Statewide COVID-19 Housing & Homelessness Calls

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**SPEAKERS**

Kirsten Jewell, John Stovall, Rachael Myers

01:43

Morning everybody. Can you hear me.

**John Stovall** 01:46

Good morning. Yeah.

01:50

Got it. Yes,

01:51

yes, yes, yes.

**John Stovall** 01:58

Camera networking.

**Rachael Myers** 02:00

Great. We'll just give it another minute or so before we get started. All right. Well good morning everybody, thanks so much for being here. JOHN thank you for putting the agenda in the chat our agenda is a little different than what we set out on Monday, we have a few updates. We did not have an update this morning from the Department of Commerce, but I've got a little bit of information to share from them. And we're holding off on on one staff report that we were going to give with some data, because we want to make that a little bit more thorough so we'll bring that back next time we are going to hear from Michelle about the pulse data but I think in our in the email we talked about sharing some information from counties. So that will not be on our agenda this morning. Thanks, everyone again for being here. Before we start I hope that everybody is well what a terrible and difficult time this is I hope we're all breathing. Well, and I hope for all of us for the smoke to clear and the fires to get under control. Very, very soon and I hope you're all taking as good care of yourselves and your families and your communities as possible. We're not going to talk a lot about that today but I do want to share a couple of things. We sent an action out an action alert out yesterday, calling on the governor to immediately mobilize resources to get folks who are living outside and at risk of the health impacts of breathing, this terrible air and the wildfire smoke indoors immediately folks who are living outside folks who are homeless have significantly greater, on average, health challenges underlying health challenges already and this air is just so unhealthy for them so we would ask you if you haven't already to please join us in calling on the governor to do that, I'm going to put a link here in the chat to our action. And then what I wanted to share from commerce was many of you probably received this commerce sent out an email a few days ago with some resources. They're not specific to Washington State most of it's sort of federally focused. Information about dealing with smoke and wildfire response. So I'm going to share that in the chat as well it was an email but this will take you to a link where you can see it on the web. And then the last thing that I will share from the Department of Commerce is just a reminder that day shelters are and have always been an allowable use of consolidated homeless grant funds. If you have any questions if your community is looking to set up indoor, you know, healthy air say fare shelters. Of course you can always contact commerce about, you know, use of those resources and we encourage you to do that. We're calling on the governor to, to actually make hotel and motel at non congregate shelters available for folks experiencing homelessness, so that we're not increasing the risk of COVID-19 spread. But we know that many communities because that's what they can do, are opening up indoor congregate shelters with as much social distancing as possible. And, again, just a reminder from commerce that consolidated homelessness grant funds can be used for that. So with that, I'm going to briefly hand it over to john to do some polling questions and talk about the rest of the agenda john.

**John Stovall** 07:02

Okay, good morning everybody. Nice to see you all again. So I'm gonna go ahead and launch one of our polls that we've done repeatedly and this is you know what hats are you wearing today, in other words what roles, do you have in your community around housing and homelessness. So, acknowledging that you can choose more than one of these, and most of us have more than one of these hats that we wear. So are you a person who has lived experience or lived expertise of housing instability and homelessness Are you a housing and homelessness advocate in your community or at the state or federal level. Are you a direct service provider housing provider, local state or federal elected official or staff government person. Do you work in the kind of legal realm around rights of tenants or rights of people experiencing homelessness. Are you someone from another sector like healthcare, education environment climate justice work, etc. Who is, you know, seeing the, the need to overlap with with housing justice work as many of us do, or do you fall into some other category. And I want to just remind you feel free to use the chat if you want to add something else in here, because it's just really helpful for us to see who's on the line and what what assets and what sort of what things you're bringing to this space today so I'll go ahead and just give it like two more seconds. And one, two, ended. Cool. So as usual. Let me share the results so you can see. Okay, as usual. Many of you are advocates which is awesome. And makes a lot of sense, giving the, the, the, the network of people that we are a lot of direct service providers today which is great. I think that's a little unusual that we have more direct service providers so that's awesome. Quite a few housing providers. 20% of folks have direct lived experience with homelessness, that's, that's really great to see that we have great representation there today. Allies from other organizations and other sectors, that's good. So you can kind of see the breakdown there but thank you all for sharing the hats that you're wearing. I see Becky says League of Women Voters Spokane area. Perfect. Thank you. All right, I'm going to go to a next poll, which is really like. I would encourage the use of the chat for this one. This is related to our action that Michelle, or that Rachel just talked about around, you know, calling on the governor to increase shelter and to get people inside during the most recent disaster, natural disaster and challenges that we're facing around smoke and wildfires So recognizing that and you can't really get we can't gather that much information about where in our state has implemented emergency shelter options related to this, but please do. You know, complete the poll say if if yes in your community there has been some local New shelter created or if there hasn't been, or if you don't know. But in addition, if you, if that has happened in your community. Please put in the chat, where you're at, so that we know which cities are which counties have been taking action on this. And you can also put you know if you're in an area that has not had any sort of shelter increase, so that we have that kind of information as well. And this is kind of a follow up to a question that Maureen asked in the chat a little bit ago whether the housing Alliance is tracking the local shelter response to wildfires and I don't believe we have been yet but this is a good way for us to get just get a sense based on who's on this call. Okay, so in the poll. You know, again this information this this poll results here are not that helpful necessarily because we don't know the breakdown of who's aware but I'm seeing in the chat that King County has opened up 77 beds, City of Tacoma has a day shelter Spokane County Multnomah County Yakima county Stevens ferry Lincoln. Oh Yakima county has not okay not aware of anything in Clark County. So, so please continue to just sort of like add that information in the chat. And thank you for providing the information on the ground. And I have one final question and it's not i'm not going to actually use the polls for this but, but I'll ask the question you know who has seen the really awesome conference on ending homelessness program and scheduling on our website, yet. You don't have to say whether you have or not but I'm just basically using this as an opportunity to plug the conference again. It is going to be October 7 and eighth. You can check out the program there at the link I just posted it truly is going to be a really remarkable conference this year so I'm really really excited and I hope all of you will have a chance to register if you haven't already. The earlybird deadline has passed already but it's still a pretty significantly reduced price to join this year since it's all virtual. So I hope that will encourage all of you to join we've got a couple of really great keynote speakers and plenary speakers. And just as usual all of you, many of you on this call will be leading some incredible workshops. So yep just want to plug it one more time. Go ahead and register and, and thank you for all of you who have registered. So I'll go ahead and pass it back to you, Rachael.

**Rachael Myers** 12:57

Great, thanks john and thanks for the information about the, what your communities are doing or not doing regarding getting folks out of the smoke we will we will do our best to actually compile this information and it will be helpful for our advocacy and please do again take action. This is an urgent action that people have been outside in the smoke since at least Friday, breathing this horribly unhealthy air and we need to do something better than what we've done so far. So please join us in taking action on that

**John Stovall** 13:27

actually Rachel. I do have, it's okay for me to add to another quick announcement that Allison sent just related to wildfires. I don't know if you're planning on adding this later, but the DSHS Department of Social and Health Services has expanded their disaster cash assistance program during this time two counties that have declared have been declared a disaster area to to cover folks who are impacted by the wildfires in those areas so I think I've got a list of the counties here it's Douglas Okanagan Whitman Lincoln's Spokane schulen Pierce and Thurston counties are designated to that disaster areas. And so to qualify households must have suffered suffered losses and live in one of these counties related to the fires be living in their home or primary residence at the time of the disaster being unable to live in a return to their home because of the disaster. And then meet certain household incomes. And so anyway, I just wanted to plug that, and I'll include that in the follow up email because there's a one pager that DSHS put out so that may be of interest to all of you. Thanks john.

**Rachael Myers** 14:41

So we've got a great set of speakers today, like on our last call we're going to hear from several providers about their irap their emergency rent Assistance Program, or eviction rent assistance programs that are being deployed in their counties we'll hear from Matt Garrett in Kitsap County and net Rodriguez in Yakima county and Kirsten you're in Thurston County. And then we are very pleased to have Scott crane from the Northwest Justice Project, who's going to talk a little bit about the federal eviction moratorium, and how that differs from the moratorium that we have in place in Washington, currently at least through October 15. Then we'll have Michelle talk about the pulse survey data what we've learned from the most recent data that the Census Bureau has begun again collecting on a weekly basis. It's data that, that looks at how people are doing in a number of areas including on their housing stability. During the pandemic. I'll give a brief federal advocacy, update, and then I'm also going to share there's just a lot going on right now so we've got a lot of actions and things that we want to remind you, you know, to take action on and encourage you to take action on some of them are follow ups from previous speakers that we've had. So we'll share a couple of updates about some other things. So with that, I am going to move to our first speaker and invite Matt Garrett from Kitsap community resources to take it, Matt. Thanks for being here.

16:20

Hey, can you hear me.

**Rachael Myers** 16:21

Can

16:22

awesome Hello everyone and thank you for having me on definitely appreciate the opportunity and also really appreciate the last session of hearing from all the other providers. We're in the position right now we haven't actually started Iraq, yet. So I know john asked that I could talk about just our kind of our plans. So definitely a caveat that that we don't necessarily know how this is going to work. We hope it goes well but this is kind of how we're using some of our other rent assistance programs. We actually just got the contract yesterday so today is actually our first day of E wrap coincidentally so we're actually starting to process applications. But, yeah, just a little bit ourselves is like a lot of caps we have coordinated entry and housing all under our, you know Kitsap community resources are kind of umbrella organization so that gives us kind of some unique tools to work with so our coordinated entry is the hub for a lot of our eviction prevention funds already we have some local funding as of one 10th we have harps and then CDBG and local cares funds already that are helping with eviction prevention or rent assistance so that already is kind of our initial hub and we kind of plan for a wrap to kind of fit right in there as well. So the idea is that clients go to coordinated entry and they can kind of plug them in Where is they see fit or where the client kind of wants to go, and then they pay the initial upfront

17:45

arrears and to try to get them current if possible, depending on how much they owe, and that's working pretty well. And then because we have multiple funding sources. The, if they need more ongoing assistance, then we'll actually get referred back to a case manager, and then a case manager not traditional case management, but really just trying to navigate all these funding sources. And so we have a case manager working with them to try say okay what do you qualify for what's going on. There's also some mortgage assistance that our county has so there's some folks that are kind of being screened in that way. And that's just to try to link up and make sure we're qualifying folks if they qualify for multiple funding streams so that's why we kind of have them working with the case manager and that's working decently well right now also helping not overload our coordinated entry team and kind of spread some of the work since we're having huge volumes of calls and people interested. And so the the other piece of this specifically for the E rap and some of the performance metrics for E rap is our outreach right to communities of color and specifically immigrant communities, and that's where we're working pretty closely with Kitsap legal services and Kitsap immigrant Assistance Center, so definitely a big shout out to them and they had a ton of great ideas, and we're using, we're running with a lot of them. So the first is and this is from the Kitsap immigrant Assistance Center is they wanted liaisons and so we're actually training liaison, they're hiring them and these are folks from different immigrant communities and kind of leaders, people that they have identified as kind of influencers and so we're training them as far as iraq goes what clients need and then they're going out and reaching out and we'll be bringing apps kind of back into us and so the idea is, It's just another way to kind of get folks to coordinate entry and hopefully those applications will kind of be ready to go. That's why we're training them on what's needed what's kind of the program, and then potentially they could get other assistance as well since we are coordinated entry so we're really excited we have our first training. This Friday and. And we're doing some in Spanish some in English and so that's something we're definitely looking forward to. The other thing again that was kayaks ideas pop up events and so they have kind of different locations that are kind of hubs, and so we'll be sending case managers or navigators along with liaisons or even kayak on staff to these locations and we'll kind of do different events and try to advertise to bring people into the fold these might be churches apartment complexes, or different areas, they have identified and again this is, we're really letting them lead and kind of just trying to follow along and support them as best we can. And then the other pieces with Kitsap Legal Services is, if there's anyone that's falling through the moratorium or the loophole and I know some more landlords are still kind of doing the selling loophole I don't know if anyone else has experienced that where they just declare their intention to sell, and then or now end up in eviction court. They don't have to have to prove they can sell so I know our legal services Kitsap legal services letting us know there's still a few people. And so we're working with them if anyone's on the docket that we can maybe try to get assistance to them that way if they haven't worked with us already. We also are trying to outreach directly to landlords, send them information. And then we have also some folks calling them directly and even case managers that have built relationships and letting them know to refer people to us so we're definitely really excited. We're super glad to have these different funding sources, it's a little bit of challenge trying to make them all play nicely together and making sure everyone qualifies and we have all the documentation. But that's a positive, a rap is it's a little lighter there and we definitely think, especially for our immigrant community. I know kayak is really really excited, especially with the that they don't have to necessarily have a lease right there's some flexibility there we think that's really really positive and will help a lot of people that traditionally are not eligible for any of our other rent assistance programs right now so that's. We do not know the demand, I'm we're anticipating quite a bit. But hopefully, hopefully we can spec as fast as we can. That's the goal. So, I think that's right about my five minutes I don't know if Kiersten jewel is on she's our county representative and she has some other biome fours that are still contracting almost Kerstin's on and wants to say anything about that. But if not, that's, that's all I have. Thank you very much everyone.

**Rachael Myers** 22:13

Yeah, thanks for being here. Matt kyrsten, if you're here, anything to add. Feel free to add it in the chat if you'd prefer I'm actually not sure if Kristen's on she's usually here. Oh god. Thank you, that was that was great. I do want to know Michelle's comment in the chat that if anybody else is seeing the abuse of the loopholes that Matt mentioned please reach out to us. We would like to hear about that and figure out a way to address that. And we will come back. So first of all, Matt, I want to say that I'm really thank you for that update on the importance and the creativity that some of the bind for organizations that you're working with are bringing to this that was what absolutely what we and what I'm sure the Department of Commerce was was hoping to see was like bringing some organizations into this who really are connected with members of the community who might not otherwise be able to access these resources so thanks for. Thanks for that and we'll be interested in how your program. You know what the demand is and how it how it rolls out once you really get going. If anybody's got questions for Matt please do feel free to put them in the chat we're going to go on to our next two speakers. But we'll take a few minutes after after they have both spoken to see if anybody's got other questions for any of the three folks who are talking about the eviction rent Assistance Program. So we will move now to a net Rodriguez from Yakima neighborhood health services. And that

23:35

morning, everyone. I'm Annette. I'm Annette Rodriguez from Yakima neighborhood health services and I use, she hers pronouns. Some. For those of you who don't know Yakima neighborhood health we are first and foremost a Community Health Care Clinic so we're a Community Health Care Center in Yakima County, and we received our irep contract the first week of September, so we have already started spending and helping families and individuals with the services. We have been fortunate enough to be able to do this kind of assistance because we're also a community resource center that provides all of the emergency type services to our folks experiencing homelessness, or who are at risk of of homelessness. And so we've been working really hard with trying to make it very easy for our families and individuals to get to our services. We've had to definitely do services differently. We are not doing face to face because of the COVID. We are also doing lots of phone appointments, we are making opportunities available for those that don't have a phone. We're just doing it in a safe manner with social distancing and the proper protective equipment that we need to be able to do those face to face type appointments if they're necessary. So we don't want to make more barriers or create more barriers for families and individuals, especially during this time because there's so much going on and it's so there's so much uncertainty. So, going through the E wrap. We feel like, you know, going through the eligibility guidelines was really important so because we've already started doing this. We have definitely seen the families that I think that we, you know, should be serving. Lots of discoveries along the way that we're making with our populations that we're serving mostly is that we are definitely identifying. First time users of services. These are folks that are coming to our door that have heard about us through the community either through friends or family, or some of the outreach that we're doing as well. We are going out to the different community, places like warehouses and different places where we're also providing COVID education, our agency also does testing. So, we are able to be you know to provide those to provide the fliers and information to our community a little bit differently. So we're excited about that we've already like I said started serving over 50% of the folks that we're serving right now our Latin x population so we know that there's folks that are being affected by either their work hours have been reduced they're furloughed, or they're still waiting on some kind of problem solving with unemployment issues that are going on. We've been outreaching to the, the landlords in our community. Because we do the CH D grant also we've been lucky to have a strong pool of landlords that we do work with so they're familiar with us and sending referrals and they're very been cooperative about filling out the forms. And just to kind of go through and I know that probably some of you have already seen some of the guidelines maybe not, but just to kind of go over quickly the eligibility. So, so the folks that we're serving, have to be earning income of 50% or less of the area median income and have at least not paid their rent since March, 1, the households have to meet a couple of different risk factors and criteria. So their rent has to be rent burdened at least 50%, or more. In order to qualify, or previously homeless within the last five years, have an eviction history within the last seven years, or have had their housing disrupted due to some kind of inequality the either they've been discriminated because of race, ethnicity, or gender identity. We also are serving those that are at risk because of COVID, obviously because of COVID, they've been affected in some way they have a family or household member in their household, that has a disability, and then the big reminder for all of us is that citizenship is not required. I think that, as we've been rolling this out. We appreciate that. It is very.

28:14

I guess less burden less requirements for a family so that they can get the services immediately we want to make sure that they stay house. We know that many of our families that are are affected will probably have their landlords present them with some kind of eviction. The kinds of requests that we're getting are help with either the last month's rent. So rents in arrears current rent and one month in the future. So those are the kind of requests that we are getting. The other thing that we're doing to help our families because we know this is really confusing right now is that we're working very close with our volunteer attorney services in our community also so that we can refer folks that might be experiencing some kind of legal issue with their landlords or maybe landlords who aren't willing to participate in the eviction Assistance Program. So we are also working very close with Northwest Justice in our community and making sure that our folks are getting the correct information and and access to the services that they need. We've also noticed that, you know, the folks that are asking for this help, are you know they're coming to us because they trust us. We have bilingual staff. We're trying to make sure that that's the first service we're screening for so that they're not getting directed here and there. We are coordinated entry access point as well. So, we've just we've just kind of worked through it that during this time this is important for us to just prioritize this particular service right now, so no wrong door no wrong person everybody has been trained in our, in our, in our building in our service to be able to provide whether they're somebody that's even doing street outreach right now so that they can navigate those folks successfully to receive the service. We're hearing stories, you know, it's really sad we're hearing stories about families that are being affected by COVID that are using their rent money so that they can be closer to their family they're hospitalized, they're using. You know their rent money to be able to afford additional food. There's just so many different things you know that they've had to make choices about right now because of the COVID crisis, even though that you know there may be some additional dollars coming here and there, many of our families are big, we have some really some pretty big families, you know, lots of children, and so we decided that we were going to screen and try to make sure that our families fit into some kind of service regardless of whether they don't fit in at a wrap. They might fit into something else and so that's why it was important for us to just prioritize everything right now with the prevention assistance. Even medical costs, you know, paying medical expenses out of pocket is just right now and it's not a good time and again just just to say these are folks that would normally not come through our door, even if we were receiving face to face these are folks calling desperate and when we call them to let them know that yes they qualified yes we're going to serve them even when we tell them at the moment, they're they're bursting into tears, you know they're happy they're excited they're they're just very grateful for this opportunity to receive these assistance so some of the other things that we've been doing again is the outreach to the different populations in the priority populations. We want to make sure that the folks that are experiencing any kind of discrimination or issue around this is connected to the right resource and service at the same time we're wanting to make sure that our folks are also getting the services, other services that they might need like health care services. Some of our families don't know that they can you know receive these COVID testings for free in some areas. So we've been directing them that way as well. The other thing that we've been noticing is that, you know, we're really careful we already know that they've been going through a lot of things so we want to make sure that we're taking a trauma informed approach with our families as well. And making sure that they know how to access behavioral health services, right now this is also a component of the work that we do. We do a lot of integrated medical and behavioral health services with our street teams, and then just going out and and being responsive to the type of calls that we're getting so screening them and making sure that they're getting the services again that they need. I'm trying to make sure I didn't leave anything out there's a lot going on right now.

32:53

If there's any questions definitely I like to answer if there's any questions about how we're doing it. We've just pushed full force working with lots of different Migrant and Seasonal farm worker programs so that we're making sure that again that we're touching all the populations that are being affected by this especially our agricultural workers who are essential essential needs workers right now who who probably need us the most at this time.

**Rachael Myers** 33:21

Thank you, Annette. Excuse me. There is a lot going on and we really appreciate your work and that really thorough report. I mean one thing that that you shared that I particularly appreciate is the No Wrong Door approach, and the fact that you're not making people go to the program and find the program that's going to fit them that you're letting people come in with whatever needs they have and then you're finding the program that are the resources that will work for them. I think that's really important. When families are struggling so much right now they shouldn't have to navigate a complicated system they should just say we need help. And so that's a great example. Thank you for that. Again if folks have questions for net specifically, feel free to use the chat and I just want to note that there's some great conversation in the chat and I want to highlight that that's exactly what we're seeing is really one of the points of this, these calls is that we wanted folks to share resources and information and learnings with each other. And so we're doing that with our speakers, but that's also happening in the chat with folks asking questions and other folks coming back and responding with with resources that they know about so thank you all for that and I hope, I hope you'll continue that. So we'll move on now to Kristin York from the Community Action Council of Louis Mason and Thurston County's who's going to talk about implementing the eviction rent Assistance Program in Thurston Kristen, and I believe you've got some slides john Do you have those ready to go.

34:55

Right.

34:57

All right, thank you so much for having me. I'm Kirsten York I'm the director of Family Services at Community Action Council of Lewis Mason in Thurston County's. My first slide is about kind of who we are as an organization as a community action agency we are a part of a network of organizations that serves local demographic groups in our areas so our mission, clearly, is an all encompassing of a lot of different services but specifically, you know eviction rent Assistance Program Nestle's under the work that we do quite well. And go ahead. Next slide. So we have a really wide variety of services in Thurston County, we are also a coordinated entry organization. We have affordable housing and do quite a few other housing related work we also do Energy Assistance weatherization, we have a child Advocacy Center, and we are working through, you know covid response funding as it comes through our county. So like I mentioned with other organizations we are working really hard at co enrolling cross enrolling and referrals and resources. When clients come to our organization and ask. We need help, we need assistance if whether or not they're being impacted by covid whether they're homeless or hoping to prevent eviction we're working to braid resources as best as possible and leverage funding sources with energy. COVID response eviction prevention to ensure that they're getting the most sustainable network of services for their household. So again, our vision is clear about our housing umbrella and overall mission and vision of our organization and then housing vision for sure. Go ahead. And we've already spoken specifically about the intent and scope of the eviction rent assistance program but this is her commerce the overview. Next slide. Um, so we have worked really hard with our funders specifically the Thurston County public health and social services to outreach so we've done quite a few different you know pronged approaches of getting word out about the eviction rent assistance program on all of our websites we have information directing clients and community members about what the program is what the scope of the program is how to get assistance. The county has been fabulous at helping us translate flyers create flyers in different languages. We have a public facing flyer so a flyer that indicates the types of services and eligibility criteria in order to qualify for the program. We also have a landlord facing flyer so landlords are able to understand how to refer the program to their tenants, how they're going to interact and engage with our organization to receive the rent the types of obligations, they're going to have to agree to in order to receive rental payments, if their tenant qualifies, and then how to get information that way. Our organization was able to provide an information session for anyone in the county or outside of our county who was interested in hearing about the rep program when it first rolled out. And then, we were able to answer, answer any questions and post that information session with all those details and items on our website for future use. And we've done quite a few presentations to provider groups have done email blasts to provider groups and all of the organizations in our county that would be making those referrals into E rap, and definitely were the first group of folks we reached out to to get information out to as quickly as possible. Get fliers out to for their use. And then connect them with how to get information for their clients. And then we have a really mindful approach about how we're working with our buying for organizations in our county. I'm going to talk about this in a few slides but we've reached out and have some mo use with buy in for organizations as well. Go ahead.

39:06

So the way we've worked our appointment scheduling. We August 24 we opened for a week to make appointments, we're still accepting appointments, we have two different ways to, to make an appointment. One is to call our phone number and talk to a case manager over the phone. And we're also utilizing our online website portal. So everyone's accessing the portal with appointments at 30 minute increments. And then as we started seeing clients via phone for 30 minute appointments, August 31, and we have scheduled as of yesterday, 469 appointments that began on the 31st. So that way our case managers are taking the time to walk through the qualifying documents and this you know necessary information for clients to receive assistance over the phone and then we have direct designated email boxes and a physical Dropbox for those types of things to be returned back to us in order to get their application processed. Go ahead. So like I mentioned, we're working really hard with our buying for organizations in our county community use services is the organization that received the youth funding so any client to that comes in, head of household that between 18 and 24 years of age, we are referring to see ys, and when cis is expanded their pot of funding for the Iraq program they'll just keep referring back to us so we have a good collaborative relationship with cis in order to serve the 18 to 24 population. And then there are almost a dozen buy in for organizations in Thurston County, they can engage in this program in a variety of ways. They can either just provide direct referrals to us for a wrap, they can make appointments for their clients online like any other provider or refer their clients to us for appointments and but we've also created a memo mru for them to engage with two different components for this program because they are integral at having the trusted relationships with demographic groups that this grant is designed to target. They can engage with us in two different ways. One is for outreach and marketing, so they're going to be outreach and marketing the rap program to their clients directly in the relationship building and trusted languages that they have available and staffing for, and we are paying organizations to do this work so buy in for organizations get reimbursed on a monthly basis for marketing and outreach based upon an agreed upon budget. The second way is for that organization to actually process applications with clients. We are providing a $75 reimbursement fee for every application processed by a buy in for organization. And then we have a direct email referral link for buying for organizations to send those documents over to. So far, besides the way as we've had for organizations that we're working directly with that are at multiple phases of the mru process, all of which have different, you know, guidelines and different agreements for their outreach and marketing capacity which we're working on with them. And so we're really excited to be, you know, rolling out, Iraq, on behalf of their, their clients again each organization and CAC are going to have a little bit different of a relationship depending on organizational capacity for them and staffing for them. But we're there to support however they want to engage in referrals, or mo use. So we've had, you know, some great successes we were able to roll this program out really quickly the county in public health and social services in Thurston County was an amazing. Push they got things out the door really quickly. We've been we've been meeting with them since this came about on a weekly basis as teams to talk and debrief problem solve. Discuss qualifications and you know kind of hiccups. And we automated the application internally, so that all of the documentation and all of the demographic information we're collecting pre populates our logs, so that when we do our invoicing and have to provide demographic and data to our funders that it's already done so that reduces the stuffing work on our end, and definitely having a increased Variable Frequency allowed has been helpful we're pushing you know hundreds of thousands of dollars out the door, a week. So being able to get that reimbursed quickly has been a huge success in our collaborative effort, and then the, you know, of course the providers in our county are really wonderful referral sources and know how important it is to get this information and this you know qualifications out to clients. So of course, you know, with successes come challenges,

43:56

the turnaround time was incredibly quick. This is a very large pot of money, we like a lot of organizations are being asked to implement many many funding sources at the same time so just managing and juggling all of the different ins and outs qualifications how they interact with each other, how it worked pre qualifying clients for multiple programs at a time. And we obviously large amount of vouchers per week, and with that comes you know we're all trying to learn the program and things are changing at a really fast pace so updating teams and updating providers as quickly as possible, making sure we have the staffing capacities as everyone knows, you know staffing at this time is always a challenge and we're trying to, you know, do whatever we can to support our teams to learn new programs support themselves and manage themselves through a pandemic. And then you know expenditure dates of the end of the year you know getting the type of level of funding out the door by that deadline is going to be an adventure. Right. So I've linked some resources here for folks to look up. So I've put our main webpage up. I've also put the scheduling webpage up we had a web developer who. Coincidentally, creates our energy assistance scheduling program, he actually converted, all of it over to Iraq as well so you can take a look at what that looks like. The webpage specifically for the rep program Department of Commerce and on our Facebook page where we post a lot of updates, and then we designated a phone extension directly for this program for people to access appointment scheduling and information. Go ahead and the last slide is just my information feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

**Rachael Myers** 45:44

Thank you so much Kirsten. That was really helpful and yeah you're doing a lot, and we're really impressed by how quickly you rolled this out, and what a big lifted is and how thorough it is a couple of questions, one that I've got I think you said you had 369. I don't know if that number was exactly right appointments scheduled so far. Do you have any sense of like how that matches what available resources, you've got.

46:15

Yeah, so we have 469 appointments scheduled and the way we estimated how many appointments, we were going to be able to book was we agreed upon an average household rental amount, which is generally the model that we use in our organization for a lot of programs sources. Our average rental amount per household and divided that by the amount of direct service dollars we had to spend, and made sure we accounted for some, you know, non qualifiers or no shows two appointments, and then just did our very best to estimate how many appointments, it would take to book out so we're currently still booking out appointments when we reach that top limit of estimation we'll turn the appointments off and then if we have any available funding near the end we'll open more appointments for scheduling.

**Rachael Myers** 46:59

That's great. Thank you. There are a couple of other specific questions for you in the chat but we're a little bit over time so sick, we need to move on. Are you able to see the chat Kirsten Can you take a look at those questions and respond that way. Thank you. Thank you. And then everybody else. Sorry for not having a little bit more time to do q&a right now but please do use the chat with your questions. If we don't, if there's anything that doesn't get answered right now we'll follow up after this call and we'll try to get questions answered. Thank you all. Kristin Matt and Nat for those reports. We really really appreciate them.

**John Stovall** 47:37

Um, Kirsten Would it be okay if I shared your slides in the chat with everyone so they can access the links and everything. Okay, thank you.

**Rachael Myers** 47:45

Right. All right, so we are gonna shift here, and we are going to move on to Scott crane from the Northwest Justice Project to talk about the recent federal of eviction moratorium and how that interacts with our state moratorium Scott thanks for being here.

48:01

Thanks Rachel Can you hear me okay, we can. Great, thank you. I'm Scott crane. I'm a statewide advocacy counsel at Northwest Justice Project, which is our state's largest provider free civil legal services to low income people. And I'm going to talk to you today a little bit about the as Rachel mentioned the new federal moratorium from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on evictions. Before I do that though I just want to mention if you're looking for either legal assistance or legal information beyond what we talked about here today you can go to our site, Washington law help dot o RG, and all of the resources that you might want about coronavirus and legal issues related to it can be found there as well as links to how to contact us or others for free legal assistance in your community. So on September 4, the CDC moratorium became effective nationwide. And I think it's fair to say this was a surprise to a lot of us in the housing advocacy community. And so we're still trying to catch up a little bit and figure out what it means for us here in Washington State. And I think it's fair to say, the way to characterize it is that the the new federal rule has provided a floor of protections for people who rent their homes from being evicted from September 4 through the end of this year December 31 2020. And I say a floor because this new federal moratorium doesn't apply if a state already has a moratorium that's more protective, or if certain areas of that state's moratorium are more protective than the federal moratorium. And if you read the the moratorium that the CDC put together it's it's really, in some ways, great that they talk about why are we keeping people from being evicted What's the reason and it's because we don't want vulnerable people who can't pay rent elsewhere and can't find other housing to either be homeless or to have to live doubled up with other people, thereby increasing the risk of spreading COVID-19 and making the pandemic worse. And so the CDC really recognized that we're not doing enough, and that evictions will make it worse and it's really worth pointing that out if anybody asks you why there should be a moratorium, the CDC put it in writing for us and we know that this is about protecting people's health and keeping people from becoming homeless or having marginal housing situations when there's a pandemic raging outside. So what is the what is this moratorium to actually do in Washington states a fair question because we already have a moratorium. And to add to the confusion, we now have a federal moratorium. In addition to the cares Act requirements so it's a lot of stuff going on and even for the lawyers who deal with this stuff every day it's been pretty tough to sort out. I think well we can fairly say though is that the CDC moratorium is going to provide a little bit more protection for Washington renters. I'll start by kind of talking about how their moratorium works but for the CDC moratorium to work a person has to be what we call a covered person. And that basically has five parts to it and it means that they have an income that's low enough under $99,000, or they got a stimulus check, they're unable to pay their full rent due for a reason related to income loss or medical bills. Note that the non payment of rent does not have to be related to the pandemic. It just has to be related to income lost or medical bills. They have to have tried to get rental assistance, and that they have to be likely to be homeless or living forced close quarters. So, kind of like I talked about what the purpose of this moratorium is, it's supposed to protect people who really have nowhere else to go if they were evicted that would be saved, they can't just go rent another apartment, because their incomes been reduced, and they don't have the ability to do that. And so there's this declaration requirement that you may have heard about the CDC says if this moratorium is going to apply to you. You have to sign a declaration that says all of these things and that they're being truthful. Now if you look at the declaration is pretty scary stuff the CDC really made it pretty overbearing and said, you know, basically threaten people with criminal convictions if they are lying here so it's, it's, we don't like that aspect of it and we're trying to work and see if there's a way to make these declarations, a little friendlier to tenants but in the short run, what I'd say is

52:31

that that's the requirement if you submit this declaration to the landlord, then you would be a covered person under the CDC moratorium now the big question for us in Washington is, do we need to do that right we already have a moratorium that says if you don't pay the rent. You can't be evicted. We already have a moratorium that says you can't be evicted except for very serious conduct including a breach of lease that causes a imminent hazardous threat to other people or property. So our moratorium is very protective, the two places where our moratorium has been less protective are that we've been allowing landlords to give these 60 day notices that they plan to move in, or that they plan to sell the property in our belief is that this new CDC moratorium could protect some renters who are being told to move because their landlord either wants to move in, or wants to sell the property again it goes back to what is the purpose of this TDC a moratorium is to keep people in their homes. When they have nowhere else to go. And so if these five criteria in this declaration apply to a renter that they're low income they can't pay their rent, and they're likely to live in close quarters, then they can submit that declaration to a landlord and use this as a defense to eviction if the landlord doesn't stop that eviction now. I will say a couple of things about this. This is a very technical legal argument, and we're very concerned about people just signing these declarations and submitting them without getting some legal advice because it could have implications for their tenancy that are hard to predict. So what we're saying is if you are getting one of these 60 day notices to move out because your landlord wants to sell the place, or wants to move in. Contact legal assistance right away and try to figure out if this more this new moratorium will help you out. By by allowing you to avoid eviction at least through the end of the year. And we want to make sure people are getting legal advice about that, and that they're understanding that this is a new moratorium judges really haven't looked at it yet, and it's our job as lawyers and people who are representing or advocating for tenants to make the best arguments we can and make sure those judges understand that the purpose here is to prevent people from being evicted. And that's why this new moratorium was passed. So I think the the main lesson there is get people to legal assistance here, it's a little difficult to figure out and defend on your own. We want to make sure people are getting advised about that we do think that this new moratorium could help people who are getting evicted for their landlords wanting to move into the property or sell the unit. There's a few things I'm kind of glossing over here. In addition to some challenges to this and courts in other states. And so we'll see how those play out but at the moment this is effective it's available. And we want to make sure that renters are protected by here when they have no other protections under Washington law. So Rachel I'm just going to stop there because it looks like we're really close to being out of time and make sure that I answer any questions if folks have.

**Rachael Myers** 55:31

Thank you Scott. So that's really helpful. So do you have any, do you have information up on Washington law help or any resource that I mean we can certainly help spread the word that if folks are getting these 60 day notices that they may have some extra protections under this and that they need to contact an attorney, what would be the best resource for that

55:52

yeah I think something's going up this week. Just an FAQ for folks about the new federal moratorium so they can start there. And this this issue will be listed there. And so if you're if you're working with folks you can distribute that FAQ or go over it with them. Then I see John's put information in the chat about how to reach us for legal assistance, as well as some of the links to call the governor's office there was a question in the chat too about if our moratorium expires on the 15th. Would this apply and the answer is absolutely yes it would because there'd be nothing else in place. So, you know if that, if our moratorium is expired on October 16 and this is the only game in town and we're really going to need to talk to tenants about submitting these declarations, to prevent them from being evicted hopefully our moratorium will be extended and that won't be the case. But at the moment that's, yeah, that's correct.

**Rachael Myers** 56:46

Great, thank you. Yeah, and we will absolutely be working on like Scott said our moratorium is in most cases in most areas a bit more protective than this. And so we absolutely are calling on the governor and we'll be more actively and more loudly and more publicly calling on the governor to extend our moratorium. And we'll invite you all to help with that. Are there any other questions. I see some comments in the chat. What are we going to do about the massive amount of rental debt. Yeah, that's a really important question and I mean it's important to know that these moratoriums are putting off evictions, they're not proven, they're not ultimately going to prevent everyone from being evicted what's going to solve that is significant rental assistance because people won't magically, you know, even if the pandemic is suddenly over people aren't suddenly going to have a lot of money to pay that back rent that they've missed when they have not been able to pay it. So we absolutely need significant rental assistance. That's why we're so glad that the state has made the funding from the cares act available that you heard about earlier in the call. And it's why we're continuing to push at the federal level for much more significant rent assistance funds. Any other last questions. All right. Well thanks Scott, we really appreciate your work and this update, and like with everything we'll share all this information out in the follow up email. So with that, I am going to hand it off to Michelle to talk about what we what we know from the most recent pulse data, Michelle.

58:24

Yeah, so I'll be quick this is just a quick summary that housing Alliance is going to put all this information into a document. Some of you may have seen that we were updating weekly when the pulse data was being updated weekly. So when we have that available, and we'll share it widely. But the the pulse data if you remember the Census Bureau started. Shortly after the COVID pandemic began to do weekly surveys of people across the country, with a variety of questions to figure out how the COVID economy and the pandemic itself. Were impacting households. They do it at the state level so we have Washington State level data, they also do it at the King County metro area as well. But we've been particularly paying attention to the state level data. And they do it on multiple range of issues, including food insecurity and other important measures the information that we have been sharing with you all and summarizing though, specifically pertains to renters and how renter households in Washington state are faring. They paused the data for I think about a month, because they needed to get permission again from the federal government to continue to conduct the surveys they received that permission. And they updated last week, information, finishing out the week of August. Prior to that we had only had information to mid August. So, the information that they call week 13 data is over two weeks, two week period August 19 through August 31, and what it says about Washington State is that there were. And I'll just preface this that the information is grim. There's 139,706 households in renter households in Washington State, who reported that they were not currently caught up on rent payments. We do not know how far behind. They were that could be just August rent or it could be going back until March, but that number of households in Washington State affirmatively said that they were not currently caught up on rent that represents 9% of all renter households in Washington State. However, disparities by race were very very significant and this, you know, if you've been on our previous Cova calls our senior summary document know that this is a, she has, has been true the entire time this data has been being trapped. Black households in Washington state were five times more likely to report that they're unable to pay their rent, at that point, then white households and Asian households were 2.6 times more likely to report that they were behind in rent than white households. Female headed households also were harder hit significantly 80,000 female headed households versus 60,000 male headed households in terms of the age groups that are most impacted, there's two that are equally tied a youth and young adults aged 18 to 24 were equally impacted with adults aged 40 to 54 those two subsets of age groups were faring, the worst. By age alone. And in terms of competence and ability to pay the next month's rent. So, in this case we're talking about September's rent. One in five renter households in Washington State reported either no confidence or only slight confidence in their ability to pay their rent. In September, this represents 18 point 56% of all renter households in Washington State. Obviously, the E rep program rolling out and communities across the state will hopefully significantly alleviate the numbers we're talking about today, but this was what was reported in August. And then again in this figure of competence and ability to pay September's rent households of color, were much more likely to report that they had either No, only slight confidence in their ability to pay September's rent. 15.5% of white renter households shared this low level competence, compared to 30% of Hispanic, Latino respondents and 19 point 32% of black respondents.

1:03:15

In terms of debt, we've been watching this also really closely because we are concerned about the long term impacts of debt I mean similar to the comment that somebody put in the chat. But it's not just debt to landlords that tenants are accruing and that worries us, it's the debt that tenants are occurring because of the reliance on very high interest forms of credit like credit cards, or perhaps payday loans. A lot of renter's also report that they are depleting their savings, and that they are relying on loans from friends and family. So the household pulse survey data shows that 27% of all renter households in Washington state have increased the reliance on credit cards, or loans to make to meet basic needs, and 32% report that they're depleting their savings to meet their basic needs. So, just an important note on this, this doesn't only include the people who reported they're behind on rent. This includes all renter households. So it is extremely probable that people who are currently able to pay their rent are doing so with their credit cards with loans, and by depleting their savings, so that all speaks to an impending crisis or a prolonged crisis for renter households in Washington State, even if and when the economy begins to recover these types of impacts on renter households will significantly delay, an economic recovery for renter households in Washington state of the renter households who were unable to pay rent in August, 10% of those households have reported that they were more heavily relying on credit cards, or loans that meet their basic needs. And then, of those households who are unable to pay their rent. In August, 27% are borrowing from friends and family to meet their basic needs. So, even people who are unable to pay their rent right now they're not saving money, they're not just sitting there, buying things from Amazon, you know, as many landlords are searching that they were willfully not paying they are hurting, and they even to meet their other basic needs food, probably medical bills childcare, all the things that we all need to meet our basic needs and survive. They're heavily relying on friends and family savings and unsustainable high rates of credit, credit cards, to meet those basic needs. So that's a quick summary, we thought that that was important to share. I know it's a lot of numbers thrown at you. So we are going to update our PDF document and we will share that out widely and we can probably make sure we have available by the next call and we'll share it with everybody.

**Rachael Myers** 1:06:10

Thanks Michelle also respond to Elizabeth your question on folks who with mortgages and how they're how they're faring, there is data on that and we're actually hoping that on our next call we'll be able to have someone from the Washington homeownership Resource Center talking about resources available to folks who are struggling to pay mortgage. So we will, we'll look at that data and bring it back to the next call as well.

1:06:33

I can just comment on that really quickly, I did look at that because I do have that information and the numbers are a slight increase in folks who are homeowners supporting reporting that they're unable to pay their mortgages. And that's alarming that there's an increased but the disparity between renter and homeowners is pretty big right now it's renter households that are reporting a lot more hardship. We hope that the homeowners, don't catch up with the renters but that's just currently what we're seeing but we can summarize that data as well.

**Rachael Myers** 1:07:06

Yeah, thanks Michelle, and thanks for that question. Elizabeth. Um, so that makes a really good case i mean that that describes, or just makes it so clear how much we need significant rent assistance. And so we're going to move in. It's a great segue into just a brief update on federal what's happening at the federal level. If you were on our last call, or if you've been, you know, paying attention or participating in the national income housing Coalition's calls. You might be a little dis discouraged by progress so you know that Congress is currently back in session after taking a recess in August. They are scheduled just to be back through September. They have to pass a continuing resolution to keep the government operating if they don't pass a continuing resolution then we'll be in a shutdown situation, because our current budget ends on September 30th. There seems to be really strong bipartisan agreement to not let that happen. We don't know how long the continuing resolution will be for whether it'll be three months or longer or shorter. But it seems like they're likely to do that in the last couple of weeks it sounded like there was less and less chance for them to come to agreement on next coronavirus relief package and that's where we would be likely to see rent assistance. Funding for emergency solutions grants so homelessness funding and potentially an extension of the eviction moratorium, as well as funding for folks who are homeowners, trying to avoid foreclosure and some other things. So it wasn't looking very good there has been a little bit of an update, and some more progress potentially so again they were scheduled to leave town again at the end of September, go back to their districts partly related to the elections and not come back to session until after the elections, just recently in the last few days. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi has said that the house will remain in session, until they get a coronavirus relief package agreed upon. That may not mean they all stay in DC, they may come back to their districts, but they'll still be in session and be ready to be called back so. So she is committed to not going home and not wrapping up until they have that package. There's a new caucus called the, I believe the problem solvers caucus in the house. It's a bipartisan caucus, and they have actually put together their own relief package of 100 or $1.5 trillion. And you may remember that there was a significant disagreement on how large the package should be that's much smaller than what the. The heroes act relief package included, but it does include $25 billion for rent assistance and well that's a lot less than the hundred billion dollars that we're all asking for that rent assistance goes is intended to be used just through January. So if you look at it on how much is available on a monthly basis. It's pretty close not exactly doesn't add up to 100 billion would be over a year, but it's not insignificant so that's that's hopeful actually that's really the first bipartisan prioritization of rental assistance that we've seen so I feel a little more hopeful than I did just last week, and so because of that we just want to remind you, please do take, please do take action, we've got our action page still up and running encouraging members of Congress to prioritize housing needs in a package and to make sure that they get a package done. Even if you've already taken action please do again, even if you know your lawmakers are supportive. Please continue to contact them because they need to keep hearing that this is one of the top priorities that this has to get done before they go home. So I will leave it at that I'm going to give a couple of other updates again there are so there's so much going on. So a couple of follow ups from previous calls. Those of you who were on our call last week or two weeks ago might remember that Sharon Navas from the equity and Education Coalition talked about the digital divide and some efforts, they were making to close that. Currently they are estimating that there are 285,000 students in Washington State, without access to the internet and 50,000 elders and seniors without access to the Internet, and during the pandemic with schools being remote. We all know how important access to the internet is so they've put up a petition. They're calling on the governor to close the digital divide with some funding for a program that would make internet access available to more people I'm going to put the link here and again we'll follow up in the email with all of this information, we've signed on I encourage you to sign on and support of that. And then lastly, just a reminder that a number of weeks ago I can't remember exactly when we talked about the housing saves lives campaign. This is the effort to push back on the Trump administration's changing of the Equal Access rule, which protects transgender people and allows them to access shelters, based on their gender identity, the comment period is open, it closes on September 22, and there's a online comment portal that makes it really easy for you to comment whether you're an individual or an organization. We really encourage you to take action, every comment that's received. Every unique comment that's received has to be considered by the department by HUD. And there has to be a response to it so every comment, kind of puts a barrier in the way of this terrible rule going into effect so I'm going to put that in the chat as well and encourage you to visit that website and add your comments. And I think that is the end of those are my updates, are there any questions and Michelle looks like you've got something you want to add.

1:13:30

I just wanted to call out, Kristen Joel's comment about the Census Bureau next week. Did you, did you see that. I didn't go ahead. Okay so, Kristen if you're Kirsten if you're still on you can say this yourself but she just wanted to make sure that everybody knew that the Census Bureau is doing outreach next week for the, the census to make sure that people who are unsheltered are counted. And it's happening in Washington State on September 22 to the 24th. So she goes on to say in most cases they're doing a simple headcount and encampments but this will be from 7pm to 7am. If you work with people in encampments please let them know that this is happening in the importance of the census to improve safety for everyone. We've talked on previous calls, or meetings over zoom about the importance of the census and so this is an opportunity to ensure that people experiencing unsheltered homelessness are counted. I don't know, Kiersten if you're still on want to add anything but I just wanted to call that out because that seems important.

**Kirsten Jewell** 1:14:28

Yeah, thank you. I just, I originally this was going to be in March, and it got postponed and postponed and now it's kind of up against the end of September deadline. So anything we can do to sort of allay people's fears and encampments about strangers walking around overnight. To do a head count would be great. I've argued with the census as hard as high up as I can go in their hierarchy that this is a terrible idea. Not a good methodology to do it but it's a national strategy and so our local folks don't have a lot of control over it. So it is going to be a 7pm to 7am that they're not going to try to survey people it's just going to be a look, you know how many tents are there and do some kind of a multiplier or how many cars are there and do some kind of a multiplier so yeah whatever we can do to just like let like in our county we purchased a whole bunch of giveaway items which we have attached a kind of a little half sheet flyer to saying, Just a heads up there's going to be people coming into your camp, but since this is super important here's why. Here's one there'll be there, you know, just to try to get everybody ready and prepared so anything that people can do will help increase the likelihood that we get a more accurate count of homelessness. And of course the current administration would like to see that number, you know, in some cases be lower and in some cases be higher so we just want accuracy. Thank you.

**Rachael Myers** 1:15:53

Yeah, thanks for that update Kirsten. All right everybody well thank you I see there's a lot more comments and thoughts in the chat, and a lot of information that we've provided here we will follow up and we'll share all the links that we shared and additional information in the follow up email, and we will be. And we'll share more information about the census as well in the follow up email and we'll be back on this call in a couple of weeks. Everybody take care be well, and we'll see you soon. Thanks.