outreach, **Utah state law requires them to register their outreach event with the local health department**, at no cost, and receive food safety information. To register a charitable food outreach event in Salt Lake County, call 385-468-3845. More information about food outreach to the homeless is available at [SaltLakeHealth.org/food](http://SaltLakeHealth.org/food).

In addition, food outreach events on public property (such as a park, street, or sidewalk) in Salt Lake City require a Free Expression Permit from Salt Lake City Events. For more information, visit [slcgov.com/frexapp](http://slcgov.com/frexapp).

People experiencing homelessness and other individuals in need can be particularly vulnerable to foodborne illness, so it’s important that the food they receive is prepared using safe food handling practices. Many people experiencing homelessness have also already been affected by Salt Lake County’s hepatitis A outbreak, and it’s critically important that food handlers—especially those serving vulnerable populations—be vigilant and thorough in their hand washing.

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