Weekly COVID-19 Housing & Homelessness Call

Wednesday, May 20, 10-11:15am via Zoom

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| Time/Notetaker | Topic | Lead | Notes |
| 10:00  5 min  Caroline | Welcome & Settle in | Rachael Myers, Housing Alliance | * Welcome! * We’re here to offer updates and hear from Commerce, national and state and regional leaders * Here to receive updates and share best practices * We’ve heard questions such as what are people doing for disability justice? We are planning to make this a topic for a future call * Other questions about how * we communicate about this, and will make this a topic * Question about ongoing maintenance needs of housing; we’ve been hearing about these increasing costs from every organization; particularly for PPE, sanitation. Hazard pay, delivering food. This is true across the board. We’ll ask the Dept of Commerce to speak to that. |
| 10:10  5 min  Kiki | Poll Questions |  | What part of the state are you representing? What type of roles do you have in the community?    What hats are you wearing?    Encampments – still happening? What part of the state are you from and can you share?   * 74 people responded * mostly people don't know/are unsure * 37% are unsure * Of those who responded with that answer, there’s a long list of cities people aren't sure about (get list from John) * Interestingly some of those folks said no sweeps are happening (percentage??) * 16% of people said yes there are sweeps still happening (Seattle, Skagit county, Wenatchee, Everett) * Needing to find out more information because of the level of uncertainty   From comment section:   * (Michele) Hi all - the current eviction moratorium prevents people from being removed from public land. You can contact the Attorney General’s office to file complaints about sweeps and removals of people living in vehicles and RVs: https://fortress.wa.gov/atg/formhandler/ago/COVID19EvictionComplaintForm.aspx |
| 10:15  10 min  Teresa | State Updates & Q&A | Tedd Kelleher, Dept. of Commerce | * For CDBG, public comment period ended this week, so applications going out this week. * Did receive formal award letters for ? And ?. (couldn’t hear) Will be going out next week to providers. * For ESG: They’ll get their application into HUD and process should be quick, couple weeks. * Looking for additional tranches after this; they are developing a new formula. Stay tuned. * Housing providers seeing additional costs right now for all kinds of reasons. Tough right now. There are additional coming into the system. Nothing in state regulations that address hazard pay – using state $ or ESG is allowable. Doesn’t necessarily solve problem of coming up with dollar amt. * Q: Any updates on whether the eviction moratorium will be extended? * A from RM: Housing Alliance working on sign on letter to Gov. * Will be releasing in a day or two design ideas around shelter funding, utilizing additional funding the state passed for shelter. Commerce encouraging comments on this. Stay tuned for that. * Q: Any updates from Commerce Department on how much money is available for tenancy preservation fund? Given the likely wave of evictions coming soon, it would be helpful to know. * A: Not much of an answer but clearly a huge need on so many levels. Encourage folks to engage in that conversation about what’s needed. A lot of variables determine what the need is, let’s keep conversation going. * Q: Can FEMA play a role in sheltering people? * A: Certainly happening in states. Some counties in WA working on reimbursement from FEMA. * Q: Will there be a special session? * A: Seems likely, we don’t know when. Could be summer or fall. |
| 10:25  10 min  Emily | Federal programs and Immigration Requirements during COVID-19 | Arianna Cook-Thajudeen, National Housing Law Project  Here are the links to the documents:  <https://www.nhlp.org/wp-content/uploads/FAQs-Eligibility-for-Assistance-Based-on-Immigration-Status.pdf https://www.nhlp.org/wp-content/uploads/Immigration-Restrictions_Other-Programs.pdf> | * Talking about immigration restrictions on fed housing and homelessness programs * Working on a memo that just covers rental assistance * Overall, there are 2 main sources of Section 214 of housing and community development act and title 4 of **Personal** Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 (welfare reform) * Sec. 214 only allows qualified aliens to access programs, mostly covers HUD programs, doesn’t cover major homeless assistance programs such as ESG, CDBG, HOME, HOPWA * **Personal** Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) ... much different beast, covers a broader pool of programs * Restricts access for fed pub benefits to only qualified aliens for public education, any benefit (....) * Covers a huge number of programs * 2001 attorney gen clarifies that it’s up to individual agencies to define what qualifies as a fed benefit * How we interpret that, unless the agency specific says it’s under PRWORA it can be assumed it’s not * Most broad of these exceptions is non-profit charitable org exception. Means they don’t require nonprofits to verify this * 2nd exception is for short term noncash in-kind emergency disaster relief, a lot of non-cash FEMA assistance * 3rd exception for programs for the protection of life and safety – has a 3-prong test: program must be need for life and safety, 2nd (…), 3rd assistance cannot be provided or based off income or resources * If the program is based on income or resources an individual has it will not qualify * Rental assistance is based off income, so wouldn’t qualify for exception * In our memo, we have a chart about which programs can benefit undocumented people * ESG, street outreach, safe haven, rapid rehousing, (…) are all forms of assistance that can go to undocumented people. 3 exceptions are applied here * If rental assistance if it’s administered by non-profit charitable org can go to undocumented * For HOME and FEMA assistance, those programs are covered by PRWORA * Q: State and local governments have access to flexible Coronavirus Relief Funds. Do we have any indication if those are covered under PRWORA? * A: Haven’t come out with any guidance, since they haven’t clarified that it’s not covered by PRWORA, we’re assuming that it’s not covered. * Q: Renton looking at doing rental assistance, exploring options, heard about any orgs that can administer rental assistance funds, if you can share in the chat box that would be fantastic! * A: can follow up later. * in comments from Teri Anderson: spokane is considering rental assistance which would be administered through SNAP a local non-profit * from comments: Kitsap County and the City of Bremerton PHAs are providing rental assistance using the CARES Act $ * from comments: UWKC fundraising for more money to go into rental assistance which is currently maxed out * Volunteers of America WW Dispute Resolution Center Homelessness Prevention program administers the following rental assistance funds: EHP - Ending Homelessness Program (Snohomish County), LIHEAP- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and some private donations. We are in the process of applying for EFSP - Emergency Food and Shelter Program Phase CARES (Snohomish County), and city of Everett CDBG -Community Development Blok Grant CARES funding. |
| 10:35  7 min  Caroline | Housing Instability and Domestic Violence During COVID-19 | Linda Olsen, Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence | * We are a membership org and support our members across the state * It’s a frantic time to keep up with all the needs * I’ve been head of the Housing First project for ten years * Membership is talking about unsteady * Survivors have to think about stable housing and safety * --Holt stated, DV increases during crises – “For many who are DV survivors, home is the absolute worst place to be.” * When there are crises that happen then that effects the homes, when the external control is taken away, like when employment is gone then abuse and controlling ways go toward family members * Intensity increases * With stay at home orders, it is very hard for survivors to contact us. Calls come at off times and members are frantically trying to keep up * DV calls have increase 21% - but no crime has committed * That menas survivors are reaching out for sense of affirmation, potential safety and a way to get out * Hotlines are doubling * Staying home are not safe for survivors and kids * Kids are traumatized by fear * Intensity is increasing and opportunities to get out are decreasing * Services trying to respond - * We’ve built our housing over the years with communal housing so people can bond and heal, but found over the years that isn’t the most trauma informed approach * Last week, Daniel Malone said - Congregate living hastens the way that a virus can spread * Now we’ve had to cut our shelter capacity by 50% * Sometimes there is money for motels from state and local resources but it’s not always available * Having done Housing First for the last 10 years – sometimes having survivors skip shelter and they retain housing * Study of long-term impacts – wonderful but now... * Coronavirus was not predicted to seep into this process * Employment loss, etc... now returning to abusive partner or connect back with abuser for these needs * Calls on phone and email for people desperately crying b/c they invited a previous abuser back in and it is not good * Undocumented and immigrants 20% of violence and deaths from DV * I am uplifted by stories of survival and resilience that are coming up from these times   R: is there anything you need, or a national network wants to lift up right now?  A: Safe hotel space. In many counties there are issues of no place to go. Spaces are set aside where people are all ion one hotel Confidentiality and privacy is not the same. Agencies are having a hard time stretching the funding  This is uneven around the state   * Q: What can we offer the women and children escaping DV in their cars? Any resources out there to help? * A: depends on the circumstances – sometimes moving around is helpful and for some the motel stays are offer comfort, but it’s different for different people. * Please be mindful it may be that people are in cars is because they are fleeing or attempting to flee * Any data re: firearms * A: We don’t have that data but it’s likely * Q: any way locally we can help in Eastern WA? * Lots of programs for people to volunteer remotely and social distancing; staff are stretched to do that * Maybe delivering meals to hotels room. If you let me know which area, I can direct you to that program in that area |
| 10:42  5 min  Kiki | 2020 Census Updates | Hillary Coleman, Seattle-King County Coalition on Homelessness | * Update on the census - 2020 is the census year. before Covid was really hitting big we were all ramping up for census day on April 1. -had to pivot since then * Shows the government where the need for money is for things like housing schools and transportation * 2015 received 20 billion in census dollars? Based on the 2010 census * determines the number of folks we have in congress on the national level * Getting accurate account because need as much resources. as possible coming into our state as a result of the census * Takeaways: recommend that everyone here who works with clients in any capacity checks in with them about their progress completing the census, and help. Them with that. deadline extended through October 31 - but suggest not delaying it and getting the census work going * if you work with folks in shelter - service based enumeration and ways of counting folks without houses. those operations have been put on hold because public health crisis. * you might not have heard for them in. Awhile but no matter what the situation is, worry is what if. We can’t now. Will they get counted again (duplication, etc.). Its far more likely to be an undercount overall of folks exp homelessness rather than an over count - so please do help people complete the census and don’t worry about the duplication * 3 ways to complete right now: * 1. online portal 2020census.gov * 2. for folks who live in a household would have gotten a postcard with household ID number. If you don’t have that its fine, you can go to this site and be able to check not having a household id or street address, also box around if someone was exp homelessness around April 1, 2020. Fill it out for where the person is at now. Helpful to walk through that with. The person you're helping. Relatively straightforward. spot to fill out typing about the location - if someone wants to say they were staying at a certain park, etc. but ok to leave blank if needed. Needing to make sure counting number of folks * 2. complete by phone. 844-330-2020. Language support available – will send the link. * 3. complete by mail, but not that accessible. should have received a paper copy in the mail in April. Other than that, unless census bureau worker is out there counting there is no other way. * advocated for a form to be able to have at shelter, etc. census pushed back citing privacy concern * other reminders: no citizenship question; census information is just within the census. It’s illegal to share with other agency including ice of public assistance or law officer. have a trusted messenger share the information - will send out different documents on posters that say these things as well on social media and the importance of being counted * Response rate map – top 20% response rate by county is all over 50%. Highest is in Clark County with 59.7% (woo go Ren and everyone down there!!!) * Doubling up? When someone is filling out the census the hope is that someone fills it out and the number of people in the physical location, even if not in that “household” for tax filing location. If they were physically there and that’s where their current living situation is that’s where they should be counted. * College students etc grey area - still have them fill it out. * Undercounted often among kids of color because of confusion around who’s. In what household, etc. counted for wherever they were on April 1. * Yakima – were able to have the census mail form to them for housing projects and used housing rosters to complete and mail back   + Question not asked but still curious it about: wouldn’t this add to the issue of missing people who are doubled up / couch surfing?> |
| 10:47  7 min  Teresa | Proposed Local Moratorium on Encampment Removals | Councilmember Tammy Morales, City of Seattle | * Just got back from encampment removal at King St in Chinatown International District, and it was hard to watch. Maybe 25-30 tents this weekend, and many police officers there this morning and only 3 navigation team members. * Had the opportunity to speak with a man named Jacob who couldn’t remember how many times he’s been moved. He’s been trying for years to get into a tiny home village, and doesn’t feel safe in shelter. Worried about his girlfriend who has medical conditions, didn’t think they’d be able to go together. * So important to address housing shortage in the city. Could build more tiny home villages and sanction more encampments so we can spread people out more. * Know there’s an effort to get people into hotel rooms to avoid people being in congregate living spaces right now. * So we have options. For sweeps to continue to be the go-to strategy for addressing homelessness is frustrating. * Was on city’s human rights commission for a long time, has advocated for an end to sweeps. * In light of covid epidemic, need to find ways to limit spread of disease. * Mayor’s office committed to let people stay where they are during this crisis, but that’s not what’s happening (Ballard Commons last week, CID sweep this week...). * Has introduced legislation to formalize what the mayor declared and ensure ppl aren’t moved unless for specific reasons. Would codify a stop to sweeps during this crisis with a public health lens. * Exceptions: active health threat (excluding communicable diseases), if public health resources have been deployed and didn’t fix the issue, and (missed #3). OR in the case of fire hazard. OR reduces sidewalk to less than 4 feet, on children’s playground, or blocks accessible access. * There are other ways we could be doing this. Will have a hearing on the legislation next Wed and hope to move to full council on June 1. * If moving ppl out of an encampment, should be into individual rooms. Logistical challenges with getting that set up but until that system is set up, we shouldn’t be moving people around. * Third Door Coalition just released their framework for this solution in King County. Highlighted the need for $1.6B over 5 years for 6500 units of permanent supportive housing. * Rachael thanked the CM. Absolutely, solution to homelessness is PSH and permanent affordable homes. Ran out of time for Qs. |
| 10:54  7 min  Emily | HEROES Act & Advocacy Updates | Rachael Myers, Housing Alliance  https://nlihc.org/resource/overview-housing-and-homeless-provisions-heroes-act | * Last week we were joined by Rep. Heck who is lead sponsor for (…) which was included in the HEROES Act, which was voted out of the house on Friday. * It included the 3 priorities in Rep Heck’s bill: uniform nationwide moratorium on evictions, $ for emergency rental assistance and ESG Funds. * All Dems from WA House delegation signed on to Heck’s bill * Asking house reps and Sen. Cantwell to cosponsor (…) act * Unlikely that republicans will co-sponsor a dem heavy bill, but they can at least participate in helping the bill out * We've heard that it’s unlikely that the senate will pass the house HEROES act, but there’s some hope that there will be another package, house and senate are negotiating that * Late may into June before we see some movement there, so we have some time but no reason to delay * Sending out an action alert soon to thank folks who have sponsored the bill, and asking for others to sponsor it * From our partners in DC: asking state and elected officials to sign on to a letter: <https://nlihc.secure.force.com/actions/CapturePetitionNew?actionId=AR00929> * Some q’s about rental assistance? Yes, absolutely there will be a significant need * Will enhanced unemployment make that less? Sort of, but it doesn’t meet the need. Some haven’t been able to access unemployment, some will never access unemployment. * WA State will need 3.1 billion $ in rental assistance by June of 2021. * This is based on the best info we have now, here’s the report: <https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/Need-for-Rental-Assistance-During-the-COVID-19-and-Economic-Crisis.pdf> * Will have an option in this action alert to tweet at members of congress using #RentReliefNow. Unlike an email, this is public * We are working a sign on letter that we will share with all of you and we invite your orgs to join us. It will be to the governor where we are calling for next steps, including extending the moratorium. |
| 11:01  3 min  Caroline | Technology for service providers | Health Care Authority  Laptop loan application:  <https://www.hca.wa.gov/billers-providers-partners/prior-authorization-claims-and-billing/request-laptop-telehealth-during>  We do also have HIPAA compliant Zoom licenses available to providers:  <https://www.hca.wa.gov/billers-providers-partners/prior-authorization-claims-and-billing/request-zoom-license-connect> | * Kimberly Castle, HCA * Update on resources around Telehealth * Laptop loaner program – loans to providers; if you know people who need a laptop to access providers let us know * Quite a few laptops available for recovery services, not being utilized much * Donated 4,000 cell phone form a provider, sent out to agencies * This is to provide access for telehealth – able to give them 4000 minutes per month until pandemic has ended * People do not have to return these phones * PATH Teams, Parks Teams, Community foundation, people accessing telehealth * No more phones to give out, however if we do get another donation we will let you know and get that out there * Continue to let us know * Requests have dwindled but we’re keeping tabs on this * Q:    Would the client be able to have the laptop to access their online treatment or is it only for providers staff to use * A: Laptops for providers and phones for people accessing telehealth |
| 11:04  11 min  Kiki | Q&A |  | * How long will the unemployment and dire housing / rental assistance go on extimate??? * NYC City Council signed a letter addressed to the 4 US Congressional leaders about housing funding. Has WA stat done this work collectively? Seems in this time of crisis united is better. * can you send the name of the acts/bill for the ask? I got Emergency Rental Assistance, but not the last part   Maybe other questions I missed in the chat.... didn’t have time to answer on the live call. Follow up needed. |
| 11:20 | Wrap-up & Adjourn |  |  |