Statewide COVID-19 Housing & Homelessness Calls

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**SPEAKERS**

John Stovall, Rachael Myers

**Rachael Myers** 01:30

Morning everybody. We're just gonna give folks another minute or so to get signed on. So hang tight and we'll get started in just a minute. All right. Good morning everybody. We'll get started now This is Rachael Myers. I'm the executive director of the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, welcome to our weekly call thanks for being here again, we've got a great, great agenda today that you can see that john has dropped in the chat features if you want to download that. So you can follow along. That is there for you. I'll walk through the agenda in just a minute but real briefly just as a reminder, This is a call we do every week that goal of the calls is to make sure that folks from around the state in different communities have an opportunity to share information with each other to share best practices, and also to share challenges, so that the state, and other, you know, decision makers can incorporate those that feedback into their responses to coronavirus and how it's impacting affordable housing and homelessness. And so that the housing Alliance can make sure that our advocacy is as responsive as possible. And then of course we also share ideas and information about what advocacy is needed because there's a lot happening. We're going to talk today there's a lot coming up in the next couple of weeks, particularly at the federal level but at the state level as well we're going to need to do some advocacy, as August 1 approaches in our eviction moratorium expires on that date at this point. So we will share those opportunities as well. Generally we have the State Department of Commerce with us to do an update, they're not able to be here today. They're working really hard on finalizing the details of the eviction rent assistance program that if you were on our call last week you heard Tedd Kelleher from the Department of Commerce talk about. I have a very brief update from commerce about one thing that I'll share, and then we'll hope to have them back with us next week. A couple of things about accessibility just wanted to remind folks that if you would like to follow along to a transcript of this call, you can click the link that you see up on the top left if you're on zoom on your computer otter AI live notes that will give you a transcript I will just note that that is an AI taking a note so it's a robot, not a human being. So there may be some mistakes to it we continue to take detailed notes on these calls, and that will you know we'll always make those available. If someone john or Caroline maybe could drop the otter a link in the chat, just for folks to have have another really clear place to find it. We will We also welcome you to let us know if there are additional things that would be helpful for you for accessibility purposes, we do want these calls to be as accessible as possible. And I will do just one reminder and I'll probably do several more as I'm introducing our speakers for all of our speakers, it's really helpful if you can, one if possible have your camera on we always encourage people to do that we have some folks who are using lip reading as a way to follow the meeting. So that's helpful to try to speak as clearly and, you know, just forcefully as possible, like you're projecting to a number of people in a room and three Introduce yourself when you start talking that's actually helpful for the robot taking the notes, they actually can learn people's voices, and so the transcript is a little more accurate with people's names so if you could just reintroduce yourself, even though I have just introduced you, that is helpful. So with that, let me do the agenda and then I'm going to hand it over to john for a couple of quick poll questions. Our agenda today. Again, we don't have commerce, but I will give a brief update from one of our colleagues at the Department of Commerce. We're also going to be joined today by Congresswoman Susan Dell Ben a from the first congressional district who will be speaking about what's happening in DC. We'll be speaking about sort of the conversations around short term relief the next coronavirus relief package, and also some longer term infrastructure legislation, and low income housing tax credit legislation that she is working on and taking leadership on. We also are going to be joined by Montserrat podia from the Washington immigrant solidarity network, who will be speaking to improving the safety and seeking release of people in ice custody during COVID-19. I skipped right over myself I'll be doing a federal advocacy update and talking about a virtual Lobby Day, that's happening next week. And then after a month right we'll have some updates from a number of folks from around the state, who will be giving updates on homelessness needs if you were here last week you remember that we had sort of a panel of affordable housing providers from several different places in the state and also a tenant advocate from the tenants union who spoke to the needs and challenges for tenants and this week we're going to speak about or we're going to have some speakers talk about what's happening around homelessness and how how coronavirus virus is impacting homelessness around the state, and then we'll have a very brief update from Michelle for homeless service providers about accessing PHP. And then if we have some time left, we can take some questions, but that will wrap up our agenda. So with that john Do you want to jump in with some poll questions

**John Stovall** 08:30

thing. Good morning everybody.

08:34

All right,

**John Stovall** 08:35

so as we do every week I'm just going to start us off with a few questions to get a sense of who is on the call today. So we'll be asking kind of like where in the state you're from or if you're not in Washington state that's cool too and you can just indicate so in the chat. But I will go ahead and launch this poll here so this is just to give us a sense of are you like what kind of part of Washington State. Are you calling in from so hopefully everyone can see that. Can everyone see the poll currently that I've just launched, give me a thumbs up or something. head nod Okay great. And actually, Rachel I am unable to see the responses are coming in right now I think maybe just because we have a couple people on the same account so if either Caroline or Rachel if you're able to actually see the results as they come in. Maybe you can help me out here.

**Rachael Myers** 09:29

I cannot see them. I am not host. Okay, some secret person responses

**John Stovall** 09:38

in a while. But let's see Caroline Are you able to see them.

09:44

Yeah, actually I can see, I can see them.

**John Stovall** 09:49

That was Yes. Okay. Yes. Great. Awesome. Well then why don't we give it just like five more seconds and let folks. Finish up, indicating what part of the state you're in. And then I will. Carolina I'll let you sort of share the results if that's okay. So we'll do three to one. Okay, ending the poll. And what do we got Caroline.

10:18

Hey, it looks like we've got Seattle King County we've got 44 people that 46%. Then we've got Northwest Washington. At 12% that includes Snohomish scheduled welcomes and Long Island. We've got 19% in South Puget Sound, including Pierson Thurston. We've got some more folks in Central Washington at 11%. And then we've got some people coming in from Southwest Washington, Eastern Washington tri cities as well as Olympia Peninsula,

**John Stovall** 10:58

also. So, teamwork, thank you very much Caroline. I'm going to go on to our next poll here, which is another one that we tend to do every week so you know thank you everyone for continuing to participate in this. We have a different mix of folks on the line every week so it's just good to get to see who's new and see who's returning so I'll watch this one, the question is what hats are you wearing today. So are you somebody who has lived experience or lived expertise with housing instability or homelessness. Are you a housing and homelessness advocate in your community or statewide. Are you a direct service provider Are you a housing provider, whether through a nonprofit developer or a housing authority. Are you a local government staff or elected official Are you an elected official or staff at the state or federal level, I know we have at least one of those on the line today. And are you a legal or tenant rights advocate or are you from another sector of work that housing overlaps with like health care or education or criminal justice work or environmental work, or if you're, none of those things, or you are those things plus other things that are not on that list, feel free to indicate in the chat. What are the hats you're wearing today. So I'll give this another, another, you know, five or so seconds and then I will also turn it over to Caroline to present the results.

12:31

Okay.

**John Stovall** 12:34

Close that one and Caroline. Help me out.

12:42

Great. So, as always, we've got a bunch of housing and homeless advocates and most likely they're also wearing other hats, too, that that 51%. And then we've got a wonderful amount of people with lived experience of housing instability and homelessness here today at 19%. I think that's more than we've had. And folks from local government thank you for, for coming and we've got 18% of folks here doing that housing providers 16% oh and direct service providers 20%, a nice large amount. We've also got people from allied organizations, so people coming from different places, health care, education environmental and criminal justice etc at 20%, as well as legal and tenant rights advocates. And let's see, I think we've covered everyone. And then there's some folks in the chat to Snohomish County mutual aid and other places so thank you so much for coming.

**John Stovall** 13:51

Awesome. Thanks Caroline. I've got one final question and this is more of a sort of like what do you think happened over the last week so last week, Michelle presented on how our. the numbers from the Census Bureau's pulse survey, have been coming out every single week and as of last week, we have an astonishing number of people in Washington state who were unable to pay rent in June, and that those numbers have been updated since last week. And so we're, we want to just make sure that you get updated numbers. But, but these numbers kind of close out the month of June, so that we can look back and say this is pretty definitively how many people were unable to make rent in June, which obviously is a really really critical and important information to know for both state policy and federal policymakers so. So I'm going to launch this real quick. The question is, last week we reported that 136,000 renter households over 136,000 renter households were unable to pay rent in June. So since then as the numbers are filled filling out a little bit more for June. The Census Bureau updated its final monthly data. What do you think happened to the statewide numbers do you think they increased. Do you think they roughly stayed the same or do you think they decreased, as we kind of wrap up the month of June. And I'll give you the answer. Afterwards, so I've given so in just a few more seconds, and then Caroline can sort of share what people mostly think. And then I'll let you know. Okay, So 321, I'm ending the poll. Okay,

15:43

it looks like

15:45

86% of you said that you thought it increased and about 14% thought that it probably roughly stayed the same and nobody thought that it decreased.

**John Stovall** 15:58

Right, well, you're all very perceptive and, or maybe thinking logically. But, yeah, since last week, you know the last number we had was 136,000 renter households were unable to pay rent in June. A week later, now that we've sort of wrapped up the month of June and can look back on the whole month, the number has increased to 247,959 households in Washington, which is roughly 12% of renter households in Washington state were unable to pay rent in the month of June. As you also heard last week there are significant racial disparities among people who are unable to pay rent. Whereas white households were about 8% of white households were unable to pay rent in June. That number is 42% for Black or African American households. And I believe, 21% or. It's in the low 20s for Latin x or Hispanic households, so significant disparities. And so, this is, this is a problem this is why we're all here this is why we're working on this issue but it's just important to know some of these numbers as we move forward and will continue to update you each week as, as the numbers are released from the census data. So with that I.

17:23

Oh good.

**John Stovall** 17:25

Oh just gonna say I'm going to pass it back to you, Rachel.

**Rachael Myers** 17:28

Great. Thank you. Thanks for that john yeah those numbers are why we're here and it's also why we are so happy to have our next speaker with us. Thank you representative Durbin a for being here. But without any further delay, I'm going to I'm gonna hand it off to you first just to say thank you for taking the time I know how hard you're working right now with your, your with your colleagues in Congress. I will be speaking after representative representative who speaks about some advocacy that's needed, but representative Delaney is really taking some leadership on some important issues in in DC on housing, or that affect housing. So we've asked her to join us today to talk about a couple of things, just an update from, you know what's happening and how we can all help. Also some, you know, some status of the short term coronavirus will really discussions that are happening, but there's also some really important longer term priorities that representative del bene is working on. There's a bill she's the prime sponsor for the housing credit Improvement Act which will increase the low income housing tax credit by 50%. I can talk more about what that is, when she's done if that's helpful, and an infrastructure package that would also put some more money into affordable housing. So, thank you represent representative del bene and I will hand it over to you.

18:45

Thank you. Thanks, everyone. I'm Susan del Benet and I represent the first congressional district which goes from Northeast King County, up to the Canadian border. But, I'm going to talk to you about the work we're doing which really impacts all of us across the country. And first I just want to thank all of you for the hard work you've done to enhance and preserve affordable housing, and to combat homelessness in our region. We all know that the lack of affordable housing is a crisis. That's only gotten worse since the coronavirus pandemic started before the pandemic we had 11 million households in the United States, who are already paying more than half of their income in rent. And now with one in four Americans applying for unemployment. Our affordable housing needs are at an all time high. So it's important now more than ever that we address the affordable housing crisis with tools, like the affordable housing tax credit and emergency rental assistance. According to in apartment lists survey, as of last week, roughly one third of US households were not able to pay their full housing payments for July, most of whom were renters. Furthermore, we also know that this pandemic is disproportionately as was discussed earlier disproportionately impacting people of color. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition study people of color are disproportionately low income rent burdened or homeless, as a result of structural racism. Often the lowest income renters are forced to make decisions between shelter and food and other basic necessities. And we all across the country have to think that this is unacceptable and and demand change as the patchwork of federal, state and local eviction moratoriums are expiring, we have expirations happening at the end of the month. And another month of rent will be due we have to give Americans the help they need. So they can remain in their homes and not have to choose between food and a safe place to live, and a safe safe place to live, as an even stronger meaning when we talk about a public health crisis and a pandemic across our country in the house we acted to extend the federal eviction moratorium and provide emergency relief rental relief to millions of Americans in both the heroes act that and the emergency housing protections and Relief Act. These are bills that have passed in the House, that are awaiting consideration in the Senate and the heroes act is the most recent coronavirus Ville and I say most recent it we passed it in the house two months ago. And we are still waiting on the senate and I'll talk about what we see happening there in just a minute. We also passed this month, the moving forward act in the house HR two. It included and this was what you heard as a it's a big infrastructure package that we pass it included several important affordable housing provisions, including making the 4% housing credit permanent and lowering the bomb threshold test from 50%, as well as a 50% state allocation increase a basis boost for projects that serve extremely low income households and inclusion of both rural areas, and Native American areas as difficult development areas. This is a huge accomplishment. Again it's passed the house and we're waiting the Senate to pick it up, so we have to keep up the momentum. I urge you all to keep reaching out to lawmakers to share your knowledge about the 14 affordable housing crisis and emphasize that help is urgently needed. And when I talk to folks about how important it is. It's very important for folks to take this from the policy side and understand what it means on the ground in their communities. So that's critically, those are the stories that all of you can tell, and help you help your colleagues in other parts of the country tell, so that we can really make a difference. I go back to DC. On Sunday, we'll be back in the house for the next two weeks voting on legislation. Our hope is that the Senate will start to move on another relief package, and that would obviously we pass the hero sack, so that we would be able to get legislation passed including important housing provisions,

23:23

before the end of the month when we see deadlines coming up on unemployment, on, on, on housing assistance etc so we're past time because people need to know what resources are going to be available. We are still waiting though on the senate there so I appreciate everything you and the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance or doing that you've done before this pandemic but especially what you're doing now to ensure that people have a safe and affordable place to call home. Thank you for letting me join you for a few minutes, and I hope everyone can stay safe and stay healthy.

**Rachael Myers** 23:57

Thank you so much representative wha, do you have a few minutes in cancer and a call I do. Great, great. So if folks have questions, go ahead and put those in the chat. And it may be that you were just so clear that there aren't any

24:12

questions. And then I talked, I will add that the, that I talked about the provisions that are in the coronavirus relief legislation but a lot of the provisions like the 4% minimum, etc. are part of a fordable housing legislation that I've been leading in the Senate, or in the house and that Senator Cantwell is leading in the Senate. These are this bill is strongly bipartisan we have a majority of the house supporting it. So we're trying to move it right away as part of these packages, but we're going to keep fighting to move it in general and because we have strong bipartisan support that gives me more hope that it's something we can actually get across the finish line.

**Rachael Myers** 24:55

Yeah, that's helpful. There's a question here I think you spoke to it a little bit when you talked about how important it is for members of Congress to, you know, to know how these programs work on the ground so sharing your stories about what's happening in your community, but is there anything else that you can say about how we and how advocates can be supporting your work.

25:17

So I think the, the, especially when we talk about things like tax credits most people say, Okay, I don't know how that is gonna have a impact in my community if we lose people when we talk about things like a 4% minimum. Now many of you understand what that means in terms of projects moving forward. And, and the need for more inventory of availability of affordable housing everywhere in our country. So I think it's important to say, if we do this. Here's what it means. Here's what it means in terms of additional housing that we would have available. Here's what it means when we talk about the needs in rural and Native American communities. The I think that when people know that here's a project that might be stalled because they can't get across the finish line and if we, but how legislation might change that, that goes from being something to the abstract as be something very personal and real, and all of you can really talk about that directly in terms of the need for more housing, but also in terms of the types of projects that we could move forward. If we address these issues.

**Rachael Myers** 26:26

Yeah, that's great. I will say that the low income housing tax credit program is kind of notoriously known as a fairly complicated program because of the basis boots and 4% and 9% and just language that you understand if you're a developer, but that is a little hard to grasp. If you're, you know, a grassroots advocate, but I think once you know something, you don't have to fully understand the program to be able to talk to your lawmakers about how important it is that to expand access to affordable housing and the low income housing tax credit program has created, almost 75,000 homes affordable homes in Washington State it's the biggest housing production program in the country. And really, really important and this legislation will expand that by 50% and I also believe that it provides some additional incentives to allow the program to serve more people who are lower income. And so, you know, again, you don't have to understand all the ins and outs of developing housing to be able to talk about this program and the need for housing in your communities,

27:29

and all companies not just urban communities but rural communities, our tribal communities, because I think sometimes people forget that affordable housing is an issue that impacts every part of our country and every part of our region.

**Rachael Myers** 27:45

Yeah. Um, we've also there's a question about the negotiations that are coming up I know that you'll be back next week the Senate will be back from recess next week and you've said you have just about two weeks before some other deadlines come up. One thing that you know for us in Washington, we're really fortunate that all of our democratic House members have signed on to the rent Assistance Act so that hundred billion dollar, that's in the rent, that's in the heroes act there's a standalone bill for that. Yes, Senator Patty Murray has also signed on to that in the Senate, Senator Cantwell has not and we hope that she will but we also know that she's supportive of that. So there's, we always wonder, you know, and we've also heard that it's unlikely that Republicans will be signing on to some of those bills but they may be able to be supportive in other ways. So what for folks, particularly for folks who are in districts with Democrats who have already said I'm supportive. Can you speak to you know as negotiations are happening why it's still important for people like you and your colleagues to hear stories from folks in the district, why should we still reach out to you and folks who we already know are supportive.

28:56

Well, it always helps. As someone who's leading a piece of legislation, you talked about it earlier the complications of 9% and 4% and, you know, trying to explain to someone that 4% was actually really 3%. And, and understanding what that means and why this is an urgent issue this isn't a nice to have issue later This is an urgent issue we have projects that have been stalled or stopped because of the 4% dropping so low. And so, everybody here needs to know even if they're supportive generally of the concept, they should know what projects in their region are impacted and that this is something that they can address right away it is something that we can address there are some things that we can't necessarily solve right away with just a piece of legislation, this is, this issue is one that we can it with respect to a lot of projects that have been stalled or stopped. So making sure people understand that and have that sense of urgency because people can be supportive, but they're going to put their energy in terms of really pushing on the things that they know really directly can have an impact so that never hurts. I would also say that helps them in talking to colleagues who are, who might be on the fence or don't understand and the more folks we know who can talk to others and and correct them or educate them on these issues that helps, just like everyone you talk to or talking to colleagues that you have, where they might have different representation and making sure that they're advocating to their elected officials helps us move forward, like I said, the, the, affordable, that bill that we have the standalone bill has strong bipartisan support and when we have a majority in the House of Representatives, but we can always use more, because that's just more help, and we'll continue in that strong bipartisan support gives us more leverage pushing on the Senate to move it to.

**Rachael Myers** 31:00

Great, thank you yeah we fought you know for that heroes after the next coronavirus release package for sure we know that. It's the final bill whatever gets passed is probably not going to include everything that the House passed. So, there's going to have to be negotiation so as much as we can make sure that even for folks who are supportive of housing that housing is in their top one or two or three must haves that's really, really important.

31:27

And it's a public health issue right you can't be safe. If you don't have a safe place to live.

**Rachael Myers** 31:33

Absolutely, yeah that's more clear now than ever. Can you speak to have you heard one of the things that we're really concerned about as August 1 approaches and you know eviction. Our eviction our statewide eviction moratorium will be ending at least as it is now on August 1, also the $600 a week expanded, unemployment, as it stands will be ending before rent is due next month will be ending at the end of July. Is there any conversation or what is your, what do you think is are the prospects of extending that extra unemployment payment.

32:06

I'd say the $600 is one of the most controversial issues in the senate right now. So they've talked about as you might have heard Mitch McConnell has at least now started to say there needs to be another package which is big movement shocking that it took them this long to realize that we needed another package but at least he's talking about needing another package and they are talking about what they put forward. They've been more focused on a number than the content and the heroes act ended up being costed about $3 trillion. And McConnell has said that the Senate bill will be a trillion dollars. Well, I don't think you should figure out what the number is you got to figure out what you need to do to solve the problem that folks in our communities face. And so he seems more fixated on the number than the content and that's why it's harder to know what the content is that they have definitely been fairly Senate Republicans have been fairly dismissive of the need to extend the $600. So, they've talked a little bit more about funds for state and local a little bit more about you know support for workers, staying on the payroll and and helping there and even on direct payments, but not on that one. So that's going to be one that is something we've got to continue to fight for is clearly in the heroes act i think is very very important with so many families struggling right now. And, and also families who have lost health care and so when we talk about their expenses part of that $600 to is what they might need to help them be able to have access to health care. So all of that, though, is probably one of the bigger challenges we're gonna face as we try to move forward and we'll know more, they say they're going to release the senate says they're going to release a package, at the end of the week so we'll see what's in there and that will give us a better sense of what challenges we face in negotiation for a final package and we, as you said. Time is of the essence, because we have a lot of deadlines coming up at the end of July.

**Rachael Myers** 34:11

Yeah. Well thank you there there are a number of other questions here that we're not going to be able to get to, I will just note that a few people have brought up some concerns about, you know, this isn't true only for the low income housing tax credit program but it's true for some, you know, some other programs as well. That sometimes tenants are still having to pay more than 30% of their income for their housing and that that's a challenge and that, you know, and that we would hope that all of our federal housing programs would be scaled to be affordable to the lowest income renters, and I'll just remind folks I don't think there's any major any changes to that would impact that significantly in this legislation that the representative spoke to, but there are some incentives that will encourage developers to provide housing with those tax credits that are affordable to lower income people.

35:02

And, and, and just the housing assistance that's under heroes act two which is so critical to help. Clearly we have long term issues and I think it's definitely appropriate just like the the tax credit issue was an issue we were working on before it's even more critical now but this is a long term issue going forward not just a pandemic issue. And I think we have a lot of work to do going forward to, to not only get through this crisis but talk about what appropriate policy is for the long term in a lot of areas including in housing. If folks have other questions, definitely reach out to my office I know, Kelly Marquardt from my team is been is on the line too, and you can reach out

35:49

and,

35:50

and we'll get you as much information as possible, Victoria in my DC office has been working hard on the, on the policy side she's my tax person but definitely has been very knowledgeable on the housing tax credit and so if you have other questions, let us know we'll get back to you.

**Rachael Myers** 36:07

We will absolutely well thank you so much again for being here. We really appreciate your time and your leadership.

36:13

Thank you. Take care everyone, take care, bye bye.

**Rachael Myers** 36:16

Bye. I will just clarify a question from Jesse the standalone hundred billion dollars in rental assistance you're asking if that has bipartisan support the bill she was talking about that has bipartisan support is the tax credit bill that has and has for a long time had pretty strong bipartisan support. 100 billion dollar in rental assistance that's a bill that is being led in the house by Representative hat from the Washington's 10th congressional district. That's only got democratic co sponsors on it but there are Republicans who are showing some support in different ways but they have not sponsored that bill. So very briefly, I will just remind folks that, as you heard federal advocacy is incredibly important right now this is, if you've been waiting for the right time to take action to call your members of Congress. This is absolutely the time like like the representative said they'll be back in session. Working hard negotiating over the next two weeks. I want to let folks know that next Tuesday, our friends at the National Low Income Housing Coalition, are hosting or encouraging folks to participate in a virtual Lobby Day so we would encourage you to, if possible, reach out to your members of Congress, and ask them if you can have a virtual meeting with the member of Congress or with their lead housing staffer that again the virtual Lobby Day is Tuesday, but you may not get an appointment on that day, really doesn't matter. Just, you know, trying to get an appointment sometime in the next week or two for a conversation to just talk about what's happening in your community and what the needs are. We will be John's going to drop a form or a link to a forum in the chat. If you're willing as a as an individual advocate or an organization to partner with us in scheduling a lobby visit with a member of congress please follow that link and fill out that form and we'll work with you to help prepare for that so that's in the chat now. And then

**John Stovall** 38:12

something real quick Rachel about that. So if you fill out the if you fill out the signup sheet you'll know that at the bottom there's like three different ways to engage so if you're not someone who feels super comfortable having a, you know, one on one meeting with your lawmaker. We're also looking for folks who can help mobilize people to take action via email and phone call, and also folks who can use social media to contact your lawmakers as well. So there are different ways to plug in, but as Rachel said, I think, you know, one of the really great ways is to meet with your lawmaker and we will work closely with you to, to make sure that you can do that.

**Rachael Myers** 38:43

That's great. Thanks john, and then we'll also be sending out an action alert probably on Monday, encouraging everyone to call and email their members of Congress. Next week, so again, keep an eye out for that please do take action Share it with your networks and others. We need to turn up the volume and turn up the heat as much as we can. Over the next couple of weeks. If we don't, if we don't see some relief from the federal government there's a real risk of, you know, hundreds of thousands of households in Washington, losing their homes. So this is this is the time to act. So with that I think I have gotten some, some messages, since we started that one of our speakers, most rapidly and maybe having some, some technical difficulties or there might have been some confusion, am I, oh, much right you're here.

**John Stovall** 39:31

Oh,

39:33

sorry, I apologize, I had a little bit of a confusion, but I'm here.

**Rachael Myers** 39:37

Good, okay well I'm gonna hand it over to you. If you would just for accessibility just reintroduce yourself your name and the organization you're with. And then please go ahead and share what you're working on. Thank you for being here.

39:50

Thank you for having me. Good morning everybody. My name is I'm on set up by the my pronouns are she her hers. I'm one of the CO directors for the Washington immigrants solidarity net work. We're a statewide network that is building the fence line to protect immigrant and refugee communities, under this administration, as we knew that this administration can make it literally impossible for our communities to not only survive but to thrive. We are over 250 organizations in more than 22 counties across Washington State. Who again have been working to organize programs resources and support for whenever immigration customs enforcement or custom Border Patrol came knocking at the door, attempting to separate our families, and put it in the deportation machine. Over the last four years we have been working to develop to identify how the immigration machine has been working in Washington State. Today we know that if somebody gets pulled over for a broken taillight in Spokane, they first ended up in county jail, and then, then our transfer over to Yakima county jail, to then end up in the northwest Tacoma detention center. We also know that if folks are working in Walken County, and if custom Border Patrol who has a base and custom Border Patrol was to detain someone during an inspection or an operation. Folks again and their way down to the nurse detention center. And through this pipeline that we're teaching are funneled into the Yakima ice flex that today have made a very, you know, have left a lot of damage and pain to communities, not only in Yakima but across Washington State. Since COVID we have been having to adapt to the new conditions on how our communities and our families can survive. We knew that when the pandemic systems were set up was that it was going to intentionally and some unintentionally from the safety net programs that protect our communities. And please let me know if I get a spotty on my internet.

41:54

Let me see, let me plug into

41:57

can folks hear me

42:00

yeah okay perfect intro another unit. Um, so we knew that a immigrant communities were going to be unintentionally unintentionally left out as folks saw during the conversations of federal stimulus relief. President Donald Trump intention left out undocumented communities by not only undocumented communities but those of mixed status families. The $1,200 stimulus relief that most Americans received was actually not available for parents of, you know, wives or husbands of undocumented spouses. And that was really a basis of discrimination and see no phobia and racism. Of course our Attorney General and many other organizations have filed a lawsuit to ensure that everybody during this pandemic because we're all suffering, not only here in the United States but across the globe have the resources to survive in the last couple of months, we have we actually have a community hotline we're focusing call us to report immigration activity, and that hotline I can share it on the, on the chat box it's 1-844-724-3737. So if you are around the community and you see an immigration vehicle or you see ICE agents, and you ask yourself what can you do to support community. The first thing folks can do is call this hotline to let us know so we can send a team to go document the operation, and to ensure that people's rights are being protected. Through this hotline over 30,000 folks have called us asking us for financial support, asking us for food banks, asking us for just guidance on how to get access to testing for COVID. A large part 90% of our of our constituency are members who call us for this support is not the Unix folks but of course it's primarily anybody who is undocumented. We're multilingual multi ethnic. And we're multi-faith network. And again, we identify the four major challenges that our communities are facing right now. The first one continues to be financial rental assistance burden. This is imagine for months with not access to any form of employment, and when no form of of stimulus relief or economic relief from state government or federal government or from nearly any other entity, with no job, no economic income. These families have been suffering and have been left behind by our state leadership, and also federal leadership. And so for the last four months we have been advocating to Governor Inslee to do two major things. One is to enact a economic worker really fun of 100 million dollars to provide financial relief so that people can pay their rent so that people can have food for their table, and that they don't have to choose between having the financial resources they need to survive or having to go out into the field to potentially contract coronavirus. The second major demand that was evident on why this challenge was happening and again, looking back at the coronavirus numbers today and who has been the highest rate. We continue to see Latin x folks in Central and Eastern Washington farmworkers who don't have the safety net infrastructures to choose between staying healthy or having to go to work because they need to provide food over their tables and pay rent. And so one of the things that we have asked from the Governor Inslee is to, to support a unemployment benefits. Similar like program for undocumented workers, people who have paid their taxes. When you buy your Starbucks you don't get asked if you want to get if you want to pay those taxes they automatically come and as you all know, Washington State functions on really on a sales tax basis. We also pay income taxes and those are still removed from your paycheck, but it's primarily the sales tax that we all have to pay into an immigrant communities have been paying into the system like anybody else. And in this time where there is the biggest threat to all of us. It is important that folks have access to those safety net programs that we have been paying into. And so the two major acts that we have been asking from Governor Inslee, which is an alignment with this alliance is to ensure that people have a roof over their heads and they have that they have food and their tables, so they don't have to make the difficult choice between having to secure the resources or having to go and then be sick and unfortunately you know continue spreading the virus and so

46:17

I want to just share that over the last four months we have been leading this campaign. The governor has committed to the first domain which is the $100 million worker really fun he hasn't given us a price tag yet. This is News from last week, as I just wanted to have a moment to celebrate with you all because I know bad knees come very often and so relatively soon, y'all will have a new resource and tool to provide to your membership, and that there will be economic relief, and opportunities for them to support their families in the next couple of weeks or months, hopefully, so that people can pay their rent people can have food at their tables and families can stay healthy. And so I hope that folks continue to stay engaged with Watson. To learn more about this particular development but again this hotline has been instrumental to understand the needs of community. We have led amazing campaigns historical campaigns that have been put Washington state as a national leader in on immigration and immigrant rights and immigrant advocacy. And so, yeah. Lastly, I just want to thank everybody for being a part of this collective movement to ensure that communities are safe during this pandemic and beyond in the floods have a roof over their heads because it's very important that our families are healthy and safe so there's a lot more to say on the network we have been leading tremendous work but I'm glad to be introduced into this new alliance and partnership with you are to continue building collective power.

**Rachael Myers** 47:45

Thank you so much. I hope that you can see in the comments just a lot of appreciation and gratitude and congratulations for your work. We do a follow up if folks have questions we can take maybe just one or two, but we also do a follow up email we'll be sure to include your website and give folks a reminder to support what you're asking for from the governor. So if there are any specific actions coming up in the future that you would like us to share. Let's just stay in touch because you know this was one of the most important issues that you know comes up over and over and over again so much concern for how undocumented folks are surviving the pandemic and you know so much worry for folks in the agricultural industry and, you know, just so much concern about how COVID is hitting them financially and health wise, So we really greatly appreciate your work. I don't see any questions, must be because you were so clear. Michelle has dropped the link to the Washington immigrant solidarity network there folks keep an eye on that and someone else has put the phone number that you mentioned before in the, in the chat so thanks again Montserrat and I'm sorry about the confusion I'm really glad you're able to be here.

49:00

No, thank you so much for having me. And again, there's many more resources that are available the hotline is a is the is the hub, the entry point to accessing legal services for immigration attorneys, and many more others financial supports and so, again, that's a if one thing that you can remember is the hotline and that's the place that you can send your membership, or just a welcoming ear who will understand their struggles and pains and again we can continue to build this collective woman for power for our communities. Thank you.

**Rachael Myers** 49:31

We appreciate you. Thank you. All right. Well, we will turn now to some updates that we've got from around the state, we've got again updates on local homelessness needs and we've got a great panel of folks we're a little behind on time so if everyone could just be sure to introduce yourself when you start talking and then try to keep your comments. You know, as, as concise as possible. We don't want to shortchange you. But we are going to start with Kathy Morgan from Ollie cap out on the peninsula, Kathy Are you here Are you ready.

50:06

I am so Hi, thanks for having me here today. Um, so I just wanted to give a little bit of an update as to what we're doing right now sheltering folks. So when the COVID started. We were having trouble with the shelter that they were in it's a congregate shelter was, we were having a hard time distancing people. So when the COVID money came through from the state, we were able to pay for our hotel room for folks, we did that for about a month. And it got to be very expensive. So we were offered a site at 16,000. a month for some camping sites, and a huge room with the commercial kitchen out at the fairgrounds, which was great. So we went from about 20 to 25 folks that are typically average within our shelter, because we were offering the camping. A lot of folks who can't be in congregate sheltering, they, they wanted to come in and do the camping. So we actually swelled up to 52 folks that were between inside and outside that we have a sheltering. That was getting to be extremely expensive also as we're kind of coming down to the very end of the COVID money. And when the camping opened up in our area they gave us a five day notice to have all the campers leave. We also were just given notice that we have to be out of the fairgrounds by the end of this month. So, we're going to have to go back to the original place with a lot less money. And so I just, I worry about. We've been so successful in keeping our population safe and healthy. What happens when we go back to this congregate site. And we're not able to social distance, we're just about out of money for the, for the year, and all of our sheltering money just because of the way that we had to do it. So I guess it brings up a lot of questions, and I'm sure I'm not the only County, who's having to look at those and decide what to do. Our average age for our shelter, believe it or not, is 65. So when you think about all those folks, where are they supposed to go there is no housing here so that's pretty much on our minds right now and I'll just leave it at that. That's pretty much the update from Jefferson County.

**Rachael Myers** 52:43

Thank you, Kathy thanks for that update and thank you for your work. I think instead of taking questions individually we'll maybe just ask folks to put their questions in the chat and then after everyone has a chance to speak if there are some questions for individuals we'll come back to those. So thank you. I will I'm going to go next to elder Tony Montgomery from the Tacoma ministerial Alliance. Elder Tony thank you so much for being here. Would you like to go ahead.

53:09

Yes, thank you for the invite and assign me with the task. Oh, I'm Tony Montgomery I'm with the Tacoma ministerial Alliance. And we have been contracted by Catholic community services to provide services to African American families in Pierce County. And

53:33

so,

53:35

it is good to be in this conversation thank you all for having me to talk about this, this particular thing. Pierce County is just like any other county in the United States of America, the homeless rate among African Americans is disproportionately higher than really anybody, especially white counterpart. And so, so, so we make up about, you know, a little bit over 10% of the population but we are about 30% out of the homeless population. Now, and this is this is a problem. And, and this is not a problem in in homelessness of black people, but it is endemic to every system in the United States of America. You name the system. It is a problem for the African American, and in all honesty, in the United States of America in this pseudo modern society. It should be highly offensive to all of us. It should be offensive to sensitivities, that we, we have to even have this conversation right now. And so, so, and and, you know, you know, it is, but but this is something that we witness it is these societal qualities, you know, of equity and equality. These should be the norm, but we know that they are missing. Oftentimes, and, and, and, so to state the obvious, without providing a positive, you forgive me if I'm a little bit gross here, but it's a can to somebody's wedding on themselves. It started out warm, but it before long, it becomes cold and stinking and very discomfortable. And if it keeps on it becomes now something that's going to affect the help. COVID-19 has, in the year, 2020 has reveal the ugly underbelly that has been prevalent for so long that has allowed this to fester in so many communities. Now, to address the positive to adjust the positive. Pierce County and the TMA because of a contract that we got from Catholic community services. We feel that we can really address this in, and in a way that avoids, all of the stereotypes and the systemic systemic tear stereotypes are again stating the obvious that blacks obey the blacks is negative, that blacks are lazy, that blacks are near do well. And that's taken, you know, even after we look at Hidden Figures. Even after we consider the rare tales who guarded the B 52 bombers as they you know liberated Europe. Even after that, those stereotypes are ingrained in so many hearts. So, The TMA and COVID again, COVID has reveal, there's a gland about the TMA to come with ministerial alliance with the contract that we received from a Catholic community services has engaged this process using. I'm talking about some really this, you are, they are good tools, the homeless system that is set up is a very good tool. And, but utilizing it with one caveat. The caveat of cultural competency. To be able to address this community with a level of competency that does not come with the judgment that you obey. You know that that does not meet you, with the your narrative Well, no, no, you're in a system that, that, that the system has been designed to hold you back. So we uh we, and I'm not, you know, we're not saying that everybody else don't have this, but we just thank God for the ability now to provide a service that the church has always been providing, but we've just never been funded to provide. And, and, and I just want to give you know,

58:28

just a very high commendations to Alan brown and Dale my LG at the Pierce County Catholic community services, who lobbied first to get this contract for Gary nealon, who I'm talking about provide a yeoman's job of of helping us and for the staff at associated ministries and to one one who allow us to do this, unhindered with a whole lot of support. So, so we are addressing, and I hope we are doing it in a very positive way. And, and I hope that you will be able to see the results very positive results in Pierce County where the numbers of the homeless families. And the homeless black folks really are impacted in a very positive way, so that they are no longer disproportion and, but they now really be an adjust from a cultural competency standpoint, and this is something again COVID revealed it, but we are going to address. Thank you.

**Rachael Myers** 59:39

Thank you so much for your work, and for that update there's a lot of are several comments, there were some thumbs up and just appreciation for you and agreement with everything you had to say. Just real quickly I'll highlight. You know one of the things that I think is a lesson what it sounds like is your organization has support finally with funding to do what you've already been doing what you've always been doing, and that that is a model that at this time if we really want to address, what's happening and and, you know, in an equitable way we should be looking to community based organizations who have relationships and who have been doing the work forever, and make sure that you've got the resources to do it now would you would you agree with that.

60:24

Absolutely I couldn't have said it in about it and and these you know we are we are here, we've been doing this. Yeah. You know, we've been doing this can let me just say this. So, if, if, at the end of January the first night, 1863, when the Emancipation Proclamation would have was signed. The, the promise was to give every family 40 acres and a view. And, but just think, and if you do the numbers. If you would have just given every person who was freed at that time which was 3.9 million people, 40 acres interview. That would have been 156 million acres. 156 million acres would have been given. Just a small port well actually about half of Texas, with about 20 million acres leftover. If America would have done that then we would be an economic Jim have prosperity. But, but, but, but when you don't address it right, you push it to the generations, and sooner or later somebody's gonna have to deal with the radio. We just, we are the generations who are having to deal with it. And I think that we are really capable to do it. All of us have the shoulders to to bear this, let's do.

**Rachael Myers** 61:56

Let's do it. Thank you so much out there, Tony. We really appreciate your work and your being with us today.

62:02

Thank you. Thank you.

**Rachael Myers** 62:04

Who. Well, I am going to, why don't we keep it in Pierce County. Now, and move on to Daisy Ray as with the Pierce County, who's a Pierce County community advocate, Daisy Are you ready to speak.

62:19

Hi everyone. Yes, I'm ready.

62:22

Today I'm here as a Pierce County advocate but I normally work with the Pierce County Health Department, and also with the City of New I love helping with the emergency response. So today I'm gonna try to just talk briefly about what our Latino x community has been challenging with, with the COVID-19, and before the COVID-19. I mean, one of the things that have been happening and probably data doesn't show about this is how our families Latinx community families have been doubling up in households, and, when, when the COVID-19 starter. A lot of our families that were getting COVID-19 cases have probably one case, instead of being just one case they were having like 10 cases why because due to the lack of affordable housing, there were multiple families living in the same household and getting getting COVID-19, because they were afraid to go to the doctor to the hospital, scared that they weren't going to get the poor ID, and now, that is something that is happening before COVID-19. When I used to work with. Not a shelter, but I was part of an agency that has a shelter, I was able to translate to a few individuals who were experiencing homelessness and we're staying at this shelter. And one of the themes that I that I saw with with my client was how not having documents was a really big challenge for him to be able to find housing. Due to not having documents he was not able to get social security benefits, this person had a lot of medical disabilities and was not able to apply for for really anything. This person was 70, something years old. And that is something that is happening unfortunately in our community. We do have a lot of our Latino people that are out there homeless, and we don't see it that often just because there is scare to be out there and just wanted to put it out there that we do have a big need in our Latino community as well.

64:54

Thank you. Yeah,

**Rachael Myers** 64:56

thank you for that update we appreciate your work and appreciate you being here. We've got two more speakers and I think we've got just the right amount of time for them. Why don't we go now to Esther mega says from Yakima Esther, are you here.

65:14

Yeah, hi Rachel thanks. Um, so I've got lots I could say but I'm gonna try and keep it short, can folks hear me I just want to make sure. So, I'm Esther Magnus is Director of Human Services for Yakima County. I really want to touch today. As a lot of folks on the call probably know we've, we've had one of the highest rates of COVID for a while. In the state and on the West Coast for a while as well. And I think a lot of the rhetoric surrounding that high rate of cases has been kind of unhelpful for our community. I don't think it really, there's been you know a lot of conversation about folks in our community who are not wearing masks or, you know, who are kind of you know this the sensationalization about the idea that this is a political movement for folks in the community, but it doesn't take into account the fact that we have an incredibly high rate of poverty, and that if you look at the data, just like in every other community, the folks who are getting hit hardest are people of color and low income people. The, especially within our community with you know Hispanic population who are mostly farmworkers or cultural workers or other forms of essential worker, and who can't afford to take time off and don't have the types of jobs that you can work remotely from, we have a lot of folks who don't even have internet at home so working remotely is just not not an option because we don't have the type of resources and infrastructure in our community, that can support remote work or remote access to a lot of essential services. So, that, you know, for me, oh, my zoom cut out but I think my phone is still on can folks still hear me on my phone.

**Rachael Myers** 67:00

Yep, I can see your frozen face on the screen. Oh, that's good but we can still hear you. Okay. Daisy you're known as Esther you're muted now.

67:18

Okay, my back. You're back. Okay. Um, so, uh, you know, that's all to say that I think that the there's a really important aspect here to the high covert rates that our community's been experiencing and, like in every other community that's experienced Pirates of COVID I think those are, economic, and, and, and often along racial lines. So one of the things that's been a big issue for us is farm worker housing and farm worker safety, I think kind of echoing. Some of the things that I heard Montserrat saying during during the presentation for missing the name of the organization I apologize, but the Washington migrant solidarity network. Thank you. The, the workplace protections haven't necessarily been worked out for a lot of farm workers, we had a lawsuit recently. Sorry, my zoom keeps cutting out which is a little distracting but I'll keep powering through because I'm on my phone. The, the big issue that I've been focusing on is the housing safety and availability there have been some guidelines set out by the

68:40

by the.

68:51

I'm not sure though.

**Rachael Myers** 68:53

You're good now. Sorry.

68:56

This to me is just a premium example of some of the difficulties we've had in our community because we don't have the infrastructure as I said for good internet. I'm, you know, a director and I'm, I should have all the capacity to be able to have video calls, and I paid to upgrade my internet when this happened and we, it just isn't working, we've been trying to do speed tests and our community just does not have the infrastructure for Internet access so sort of a tangent but um the the state response for farmworker housing I think was a little bit inadequate. And I know nobody on the state is really here and I see that Ted was unable to make the call, but when. So a lot of our farm workers live in farmworker housing either through h2 a worker housing this provided by employers or nonprofits or employers that provide farmworker housing, because we have folks who come in, just for a few months of the year and our housing market is incredibly tight as it is. So it's very very hard for folks to be able to find housing on a limited three month basis or, you know, six month basis or nine month basis, however long it is that they're in our community working. So for folks who are migrant farm workers either domestic or international migrant farm workers housing is a really crucial component to safety and health, and there haven't been the restrictions that have been put in place to try and protect farm workers within that farm worker housing have also reduced the availability of beds available in that farmworker housing. The six foot rule for instance that there has to be six feet between beds doubles the space that was previously required for fire egress. So 36 inches of standard space between beds, so that folks can get out into the fire six feet doubles that which means that the number of beds that can be put in farmworker housing is reduced by about half. So while we're increasing safety around COVID, we're decreasing space fee for folks who are are now having to get pushed out into the street into their cars into doubling up, and those folks who lose their housing aren't just not going to come back into contact with everyone else they come back into contact with everyone else in the workplace. The state had released, of course, everyone knows the emergency housing grant for counties. And it seems to me at least as the person who was overseeing that grant at our county that when the season started up and farmworkers started sort of returning to the area, a lot of farm worker housing providers were asking what resources do we have to increase safety measures within our units to increase units available so that we can space beds out without losing beds, and they were basically told well we provided an emergency housing grant by the state, they were told by the state that the emergency housing grant was provided to your community. So you should go seek that grant out and whatever emergency housing measures they're putting in place, use those if you have folks who are losing housing which I understand in terms of being related to the scope of the grant that was presented for folks who are losing housing as a result of COVID and displacement from housing as a result of COVID that was covered by the grant, but the grant itself was issued. Based on our point in time numbers, not on our number of farmworkers so our county is now incredibly underfunded to respond to farm worker housing, if we're supposed to be using our emergency housing grant to support farm workers, we needed to get a lot more money than we did, because we don't have the resources now to respond to all of these farm workers all of these essential workers, all of the folks in our community who are not able to take time off of work, who are not able to work from home who are not able to afford their own housing we have so many people doubling up in our community already. And the expectation that we are going to support all of these people who are highly vulnerable, who are not able to prioritize their health over their economic safety, with the limited grant that we received based on our point in time numbers it just seems unreasonable. And the fact that the response has been. This is what you're going to this is the resource we already gave you and make it work with this. It feels like there wasn't an understanding or an acknowledgement of what the community is like here on the ground and what the population is like here because we can't even if farmworkers are technically, you know, covered by this grant by becoming homeless and becoming displaced due to COVID. It just the grant itself wasn't structured in a way to support that function, even if in writing of the scope it was

73:45

a lot more to say about it obviously but I want to keep it brief. And I already have overshot that goal so

**Rachael Myers** 73:52

well we appreciate that thank you so much, sir. And sorry for your technical difficulties. We will you're right that the state wasn't here but we will make absolutely sure that they hear that feedback that you that you had for, you know, the grants not not working the way they should and not being adequate. We'll make sure that they hear that, that some of that has been seconded by Corby from the office overall and farmworker housing so again we'll put, we'll make sure that commerce hears that feedback and I hope you also saw someone saying just noting that, you know, the lack of internet access is not a side issue this is really critical in this time I think you know for low income folks for folks in rural communities when we're thinking about you know kids in school, having to learn remotely is an equity issue. So there's been a lot of talk about that so thank you for bringing that up and I'm sorry you're struggling with that. Thank you so we are, we're probably going to go just a few minutes over time today, because we have one more speaker. So I will invite Curtis Steinhauer to jump in from what welcome homes gadget. Curtis.

75:01

Hello. Yes, I'm Curtis

75:05

from welcome boss gadget, we're here in Skagit County, part of a young grassroots nonprofit organization. A little bit about me I spent my wife and I spent 12 years being homeless, we're now housed. Low Income Housing.

75:24

Thankfully, finally.

75:27

And I just want to reiterate what elder said basically the system is meant to be oppressive you know once you get that position it's very hard to get out. There's no way. And it seems to target isolate certain groups even more oppressive than others. And that's unfortunate. I mean, I believe housing is a human right, I think it was guaranteed in the, in the body of the Declaration of Independence. You know, for life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. One of the basic needs is you got to have housing if you don't have housing everything else is mute wasted effort. And I want to I want to echo the, the problem with the Latino community. We have that problem here in Skagit County was farmworkers, and so forth are COVID numbers in tune. Last time, they did a demographic snapshot, and over 60% of the cases here in Skagit County at that time were from the Hispanic Latino community. And most of those are farmworkers and they were there in the fields, working. And we've, we've determined it's basically a cultural thing, combined with a trust issue with all this uncertainty with ice and Border Patrol and administration coming down hard on immigration, a lot of these individuals are very very skittish and dealing with government officials or agencies that they're not familiar with so it's very hard to get them on board with all the safety issues and understanding, as well as having to put them up in places when we don't have Skagit County has a gross. Lack of housing. And this last year, we had two winter shelters, we don't have any permanent full time shelters for anybody other than youth, and people with

77:48

their families, or

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certain individual singles. There's nothing for couples, listen primarily for elders or anything for for that for full time basis so we had winter shelters. Well, one of them we closed down right at the beginning of the outbreak it have a fair impact on it. But, but, COVID does have an impact on its future operation. Due to the guidelines for how to deal with congregate shelters spacing becomes an issue and it makes it pretty much where that's not going to happen where it did before, because there's not enough room to provide adequate shelter for more than two or three people. Due to the size and the other shelter which we welcome helps guide you did administrate but we were part of ongoing process and was birthed out of that shelter environment. They had shut down early because they had an outbreak and of COVID in the shelter. And fortunately they moved everybody to quarantine areas and then move the individuals into the motel environment with vouchers, but they soon run out of the out of the money's involved, that were provided for that commerce and from COVID emergency funding. And so by June 1 everybody was out on the street, the money for the, for the shelters for the shelter and the motels and no place for him to go. Since then we've seen an increase on the street

79:49

individuals. A lot of these individuals have been

79:56

lost their jobs, and subsequently had to move out where they were at whatever situation with that bug where they were doubling up with somebody, or whatever the issue was some of them had before the moratorium was set to eviction was filed, so that you got to go process through. And so we've got more people out on the street. We've also been Skagit County, never fully recovered from the great recession of 2008. And now we're impacted by what some of us are calling the Great Depression to 2020. Because jobs have ended businesses have closed their doors not going to reopen because it just, they took everything they had are no longer operating. And people are trying to figure out where they're going to go how they're going to survive. We've gone into phase two. And since phase two started. I'll give you a number in the last just this month from the first of the month. Now, we've had 108 cases, you know in phase two, we had a blossom. And this last weekend last four days, 54 cases 29 of them were on Saturday. And most of these are from congregate type situations, either care facility or large group gatherings. Some of them were from people traveling in and out of state. And so it's you know it's real concerning what we're looking at here What are we going to go backwards Are we going to go back to phase one and further devastate our economy here. And all of this has an impact on sheltering. We're looking at new guidelines for sheltering, the county wants to maintain non congregate shelters, to provide the necessary for one of a better term, isolation, to pervert provide a healthy, safe environment for the, for the individuals. If they're put into a congregate situation. There's the fear of the breakout again. We've seen this happen with what's going on with

82:26

the lighthouse

82:29

shelter in Bellingham, Washington County where they lost their building, because they couldn't provide adequate shelter, they temporarily moved into the. I think it was a high school gym. They had to move out of the high school gym because they're getting schools getting ready to prepare to open up. So they moved him out of there. Fortunately city council provided them another temporary place. But, I mean, let me

82:57

put an accent on that temporary,

83:02

they're in need of a more permanent solution there as well. And they have more economic ability than we do they have a housing bond and so forth. They're in Bellingham which we don't have anything like that we're strictly all financed by sales tax. So we've got some definite issues in hardships, we're looking at, and welcome home schedule, we're looking at the long term. We're not looking at the short term, we're looking at the long term, short term right now is we're probably not going to have a winter shelter this year. The previous host is decided that they're no longer going to provide a place for it, and the other shelter, the size prohibits under the new guidelines. So we're looking at how, how much money can, can the county get to provide motel vouchers for these individuals through the winter. I mean there again we're subjected to what that point in time count said, and the numbers are growing vastly on a weekly basis and newer faces out on the street I see every day. So we're looking at solutions for the long term of hopefully coming up with a full time shelter for year round, that meets these new standards towards non congregate shelter where it's more like a apartment complex type situation, or possibly a cottage community type situation to where these people have a nice personal residence type situation where they're out of the weather feel safe and have a healthy means, because I for one I think we're in this for the long haul route, we're going to be dealing with COVID for a few years and economically. Hopefully we can recover here in Skagit County, a lot better than men 10 or 15 years.

**Rachael Myers** 85:16

Thank you, Curtis, um, we're gonna have to wrap up now but I think you've really, you've hit on problems that communities are facing I think all around the state probably all around the country, and just highlighting that you know, part of the reason that this is is so bad and so hard right now is that we had an affordable housing crisis and a homelessness crisis. Before COVID arrived, and I think you you described really well how that has made our response to COVID, much more challenging than it would have been otherwise. We really appreciate your work and appreciate your update. If folks have questions, since we're over time. If folks have questions for any of our speakers today. Feel free to follow up with any of us at the housing Alliance, we'll try to get the questions to our speakers will also send a follow up email with folks contact information we'll check that with all of you to make sure that's okay. But with follow up our contact information so you can speak to each other directly and there were also a couple of things that we didn't get to on our agenda. Commerce has updates and an update on PGP for housing providers and homeless service providers, we'll include that in the follow up email as well. So thanks again everybody thanks for being here. Thanks for everything you're doing in your communities. And please continue to take good care. Take good care of yourself and each other, and be well and we will see you next week. Thank you.