Weekly COVID-19 Housing & Homelessness Call

Wednesday, April 15, 10-11am via Zoom

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| 10:005 minCAROLINE | Welcome/Settle in | Rachael Myers | * Alliance is super appreciative of what everyone has been working on
* Goals: State and federal response to Covid-19, to ask questions and talk about what is happening in your communities so state attendees and Alliance can respond and gear our advocacy in response
* Talked about agenda and speakers
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| 10:055 minKIKI | Dept. of Commerce Updates  | Commerce StaffTed KelleherDiane KlontzKim Justice (Office of Homeless Youth) | TEDQ: Can you talk about where the state is getting FEMA – isolation and quarantine* Emergency response 101 – way that this is traditionally work, local county management submits requests to state and gets approved
* Happened for about 10 counties so far - could happen for every county to put the request for FEMA funds thru that traditional channel
* Looking at top down sort of request – but encourage everyone to due bottom up request

Q: Hotel rooms that are paid for but still empty * Begin the convo about pivoting away when we are sure about reaching the top of the curve – redeploying it will depend on the relationship you have with the hotels and motels. Contract says willing to pivot to different purpose. Encourage everyone to push on that at the county level – if need state assistance ask

Q: Can you provide some info on how commerce will use? * Looking at past ideas of formula – those discussion can take forever, but we don’t have the luxury of that - couldn’t distribute the money
* One thing to be careful that we are taking into consideration is the short fall is likely to be in well in excess of the ESG and CBG funds that are out there. Careful about creating a new program – realistically will be cutting shelters and other programs in the week after we launch a new program. When there is a catastrophic decline in income, potential of cutting existing contracts any sort of pivots we do

Q: Shared best practices - * Turn that toward the group. A lot of great work out there. A lot of adaptation, part of the pivot will be interesting to. If anyone can share what sort of pivoting they are doing

KIM:Q: What are the needs of YA exp homelessness and some of the resources?* Compiling resources from providers – hearing a lot of overwhelming need for covering basic needs (food, rent, motel vouchers0. Experiencing job loss, living in college dorms. YA bearing the brunt of the covid 19 crisis. Struggling more than the rest of the population. More young people potentially experiencing homelessness in this crisis
* A lot of need for technology access – laptops, phones, things helping stay connected to school, community, etc
* Hear providers that need access to supplies, cleaning supplies PPE in shelters
* Requests we have seen on waivers for time limits on our HOPE shelter program – typically limited to 30-day beds. Can suspend that during this crisis. If we want to help other time limits or wave age limits, need statutory to implement that

Q: Talking about new quarantine and isolation facilities set up – how will they be able to shelter minors when they need to be license * Submitted a waiver to the gov to allow these facilities to serve minors – don't want any youth to be turned away. Think we are on the cusp of having that proclamation. Another key component is not just waiving that statute but providing some guidance on what some best practices on are how to serve minors in these spaces. Will address things that staffing, co-mingling w adults, considerations of the space.
* Theme of licensing – another big thing that shelter who serve minors are grappling with a host of issues. Staff risking own health, working at low pay. Doing it without necessary supplies or protective equipment. Getting other staff to work in those shelter when they require licensing and background checks. Ways of expediting process – link on DCYF website.

Q: How we are trying to respond – Building Changes will speak more * Partnership between Raikes foundation and building changes to launch private funding pool for basic needs, technology and supplies. Philanthropy stepping up to help during this crisis
	+ Re: the covid response fund Kim Justice brought up, please feel free to email me specific questions paula.carvalho@raikesfoundation.org.... High level: It's a statewide fund, will be available to non-profits and tribes working with YYA experiencing homelessness, funds will be flexible. It is one fund with two separate tracks, one focusing on YYA and one for students.
* Commerce landing page – link on the side for office of homeless youth. Catch all space for FAQ and issues with waivers in, info on how to conduct street outreach during this time, etc.
* Trying to keep track of federal supports coming through CAREs, ES, etc and how that can help youth program

Q: How to help young people get their stimulus checks, esp for young people who haven’t filed in the past (can find on the DoC website)* One source that we found helpful – national network for youth has a good collection of resources that will help programs serving youth and young adults.
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| 10:105 minEMILY (A)KIKI (Q) | Commerce Q&A | All | Questions:* Community development block grant (CDBG) money and can that be used for rent?

Answers:* Once we do we can engage in conversations and even an application round, for public services, it can be used for rent. WE don’t have plan solidify yet, we’re super proud of LIHEAP, want to modify to help people pay rent directly to their landlord
* Tedd- modeling and #: it’s hard. It’s important to know that with these dollar amounts, on a good day our system was leave 10000 people outside, if we defunded our entire homeless housing system and put it into rent assistance it might barely be enough to address this new gap. We’re talking about a 2 billion dollar rent gap, when we talk about 9 million in new money, it’s great but we need to talk about the magnitude of what we’re facing.
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| 10:1510 minCAROLINE | Federal Updates | Steve Berg, National Alliance to End Homelessness | * WA is way ahead
* CAREs Act – provides range of different funding for H&H and COVID. Key elements are:
* Coronavirus relief fund to make up for lost state revenue, can be used for lots of purposes and housing and Homelessness can be one of them, but this is nowhere near what govt will lose in funds. Partially make up for lost funds
* ESG and CDBG funds can help with housing
* ESG – Congress put 4B dollars 15x the normal annual allocation; can make a rough approximation of what WA will get. HUD will redo the formula for ESG. They are working on new formulas talking into account the new elements according to needs for Coronavirus. In the meantime, you can use what has already been allocated
* Several ways congress has flexed up both
* Before 15% limit for services. Congress took away that limit of CDBG allocations for services and programs. More guidance will come out.
* At the Alliance we are focusing on the ESG money
* One of the most important rules for local govt is the coordination function.
* Sheltering is a big part of keeping people safe. Some shelters have needed to be deconcentrated. There should be a certain amount of space per person. Some are more vulnerable. Hotel rooms are being used and hotel industry is in a crisis right now, so some hotels are happy to receive people.
* Healthcare needs like community health center, particularly ones that serve houseless
* Longer term housing in challenge – peak being reached, but if people are in hotels now, where will you send most vulnerable people, to the streets? People are seeing this as a wakeup call that we shouldn’t have people on the street so that there are more resources available so that there is a longer-term solution.
* This will require coordination with public housing authorities... more money for this
* Congress is talking about next stimulus, particularly WA state congress members
* Look on our website for more tools that are available
* Q&A: Comment:
* not the same for people experiencing HomelessnessSteve Berg - the concern is that the peak being reached for the general population is not the same as it being reached for people experiencing homelessness - we are concerned about delayed wave, and I think that's an important thing for you at national level to pay attention to. Thanks.
* Yes. Most people in the country are far from thinking of this; conversation we need to keep having.
* Rachael – speak to unsheltered... sweeps? Greater risk. Thousands living outdoors with people who have no hand washing areas. Recommendations?
* First thing is to get some basic supplies to people. We strongly believe that exp. Homelessness is dangerous and now even more so. It’s not easy here with high pop of homelessness. Tendency to see people crowded indoors which is dangerous, and people outside also tend to cluster which is also dangerous. We are seeing this and helping people get into CDC compliant shelters. Then getting them into housing.
* Ted – Tracking, and looking at Rep. Heck Bill... are there other vehicles we should be looking at federally with investments at that level?
* That bill for 100B – based on calculations on emergency housing, not just for houseless. Intended as temporary help. Longer term issue of need for more permanent housing. Conversation we are having. We need a lot of help to amplify. This idea of going back, well I don’t think it will go that way.
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| 10:255 minEMILY | Housing interventions for people being released from jail | Latrice Williams, Peer Navigator Training Program | * Our program was created for people who were formerly incarcerated who wanted to make a 180 turn, set up program to help with stability and changing mind frame we were supposed to go live in March – then COVID. So took pivot, once numbers came out about COVID in prisons we needed to focus our efforts on getting people out – people for low level crimes (for example: driving without a license). Don’t get a death sentence when you’re incarcerated, especially for low level crimes.
* It's not people who are incarcerated, it’s the officers who are bringing it in
* Starting 3 weeks ago, we’ve been working to get people out of Spokane county jail, worked with mayor of Spokane and director of Spokane County Jail, sent letters, worked with the media to provide info on how to get people released
* We saw about 50 people the first day, have about 200+ people released now
* This past week, not only Spokane county, now at a statewide, now looking at Department of Corrections. They have had several COVID outbreaks, guards who have been tested positively
* Been discussing on how we can help individuals because they aren’t getting proper treatment, getting CDC requirements provided to people in prisons. Some people don’t even have hot water, need it for handwashing
* Had a lot of inmates contacting media, letters are being sent, calling in, v. scared
* Most individuals were homeless before, we’re now letting these people out of jail, and now they are homeless again. We have collaborated with justice coalition nationally
* Trying to pull together funding.
* Mayor opened Spokane public library for more shelters, other shelters cut back down to half, but we still need separating barriers because we have cots in large rooms, and they are unable to social distance
* We reallocated funds to help house people, looking at hotel rooms, hoping to house people how much? Like everywhere, the hotels have been losing funds, it’s a misconception that we can just get 600 dollars a month like it’s an apartment, they are losing money
* No discounts on hotel rooms, what is 30 to 40 people compared to 10000 on the street
* We have been working with advocates in order to get information out.
* We want the gov’t to provide housing for unhoused, but priorities elderly and medically vulnerable, get homeless youth to get housing without parental consent, enforce non-disc. In housing particularly for LGBT+ youth. Halt sweeps of encampments and vehicle tows. Provide people experiencing homelessness with testing, provide medical care and wrap around services. Getting new release people more wrap around services.
* Disability director has met with ppl with mental health needs, they need a support group. Setting up virtual peer support groups, they will be able connect w/ us online. Virtual yoga, a one on one time with new release people.
* Met with a couple of landlords yesterday, they brought up specific concerns. Hoping to find ways around it: example question: “If they received funds from us, who is responsible for damages?”
* Understand that people may are newly released and may have some issues transitioning.
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| 10:305 minKIKI | Overview of Public Benefits during COVID-19 | Liz Olson, Budget & Policy Center | * Happy to provide more info by email in follow up
* Emergency rule changes in public benefits at the state level
* Dept of health services has been quick to respond, changes to help families.
* Still a lot of things to be done to make sure folks can access those support
* 1s – temp ass for needy family – DSHS has provided expanded, provided sanction and the extended the time limit so family will not get cut off during the crisis.
* TANF can be a barrier to get in because of training requirement - is still mandatory but can be done over the phone
* Abled body without dependence labor (??) has been approved. Folks who will be affected by that rule – will not be penalized if can’t work at this time/meet 80 hours
* March supplement should have showed. Upon april 4
* Disaster as still available at state level – one-time assistance if folks don’t qualify for TANF or SNAP. IS AVAILABLE. For folks who are undocumented.
* family co pays waived for April, May and June
* Paid family medical leave available for folks who get sick or are caring for folks who are sick
* Interfacing with state benefits: most of us know that applications for critical resources are way up (unemployment insurance, application for TANF have doubled, snap up over 70% percent. Phone lines are swamped, waiting for long times, forced disconnected. Likely folks are getting kicked off of benefits because haven't been able to get through on the form. Some state benefit offices have put paper forms outside of their offices – folks can pick those and drop off at drop boxes that are being picked up each day. can submit application online. Date of application gets preserved – can help get folks connected more quickly. Questions around access - to the internet, to phones, able to be on long wait times
* issues with language accessibility. Forms not available outside of englihs. Some of the barriers we are thinking about
* Federal CAREs act – but we have a lot of info so I will hand it over
* Rachael – will share info LIz’s after the phone call
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| 10:355 minCAROLINE & EMILY | COVID-19 data on youth and the data on race and ethnicity | Megan Veith, Senior Policy for Building Changes | * Slides
* Sent letters to Gov. To disaggregate covid data by race and ethnicities. Other states are showing disparities
* At BC we see inequities and the importance of seeing this data
* Will send the Secretary and Gov a follow up and then got some of that data recently
* Data from yesterday
* Cases vs Pop – only have 51% of cases
* Hispanic: 24%/13%
* Native 1%/1%
* Black pop – much Higher
* We believe this data should be used with caution
* The data they included was rounded high, so it’s hard to see how it’s impacting smaller populations, especially native and pacific islander populations
* Hard to tell, some people may be experiencing milder symptoms of covid
* Other challenges in gathering is access to care, info translated into native language, previous negative experiences in health care system. Unable to get testing and care, lack of childcare, fear of contracting the virus, lack of medical insurance and fear of high costs. A lot of these barriers disproportionately impact POC
* While the state does have covid data broken down by age, colleagues will discuss more about youth experiencing homelessness on the next call
* If you have any questions, contact Megan at Megan.Veith@buildingchanges.org
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| 10:4015 minEMILY – A\*\*Kiki – Q\*\* | Q&A | All | SECTION CUT DUE TO TIME |
| 10:555 minEMILY | Announcements |   | Eviction moratorium is due to expire on Friday. But been assured that it will be extended, and pushing hard to get that announced as soon as possibleWe have a form on our covid-19 resources page, share anything covid related that you think we should know  |