

OUTREACH TO AREA SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

(The below responses were obtained over a four week period during the month of May, 2020)

In an effort to determine need in the City of Beverly for assistance with housing, and to identify existing gaps in assistance the following agencies were contacted and were asked (1) if their agency had experienced an uptick in requests, generally, for assistance since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic; (2) had the agency experienced an increase in the number of calls requesting assistance with housing costs. Their responses are below, formatted as bulleted points.

ACTION, INC.

- They have definitely seen an increase in requests for assistance over the last few months and it has been COVID-related. In March and April, they received almost double the number of requests for rental/mortgage assistance that they received in January and February. The majority of callers have told them that they are seeking assistance because they lost income due to COVID-19.
- They have noticed that a significant number of people have come forward seeking rental assistance once they knew it was available. As one example, they received rental assistance funds from the Manchester Affordable Housing Trust, which were announced on April 13. In the eight weeks prior to that announcement, they had received one request from a Manchester resident in need of rental assistance. Since that announcement was made on April 13, they have received requests from 16 households and are continuing to receive new requests daily from families that lost work due to COVID-19.
- Additionally, they recently began operating an emergency relief fund that provides households with cash assistance if they have lost employment or had their hours reduced due to COVID-19. Since the fund opened one month ago, they have received over 360 requests for assistance. Last time they checked, over 80% of these applicants were new clients of their Advocacy program; many of them have applied for rental assistance and they anticipate more will apply in the coming weeks.
- They do not typically receive calls from Beverly residents and have not received any recently. Beverly is not in their service area.

BEVERLY HOUSING AUTHORITY (BHA)

- The BHA will have a better sense next month as to how COVID-19 may be impacting their current residents
- Residents in BHA properties can request a rent adjustment if they experience loss of income as long as they provide proof of income loss.
- The BHA has received a few calls requesting applications since the pandemic began but they are from people throughout the area, not just residents of Beverly and not in excess of the typical number of calls they receive.
- The point was made that some people who have been furloughed or laid off as a result of COVID-19 public health precautions may not be familiar with the resources that are available in the community so they may not be aware of the BHA.

HARBORLIGHT COMMUNITY PARTNERS(HCP)

- Their residents who have been impacted by COVID 19, in terms of losing jobs/income and not being able to pay the rent, have been able to get rent assistance through the RAFT program.
- They have a fairly constant demand for housing (600+ people on waitlists and very frequent calls from people looking for housing). They have not seen an uptick since COVID 19.
- They rely heavily on CPC funds when it comes to creating new projects (Anchor Point and Briscoe, for example). Local funding is an essential component of every project, and is required in order for the State to provide funding. They would prefer to balance immediate needs against the needs of future projects that will create the affordable housing that is so greatly needed.

NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM (NSCAP)

- Receiving an uptick in requests for assistance from people in the following sectors: construction laborers, landscapers restaurant workers; hospitality workers
- Concerned about the eviction proceedings that will be initiated once the moratorium is lifted
- If the CPC chose NSCAP as a recipient of funding they could direct the funds to Beverly residents only. They could replicate Salem's program. They would request a 10% admin fee
- They record the number of people they assist but they don't keep a record of inquiries they receive re assistance

SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

- Three quarters of the inquiries they normally receive are related to housing. Does not perceive a significant uptick in inquiries
- They will reach out to the person to maintain a list of inquiries to get numbers

CITY OF BEVERLY VETERAN'S AGENT

- Has not seen an uptick in either general inquiries or inquiries about housing

UNITED WAY

- United Way works with a number of communities to set up philanthropic funds to augment other monies they may already have available through various government programs. There hope is that these philanthropic dollars could be used first, saving CPA funds to support permanent affordable housing options.
- United Way is a mobilizer and helps to coordinate efforts amongst the various non-profits in the community/area.
- Their focus has been on those communities struggling with poverty and hardest hit by COVID-19 safety measures so as to be able to concentrate donated funds in those communities with the most need..
- They do not administer housing relief programs such as the grant program that is being discussed using CPA funds.
- In the past that have contributed funding to Beverly Bootstraps to use towards rental assistance

BEVERLY BOOTSTRAPS

- Beverly Bootstraps could administer this type of program. They already do screening on behalf of a number of other organizations.
- Their perception is that the need will become clearer and greater once the moratorium on evictions is lifted.
- They are considering the launch of a special fund in the summer/fall.
- The most frequent request for assistance is for housing costs. The number of requests has not increased substantially but the amount associated with the requests has doubled.
- Has heard that some other local entities are considering launching funds as well
- They do receive some requests for help with mortgage payments

YMCA OF THE NORTH SHORE

- Many calls from residents that have been adversely affected by this pandemic. Several who have lost their jobs, many of whom cannot get unemployment for a variety of reasons and others that are trying to get through but have been unsuccessful. An increase in food costs, and availability, has also had an impact.
- In Beverly we have almost two dozen residents who are unable to pay their rent due to a loss of income. Others are struggling with higher than usual electric bills and food costs.
- Unpaid rent for April and May significant. Sending out information on how to apply for assistance.
- Received \$1600 from Stop & Shop in the form of gift cards that we distributed to our families that have been affected.