Weekly COVID-19 Housing & Homelessness Call

Wednesday, April 29, 10-11:15am via Zoom

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| **Time** | **Topic** | **Lead** | **Notes** |
| 10:00  5 min  Caroline | Welcome & Settle in | Rachael Myers, Housing Alliance | * Poll questions * Updates from Commerce and Corina on HTF * Debbie will talk about Best Practices from California * Sarah will talk about Low Income Housing and Tax Credit and how we can advocate * Kate Burke to talk about Spokane and Renter’s protections * 37th State Senator Saldana will talk about new state committee on Covid-19 * Then Wrap up * We are looking for info from attendees, so we are responsive to your needs and that you are learning something here to help your communities * We are open to feedback to making these more useful * Please reach out to Rachael, John or Michele |
| 10:05  5 min  Kiki | Poll Questions |  | * Purpose: Getting information on how our state’s response is working for your community * Geared toward folks joining from computer – will read through the call and if you're on the phone think through your responses. Can follow up directly or with feedback form * Three different [poll questions * 1. unmet needs in your community? Choose all that apply. - PP, -rental assistance, -safe parking, etc.   + Rental assistance – 83% (highest)   + PPE for shelter/affordable housing – 71%   + Sanitations for unsheltered – 58%   + Testing for staff – 55% * 2. overall satisfaction with resources (amount of resources available to meet the needs of folks experiencing/at risk of homelessness)   + 57% moderately dissatisfied   + 22% extremely dissatisfied   + 19% satisfied   + 2% very satisfied * 3. how has your local shelter capacity been impacted?   + Capacity has decreased as space was made – 59%   + 18% capacity no change   + 16% decrease due to shortage of staff/volunteers   + (I missed this last stat)   Shared by Karen Studders: [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6917e2.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6917e2.htm ) |
| 10:10  5 min  Caroline | Updates from Commerce | Tedd Kelleher, Dept. of Commerce  Corina Grigoras | * Corina– HTF set of temporary policies; have been working on this for the last 3 years with many meetings * Strike a balance b/w social movements and gov duty * HB2849 – based on a draft we put together with recommendations to the HTF with expended def on homeownership etc. - Bill did not pass * We will implement most of that bill anyway * This is posted on our website * New contracts – not related to covid * We will start making full loan deferrals for those projects who will offer at least 50% units for homelessness, or low income, etc. Most are already this way * More grants for home preservations, and other projects * For projects already contracted and those with scheduled payments deferred until end of 2020 * Stay tuned for details * Please reach out to us * Policies are temporary * 2021 will have new bills and hoping to build a bill that amends the trust fund and solidifies program administration, etc. * Tedd – lots of engaged convos on rental assistance needs, 100’s of millions of funds in rent gaps, trying to nail down * If we’re lucky then we’ll have a quick recovery in a couple of months |
| 10:15  5 min  Emily | Q&A |  | * **Q**: How long will these temporary policies be in place? * **A**: If you have any payment coming up from now through 2022, any awards we make this year we will apply these temporary terms to. * **Q**: Are you expecting the special session to take back Housing Trust Fund money? * **A**: From Rachael: Likely commerce can’t answer this, Housing Alliance is concerned that HTF funding was heavily in operating rather than capital budget this year, more risk of being cut. We will work very hard on advocacy if that starts looking more likely. Corina: Plans to work as fast as we can to get that $ committed, highly unlikely that funds will be taken away. * **Q**: are the terms of the loan extended commensurate with the length of the deferral ? * **A**: Thinking of moving anything due now, perhaps move at maturity. Don’t know yet, working on it. |
| 10:20  10 min  Kiki | Emerging Best Practices from CA and around the nation | Debbie Thiele, Corporation for Supportive Housing | * Oversee work in the western US – focusing on what is happening in CA. Our roll is similar to WLIHA in CA, leading advocacy on homelessness and affordable housing in the state * 1. what's happening in project room key * Statewide initiative to mitigate transmission, prevent/reduce hospital surges, save lives by moving folks exp homelessness or ill into trailers/quarantine cells. * Stat was successful in getting FEMA approval, first state to get approval on this * It was a health initiative technically, not just housing, easier to get accepted by FEMA. Quick turnaround and in place until mid-June. Believe we can get extensions in 30-day increments. * Moving really fast – state has secured 9,00 rooms and 1,00 trailers. Goal of 1500 to be trailer. Figuring out what's the best fit, how to safely move folks into these temp shelters, asking big questions around harm reduction and how possible it is in concert with hotel management. a lot of big questions around work force. Needing a bigger work force this. Redeploying government worker to disaster/essential workers so they can work in this section/setting. * 2. what comes next * In LA, we’re talking with the city, county and lots of partners about “Day 91” and what happens next. Trying to distinguish the thinking from today’s immediate crisis to what happens tomorrow. Lot of balance. Seems to be strong sentiment that we couldn’t just move these folks out back into homelessness. The state is exploring ways to purchase these hotels and motels to change them to permanent housing. * the question is where are we doing this in a way that allows us to move folks into safe decent affordable housing and where are we going to look at substandard living conditions as an alternative to homelessness * Resources might come from – working with a coalition of 200+ across the state for a budget proposal. CA is still in session so its possible. Modeled at the state level off of work already happening in LA and Chicago around these flexibles * Trying to figure out how to do public hearings and how to convene virtually. Only three policy areas 1) wildfires 2) covid 3) homelessness * How to resume that advocacy that we were pushing for in this budget proposal. Is pushing anything not related to public health crisis tone deaf? We had to have a lot of convos on that – after which in LA particular, decision makers said this IS. A big part of our way of moving forward. Its tone deaf we haven't had this before. * Big city mayors – 13 biggest cities, signed onto this budget proposal last week. Really makes a statement on where things are at the local level for long term solutions * Accompanying legislation and some other bills, oversight management entity at the state level to firm up the way the sate looks at this issue as well * CSA has a weekly webinar as well. Place to post and download resource – operating supporting housing focused * Concern – lack of resources and confusion on how to support homeless folks during this time. We know that’s true. Rachael – we will follow up with reminders for what resources are available and how you can try to tap into those resources rather than try to answer all those questions here. * Joy – is that project only in CA? * A: yes, it is. |
| 10:30  10 min  Caroline | Low Income Housing Tax Credit Advocacy | Sarah Brundage, Enterprise Community Partners  Here’s how to sign up or learn more: <http://rentalhousingaction.org/> | * Co-chair the National Action Campaign – housing Tax Credit – improving the * Sen Cantwell & --- lead champion * Working on the regulatory side – have asked the IRS and the treasury for 1-year extensions that are difficult to meet, 10% tax, Placed in Service deadline, ---deadline * Sent ltr to IRS and Treasury * Working with others to lead this charge * Asking for special pandemic guidance from IRS and the treasury to request for accommodations * IRS has provided some short-term changes * April 1st to July 15th * See list on Rentalhousingaction.org - see page on Covid-a9 updates * See blog post * Accommodations that fall under prior disaster guidance, since every state applies to deadline – neither guidance asks for the full range of asks so we are asking for more guidance * Asking Sen Benning and W&M Chair Neal for guidance * New obstacles and challenges are coming up – please don’t hesitate to ask us so we can pass that along * Legislative side: prior recovery pkgs have not included housing recovery provisions * Provided immediate relief for HUD programs but not much more – advocating for more in the next recovery pkg * Timing – Senate is returning next week, but House is not returning so we don’t know * Maybe by Memorial Day buy now that may be more disagreement * b/w Senate and the House * Strong Champions and narrative to be included * When it comes to Housing Credit, we’ve been advised to keep it to 1-2 priorities * 1.) Min 4% housing credit rate – very relevant to what is happening based on Federal barring rates, potentially will stay low for this period – this is at an all-time low – in May 3.8% - huge gap for developers – has Bi-partisan support * Looking for examples of projects with decline in the credit rate – great evidence for them to use * 2.) Asking to lower 50% bond cap (?) * We were looking for something that would make the 4% rate; this is received on The Hill as a technical question vs a large ask * Thought about going from 50 to 25% but we must see where that lands 40-30% would also be good * Two other priorities for economic recovery * Increase annual housing credit by 50% * Provide additional basis – additional equity, housing bond development, extremely low households and rural and tribal communities * Gearing up for a huge action - “opt out” campaign Here’s how to sign up or learn more: http://rentalhousingaction.org/ |
| 10:40  5 min  Emily | Spokane update on protections enacted for renters, homeowners and people experiencing homelessness. | Councilmember Kate Burke, City of Spokane  kateburke@spokanecity.org | * First few weeks in March, worked on eviction moratorium, eviction and foreclosure moratorium, couldn’t add late fees that aren’t paid. Expires tomorrow, trying to work to get it extended. Gov’s has gaps that we don’t * Public library opened as shelter * All other shelters have been full * Other shelter space opened at fairgrounds for anyone infected or needing to isolate, also a drive thru testing site * Not enforcing camping laws * Not doing fare enforcement on bus system * Spokane got 90 mil from CARES act; county sent around a survey to figure out needs * Working on that funding going to essential needs and rent assistance * Asking for give 80% of rent in exchange for just cause evictions and no rent hikes. * Have encouraged nurses’ and firefighters’ union to send a letter to mayor for hotel rooms for first responders and houseless folks who are infected * Utilities were included in our eviction moratorium * Avista said that no shut offs during this time * One of the things we see, restrooms are closed so no places to go to bathroom and wash hands. Asking mayor for Washington stations and portable potties * Asking them to cancel rent, permanently lift ban on rent control, universal health care for those impacted by COVID, (missing things here) |
| 10:45  10 min  Caroline | Updates from the Legislature | Sen. Rebecca Saldaña  Rebecca.saldana@leg.wa.gov | * It’s so important to have innovative thinkers engaged early * Senate – bipartisan economic recovery People’s Committee * Sen. Dhingra and Mullet from our Caucus are participating with the Gov. * Middle of forming a select Covid recovery committee chaired by Sen. Frockt, Sen. Dhingra, Sen. Mullet, Sen. Rolfes. Still needing to determine the folks who will be joining from the minority committee * What wasn’t working before? What innovations are we learning form Covid? How we can have a more just recovery? Address problems in our system as these become more clear * First mtg not until June but go through the Fall * Some easy action and some longer term * Working to see what interim looks like, Sen. Kuderer in particular with housing * Internally you may hear from Sen. Kaiser (also Chair of Labor Comm) with Sen. Dems Darneille, Wilson, Conway, Saldana and more to look at how we are supporting people on an individual level – another place to bubble up ideas * My Leg Asst – Coco Chang is also on the call and respond to questions if not today * These are Legislative specific committees - there will be opportunities for constituents to weigh in. If people on this call would like to inform by reaching out to us to make sure we are bringing in ideas, then that is the intent * Q: I understand Sen. Dhingra will be on committee regarding health, etc. She announced this on her Facebook page. Will there be a connection to housing and homelessness? * These committees are informal in 4 groups; this does not replace our regular committees, but looking into having them inform others * 1. Small biz and non-profits * 2. Revenue * 3. Infrastructure – including trade and broadband * We don’t have a name yet – but each of the 4 of us are on these committees * House is similarly trying to work on economic recovery – ways to collect information * Please let us know about Best Practices * As Sen. Frockt gets structure together, we will know more * Anything that comes to our offices is public comment, but it’s not the same kind of structure * Q: Will there be a special session, if so how do we protect funding for housing and homelessness? How can we support the legislature? * A: Still questions about if a special session will happen, increasing likelihood for a special session, likely soon. What can get done depends on if there’s a special session quickly or not, if quickly there will be pressure to keep the focus narrow. A lot of unknowns, so hesitant to set early policy. * Some advice, a lot of us have been there since the great recession, there has been a lot of criticism about the response there. A lot of Washingtonians haven’t recovered from it yet, trying to prevent inequities among Washingtonians. Policies have continued to create more division, more homelessness, more negative health outcomes. King county metro had a tough decision a few years ago where they had more ridership but had to make cuts. Not every community is coming from the same place, need to look at equity. Bring strong long-term lens. If we make cuts or investments, we need to recognize that this crisis is not impacting everyone equally. |
| 10:55  5 min  Emily | Federal Updates | Rachael Myers, Housing Alliance | * Next week that anyone can do anything in congress will be next week, May 4th * 5 mil pkg passed last week has taken pressure off congress people to do another pkg – so very important that they know that we expect them to do another big pkg including housing and homelessness needs * Pls take action, if you already have sent something, please send another one. The language has been updated. Also feel free to call your congress people * On Monday, IRS issued new guidance for those receiving SSI, they need to give additional info through non filer tool: [https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/non-filers-enter-payment-info-here](https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/non-filers-enter-payment-info-here ) * NLIHC would like to hear examples from what’s happening in states and communities, if you have anything you want them to hear, send it the Housing Alliance and we’ll get it to NLIHC * Building changes has posted resources for funding opportunities for their website. Reviewing on a rolling basis: [https://buildingchanges.org/covid-19-response/faq](https://buildingchanges.org/covid-19-response/faq ) |
| 11:00  10 min  Emily | Q&A |  | Ran out of time |
| 11:10  5 min  Emily | Wrap-up & Announcements |  | Ran out of time |