Weekly COVID-19 Housing & Homelessness Call

Wednesday, May 27, 10-11:15am via Zoom

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| Time and Notetaker | Topic | Lead | Notes: |
| 10:00  5 min  Emily | Welcome & Settle in | Rachael Myers, Housing Alliance  Link to NLIHC convo: <https://bit.ly/3bYisC2> | * Will do these calls as long as they’re helpful, since a lot of people join on it seems as though they still are * This is either the 11th or 12th call * Do calls every week to share info in multiple directions * Want to make sure housing and homelessness communities get resources, also want state and housing alliance to get your needs met * Trying to get folks from Yakima to talk about the experience of farmworkers during this time and to hear their needs * Encourage people to watch the NLIHC Call with Ibram X Kendi talking about how COVID is impacting POC disproportionately * (I missed the question, related to Ibram X Kendi’s talk) |
| 10:05  5 min  Caroline | Poll Questions |  | * Roll Call question – Thanks!!!          * Q: Did you watch the NLIHC convo with Ibram X. Kendi? * Yes 15% and others have not * Q: According to 211, Rental Assistance has risen by how much? 156% over a 2-fold increase * Q: Which county has had the most requests? Skagit County over 500% increase since February, they went from single digits and into the 30’s |
| 10:12am  Emily | Updates from the Department of Commerce | Tedd Kelleher, Dept. of Commerce  CARES Act funding:  https://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/local-government/covid-resiliency-grants  https://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/hau-shelter-grant-request-for-stakeholder-feedback-5.26.20.pdf | * CARES Act going to local gov’ts * 300 mil for local gov’ts from, some larger jurisdictions.. For most communities it will be on a per capita basis * It's explicitly allowable for expenses for care of homeless pop related to COVID 19 * Don’t hesitate to contact the dept, or Tedd as a liaison * Encourage everyone to try to get a piece of that data * It’s only a small handful (cut out on my end). From Rachael: both Tacoma and Spokane were included, but Seattle wasn’t. Ted: Surprised how limited it was * From Maureen: Every city except Seattle, every county except King, Pierce, Snohomish and Spokane * Q: Is mortgage assistance allowed? * A: Maybe, but not close enough to that program to know * Q: so they cannot be used after 10 2020?  thought they went through 12/30/2020 * A: Not sure when the money ends, don’t know. Supposed to be COVID related, not meant to be a long-term funding source * From Kirsten Jewell: I believe the funding ends 10/31/20 (also corroborated by Michele) * Q: Would safe parking programs to help vehicle residents in shelter in place be covered under this? * A: Not the admin for that program, but since it’s keeping people safe it would be a reasonable response. * Yesterday, we released … for comment * After leg session with ..$ for shelter (…) * 20 mil of that will temporarily go into COVID emergency housing grant, but 40 mil left over to be distributed for 3 years * Intention that it will be on a community wide basis (did anyone hear him there?) * If you look at the link, it’s in the budget law that passed on the condition of receiving that funding must be consistent with local homeless plan * Shelters created due to COVID count * Have to connect folks to mainstream services * Average length of state * Beyond what’s strictly in the law, commerce is recommending that in order to get funds they have to ensure racially equitable entrances and exits * Also, trauma informed care and diversion * Meant to be set up for the shelter to be set up in the near term * Will not be make direct awards to shelters, subcontracting to non-profits * Formula award * Criteria around racial equity and shelter rules * Q: To clarify funds must be requested by jurisdiction, not providers. True? * A: For this set of funds that is true, for previous funds those are going to jurisdictions by formula. Jurisdictions will make decisions based on how. Tedd: this predates us knowing anything about a virus. * Q: Can counties/cities choose to supplement the $56/day/bed and only get reimbursed for the $56? * A: pretty different contracting model for commerce, it’s a rate. Uncommon * Q: when will you release the amounts proposed for each county? * A: A little hesitant to release the formula $5.48/person * Q: Who is the program director of the Cares Act funds direct to jurisdictions? * A: In link I sent (see Lead column) * Q: Domestic Violence shelters be specifically included as eligible? * A: Should be eligible, June 4th is comment day * Q: Concerns about walking back leg funding wins * A: A lot of concerns about a lot of things having to do with the budget. Hard to know what’s going to happen with $. Data we have so far is lagging, primarily associated with real estate transactions. So many variables hard to say. Political changes. Larger ecology will affect this. Is it a V shaped recovery, or not? Won’t really know, we should all be concerned about it. * Comment from Kathy: Commerce will release the application shortly after the comment period and counties will have 4 weeks to plan before responding. |
| 10:20  7 min  Caroline | Third Door Coalition and the plan to end chronic homelessness | Sara Rankin, Seattle University | * Slides shared * Proposal for ending chronic homelessness in King County * SR: Professor of Law at Univ. Of Seattle, and co-chair of third door coalition * An unlikely alliance of Seattle biz, researchers, non-prof, healthcare professionals, etc. How can we work together to solve chronic homelessness; we are a rag-tag group of volunteers and work with others who lead * Coalition focused on bringing PSH to scale in our region in response to unsheltered chronic homelessness * Thirddoorcoalition.org * Word-cloud slide – culture of coalition is to come together around polarizing issues and come together * Co-chair: Chad McKay – traditionally opponents – leader in hospitality industry; intentionally – NOT ideologically aligned, but we came together to the table because we do agree that the solution is supportive housing * Scrappy group of volunteers who aren’t used to working with each other – but once we step into that room then we can work together * One of the most uncomfortable work, but most productive and rewarding; we can bring people together to show that this is important without having to align ideologically on everything * Conducted 2 analyses * Needs Assessment & Cost Driver Analysis * Needs and cost in time – try to mitigate cost drivers * Started with HMIS data and McKinsey info; 6,500 People in CH in King County * 35% of homeless population – but most visible, and most vulnerable during COVID; most costly to leave homeless * Good news: We think it's also the most clearly solvable * Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) slide: * Disabling condition and longer outside * PSH is not shelter – non-time-limited housing units with wrap-around services available, not a handout * Residents of PSH contribute up to 30% of their income, ex. Disability benefits; some don’t know they are eligible for these benefits * They also sign a lease * This approach is wildly successful; retention rates in high 90th percentile not returning to homelessness * PSH is also the most cost-effective solution; go to website “Pennywise but Pound Foolish” decades shown why we can’t leave people unsheltered * Pie chart shows overall proposal * We called for $1.676 billion in King County to bring PSH to scale to create 6500 PSH * Legislative State Fund in a public/private vehicle like the kinship? scholarship fund * Funding: 10% city, 20% WA, Biz 40% King County 30% * We’ve offered this framework as a public good; thirddoorcoalition.org * Please sign letter of support * Please connect on Twitter @thirddoorseaLook out for public Q&A Ambassador training program Strategy sessions to operationalize the framework * RM: this can be replicated around the state - * Talking to Oregon and other states – there is interest * Q: There is a growing number of 'silver surfers' who are becoming homeless, so do they qualify for this model of solution? * A: trend is for people to do this and they are older * Q: Where would the funding from the county and cities come from? They are already overstressed, especially counties, financially. * A: Lets come to the table and look at new revenue sources; first take inventory of what we have; maybe even create a new financing tool; lots of answers * RM: We will get other questions answered if Sarah doesn’t answer them in the chat |
| 10:27  7 min  Kiki | Homeless encampments – CDC guidance against sweeps and letter to City of Puyallup | Tristia Bauman, National Law Center on Poverty and Homelessness  You can find the Law Center’s template letter (which you are encouraged to use!) at https://nlchp.org/coronavirus/ | * Shared slides – be sure to include in follow up * Office based in Washington dc, existed for 30 years. Sole mission is to prevent and end homeless thru power of law * Core areas of work have been on the growing criminalization of homelessness – referring to local laws that criminally punish the life sustaining activities or survival acts of folks who need housing. Can refer to civil punishments as well as practices that punish ppl for lacking housing * Core set of 27 ? Cities. Reporting on those cities for years. Looking at things for camping bans, etc. * Found across categories that since beginning studying these laws have grown – over 70% of the cities studied (both big small, urban rural,) ban camping. That type of ban can include restricting use of ten or merely sleeping outside or resting next to public space. * Law enforced even in communities that don’t have congregate shelters available to ppl who lack housing * What we know is even where there is a group shelter, it's not accessible to everyone who may need it * One of the common forms of enforcement of camping bans - “sweeps” “clean UPs” that amount to displacement of people who live outside. They often lose their property. Law enforcement can sieve it - things people use to shelter themselves and personal possessions or even legal paperwork that are impossible to replace if lost but are necessary for future employment, etc. * Sweeps have increased with camping bans. Correlation between camping bans and increase in camping bans * Looking at the national picture, homelessness is dramatically increasing * This has already been a problem but has become an acute public health problem since the outbreak of covid 19. * Two of the most critical tools for covid – physical distancing and performing hygiene practices. Those types of activities are ones that are always difficult for folks who lack housing, especially difficult if the shelter/camping they use is criminalized * Sweeps have continued even after the pandemic has seized the nation, even after shelter in place orders * CDC guidance as it relates to unsheltered populations. Some of the advocacy we’re engaging in including places like Puyallup. necessary to protect public health * If interested in the criminalization of homelessness or rise of sweeps – check out housing not handcuffs website as well as tent city USA * Advocated with CDC to get guidance on how to approach unsheltered populations given lacking housing and lacking hygiene facilities and their very shelters are illegal despite shelter in place/pandemic. CDC original guidance – unless individual housing units are available, do not enter encampments during community spread of covid 19 * Do not clear encampments during spread of covid 19. Leave them intact so people aren't displace are forced into congregate shelters. Provide these services necessary to help curb the spread of the disease. * Encourage spacing of tents * Ensure access to restroom facilities with running water * If toilets and handwashing facilities not available nearby, provide access to portable latrines with handwashing facilities for encampments of more than 10 people * Unsheltered guidance focuses on people living in tents and makeshift structures, rational applies to ppl living in vehicles * Updated guidance issues on may 10th by CDC * Some of what was described is the need for a whole community approach – involved partners who aren’t just the usual suspects and involved them at every stage of the process * Needing to hear from the people who will be affected by these policies * Communication is key * People who lacks housing are not as able to get updated information due to libraries closed, etc. * Important that they get this communication /information in the language they speak and if they have hearing issues * When people living unsheltered be allowed to remain where they are when no housing options * Clearing encampments can cause people to disperse throughout the community and break connections with service providers. This increases the potential for infectious disease spread * Space recommendation of at least 12x12 feet * Individual rooms or safe shelter for people with higher risk – offered hotel and motel rooms in an effort thin the encampments * Improve sanitation access that is available 24 hours a day * Additionally, guidance with respects to shelter populations * Congregate shelters do create a risk of close person to person contact. Not to condemn any provider. * Helpful for curbing the spread of the virus in those environments * some of what’s described in the updated CDC – barriers between bed, physical distancing during meals, limits on number of people using shared facilities. Shelters should not close or exclude people who shows systems/test positive unless there’s a place for them to go * Talks about efforts to ensure people have access to safe shelters, but to also use this time to connect folks to resources for after the pandemic * Template available on the law centers coronavirus page – anyone is able to use it. Include any information that is relevant to your local community * Sent a letter similar to this to city of Puyallup. * There’s at least one community – Sacramento county - best policy nationally to date that not only prohibits clearing of encampments, but refers to the people in vehicles and RVS as well * The Sacramento County policy is a good model for other communities looking to stop the sweeps and protect public health. You can find it at: <https://www.saccounty.net/COVID-19/Documents/2020-05-22%20Health%20Order%20Stay%20at%20Home%20May%2022%202020%20Orig.pdf> * You can find the Law Center’s template letter (which you are encouraged to use!) at <https://nlchp.org/coronavirus/> |
| 10:34  6 min  Emily | Using CARES Act Education Stabilization Fund to serve students in foster care and students experiencing homelessness | Katara Jordan, Building Changes  Email address: [Katara.jordan@buildingchanges.org](mailto:Katara.jordan@buildingchanges.org)  <https://frac.org/research/resource-library/pandemic-ebt>  <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/26/us/politics/child-hunger-coronavirus.html> | * 25% of covid relief $ * Education stabilization fund made of 3 different funds: Governors relief fund, education relief fund * Based on title 1 formula, but not based on title 1 guidance * This is concerning to us * Us, and WA State PTA ask governor to reserve 25% of the education relief fund for kids in foster care and those experiencing homelessness * We mentioned that we have a fund that were sending out to support orgs and school districts serving kids experiencing homelessness * Sent out 78 surveys covering 74 areas to figure out need * They need rental assistance, food access, hot spots, etc. * Really highlighted that they need $ cut out * For example, food access, we are learning that school districts are only serving 40-50% of who they would be normally serving school milk, meaning that kids probably aren’t getting used to * Another issue is pandemic EBT, members of out community may be eligible for more EBT dollars * Always happy to answer more questions. * Katara.jordan@buildingchanges.org...please feel free to send me questions! I would love to chat with you. |
| 10:40  5 min  Caroline | Federal Advocacy Update & Letter to the Editor Campaign | Rachael Myers, Housing Alliance | * Pass on here and will include a summary on actions |
| 10:45  10 min  Kiki & Caroline | State Advocacy Update – Special session, budget cuts, and more | Michele Thomas, Housing Alliance  <https://www.wliha.org/sites/default/files/05-26-2020%20May%20Action%20Alert.pdf>  TODAY PLEASE  Organization Sign on letter:  [https://housingalliance.salsalabs.org/orgsignoncovidhousingstability/index.html?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=67cac285-cba9-41ca-8098-86cbbf9f8293](https://housingalliance.salsalabs.org/orgsignoncovidhousingstability/index.html?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=67cac285-cba9-41ca-8098-86cbbf9f8293 )  BY SUNDAY, sending to Gov on Monday:  Individual sign-on:  [https://housingalliance.salsalabs.org/covidpetition4stablehousing/index.html?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=67cac285-cba9-41ca-8098-86cbbf9f8293](https://housingalliance.salsalabs.org/covidpetition4stablehousing/index.html?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=67cac285-cba9-41ca-8098-86cbbf9f8293 ) | * In the context of the sign on letter – update about what we know about the current budget deficit and possibility of special session. At this point – no point on when or if it will happen. There is push to have it happen as soon as possible in June, and others to not happen until we know about what the pandemic will look like and if we will get additional funds * Projected outlook $7 billion deficit * Can convene at the governor’s request before January, governor gets to set the timing and perameters. Can call for 30 days at a time. Could convene to just budget cuts. Surgical or across the board. That is obviously a bad way to proceed because you harm every part of the budget which leaves impacts that are felt deeper in human services which has a direct impact on human lives. Not everything in the budget is as life or death as housing. * Some of the convos with lawmakers – how much they have to cut in addition to what they have to cut. Some pushing back on cuts at all * This deficit could be made up for with revenue * We could proceed as a state with a better revenue source – move forward with having even more money with the deeply unmet needs for housing * No agreement if that will happen or the approach * Other thing not decided, whether or not they will consider policy if they do have a special session * Governor will set those parameters. * See in the letter – link in chat – that we request that the governor call it in a manner where policy could be considered * Action alert shared in middle column * Hoping each of you will sign on 1) through your organization andI2) as an individual. Its address to Inslee but really to the entire state, including reps and senators. List of requests in there because the needs are great (just copy and paste the asks from the sign on letter)   + Eviction moratorium extended – 90 days   + Stop the sweeps – at least 2 still happening in Seattle last week   + Use CARES money appropriated quickly. State had 1.6 billion dollar and 200 mill have gone out to cities and counties. Can be used for housing/homeless and rental assistance   + Asking gov to call on congress to invest the funds that WA state needs, not just for rental assistance but for homelessness and housing   + FEMA reimbursements to state. Address needs for folks living in small crowded housing/doubled up   + 25% for education relief to students in foster care/exp homelessness   + Additional supports so no young person in extended foster care age out and into homelessness   + Anti-austerity approach * We’ve been supporting groups like Poverty Action and others * Asking them to leverage properties; the state should come in and purchase properties for housing and homelessness |
| 10:55  5 min  Emily | Accountable Communities of Health & PPE Distribution | Rachael Myers, Housing Alliance | * Reminding you all about the urgency that the eviction moratorium ends on June 4th * Please sign on **today** if possible because we want as many folks as possible signed on when we send it to him; but you can still sign on after * Individual one – please sign by Sunday so we can send on Monday |
| 11:00  15 min  Caroline | Q&A |  | * (ran out of time) |
| 11:15    Emily | Wrap-up & Adjourn |  |  |