



CCEH COVID-19 Response Newsletter

Letter from CCEH's David Gonzalez Rice



Dear Friends,

I just got back from vacation and looking at my job with a fresh perspective was struck by a serious juxtaposition. On one hand, I found myself in awe of the frontline staff, who have truly been heroes in our recent efforts.

The heroic efforts of frontline shelter staff made Connecticut one of the most successful states at containing the spread of COVID-19. But despite those successes, my colleagues at CCEH and I have been hearing a refrain from providers and partners across the state: shelter waitlists are growing, and outreach teams can't get people off the street.

Our data shows that families with children are having more success finding housing alternatives than single individuals seeking shelter. While data suggests that families with children are often able to avoid having to come to shelter, individuals without children seem to be running out of options faster than ever before. This cohort is less likely to be the primary leaseholder, more likely to be staying with a "friend" than a family member, and more likely to report street homelessness as their current living situation.

To attach numbers to these figures, Connecticut's Coordinated Access Networks saw 35% more individuals this spring than the previous one. Frontline workers stepped up to that challenge and diverted an incredible 77% more individuals from shelter than they did the previous Spring, but even that massive effort has not been able to keep up with the increased demand. All told, around 1,500 seeking help from the shelter system this spring left without assistance. This is stark.

It seems we already have a significant wave of unmet need rolling across our communities and threatening to overwhelm the dedicated but fragile network of homeless services providers. This before the eviction moratoriums end. Before the unemployment checks get smaller. And ahead of Fall and Winter, when the CANS are planning for winter overflow and warming centers.

There's more work to do to flesh out this picture. We need a better understanding of where wait listed people are staying and in what conditions, and we need to know how the data does or does not line up with what providers and community partners are seeing in their own work. That's where you come in. Help us cut through some of the uncertainty to understand the real scope of the challenge ahead and what it will take to meet it. Let us know how this picture looks in your community, send your messages to info@cceh.org

We will continue at CCEH to gauge the scope of this crisis, to track unmet need, to advocate for the resources needed to do the work ahead. We have accomplished so much together, and in the face of continued uncertainty we hold fast to our commitment to end homelessness.

Yours,

David Gonzalez Rice
Senior Program Manager

Apply for COVID-19 Funds Now

As a thank you for your efforts to keep people safe during COVID-19, we are inviting all CCEH member agencies providing direct service to homeless populations to apply for a grant from CCEH's COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund. This funding is intended to reimburse regional providers for the purchase of supplies including PPE, food, toiletries, clothing, and coverage of gaps in staffing, as well as additional costs including flexible emergency assistance and unsheltered outreach expenses. We will be distributing a total of \$100K from the fund to CCEH member agencies who submit requests for eligible expenses not reimbursed through other sources.

Your agency can apply for a grant from the COVID-19 fund [here](#). We will accept applications up until noon on Friday August 7.

If your agency is not a current member, you can join [here](#) before submitting your application. Click [here](#) for a full list of current CCEH members.

Thank you again for your incredible work during the pandemic!

Take Action: COVID-19 Relief Bill

The Senate passed the latest COVID-19 relief bill, but it fails to include an extension for the eviction moratoria or funding for homelessness and housing.

As final negotiations for this bill with the House begin, we need YOU to take action and help your vulnerable neighbors experiencing housing



instability, as well as the local homeless service providers doing their best to respond to the effects of COVID19.

Contact your elected officials [here](#) and urge them to include funding for housing vouchers, rental assistance, and Emergency Solutions Grants!

Welcome Our New Employees

CCEH would like to introduce you to two new employees who joined our team just prior to the COVID crisis. We are a little late to introducing them to the coalition as a whole but most of you have already had the pleasure to work with them. Please join us in officially welcoming them to the team.



Amber Freeman

Amber is a graduate of Hampton University in Hampton, VA, where she received her BA in Psychology Education and her MA in Community Agency Counseling. She comes to CCEH with over fifteen years of experience in the human service and the behavioral health field. Amber is our new Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator and because of her experience and expertise she also leads our Rapid Re-Housing Learning Collaborative and assists in other projects and initiatives. Amber resides in Manchester, CT with her twin sons David and Daniel.



Allan Vega

Allan joined our team as a Communication Coordinator in March, at the beginning of the quarantine. He has served as a community organizer for the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice, a multi-media editor for ESPN, and a case worker for AIDS CT and The Village for Families and Children. Allan received his BA from the University of Hartford in Communications, and he's a talented photographer. A native of Venezuela who has lived most of his life in the Hartford area, he is fluent in Spanish and is personally passionate about homelessness.

Farewell to Dana Kras

It is never easy to report when an employee leaves our family, but such is the case today as Dana Kras will be moving on from CCEH and will be starting a full-time position in August. Dana's last day will be today, Friday, July 31st.

Everyone at CCEH has enjoyed working with Dana and are saddened to see her go, but we are also very excited for her to embark on this exciting opportunity. We are so grateful for all of the work that she has done for the organization this past year, and for all that she has contributed to the effort to end homelessness. Dana will shine wherever she goes.



Get Out the Vote

Make sure you register to vote! People experiencing homelessness should be aware that of their rights to vote. Courts have said that an individual is a resident of a town if they have some nexus to that particular town, and there is an intention to return to that town when absent from it. This could be some town that you have spent time in, slept in, and intend to go back to even if you are not presently there.

You can register to vote online [here](#).

CCEH seeking be homeful ambassadors

If you know of any amazing kids who care deeply about ending homelessness, please encourage them to reach out and become *be homeful* ambassadors by filling out this [form](#).

Kids of all ages who want to help by making welcome home signs can send them to:

Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness
c/o the be homeful project
257 Lawrence Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Please also share your signs via the [be homeful](#) Instagram page!



Picture credit: Lily Rosenthal



Picture credit: Lilo Gaul



Picture credit: Emma Vega

How You Can Help

Our providers need your help! This [site](#) includes ways you can join Connecticut's homeless response.

Webinars & Additional Guidance

With information about COVID rapidly evolving, keeping up-to-date is more important than ever. Stay up-to-date by visiting CCEH's COVID Guidance Page, located at cceh.org/covid19.

Spotlight Webinar

[Communities Using Data to Analyze Racial Disparities During the Pandemic](#)

CCEH has partnered with the CT Fair Housing Center, CT Legal Services, and CT Department of Housing to provide you with an "Update on the Status of Evictions in Connecticut During the COVID-19 Crisis."

Upcoming Webinars

[Components of an Effective Outreach System](#)

Friday, August 14, 2020
11:00 A.M. -12:00 P.M.

[How Vulnerable is the Homeless Population to COVID-19? Results from a National Study](#)

Tuesday, August 18, 2020
12:00pm-1:00pm

Previously Recorded Webinars

[Update on the Status of Evictions in CT During the COVID-19 Crisis](#)

[Having a Harm Reduction Approach During a Pandemic \(Session 1\)](#)

[Having a Harm Reduction Approach During a Pandemic \(Session 2\)](#)

[Working with Landlords to Rapidly House Successfully: Recruiting, Engaging and Retaining](#)

[Addressing Racial Disparities in Homelessness During COVID-19](#)

[Responding to COVID-19: An Inside Look into Connecticut's Homeless Response](#)

[Shelter to Housing Crash Course: Rapidly Exiting to Permanent Housing](#)

Please [click here](#) to access our entire webinar catalog.

CCEH in the News

[During Pandemic, Stable Housing Is More Critical Than Ever](#)

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Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness | 257 Lawrence Street, Hartford, CT 06106

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