CCEH COVID-19 Response Newsletter

Guest Blog: A Letter from CCEH’s David Gonzalez Rice

This week, I participated in a familiar conversation. The players included a shelter Director, a homeless outreach worker, a municipal social worker, a faith-based ministry, and a harm reduction specialist calling in from the needle exchange. Their discussion went something like this:

"Who is John Doe?"
"Oh, he's been living behind the shopping plaza for years (nods of agreement all round)."
"He's not in the database."
"No – he's never called 2-1-1. Never asked for help. Won't accept it when offered."
"I'll see him later this week."
"See what he'll accept help this week, if anything. Try describing the offer differently. Find what resonates."

It is really heartening to hear conversations like this one happening all around Connecticut as concerned providers citizens --- including many part-time and volunteer laborers --- come together to figure out how to offer effective assistance and a path to housing for people who are living in the harshest conditions. The task has never been easy, or adequately resourced. And now, the staff and volunteers who support homeless outreach efforts are working upstream against the pandemic and the very risk-averse rental housing market it has created.

But there are opportunities, too. An influx of CARES Act funding through the state Department of Housing will allow Connecticut to scale up homeless outreach – hopefully giving more hours to some of those dedicated part-timers. Though this funding is key, it isn’t the whole picture. The essential workers in our outreach teams and homeless services agencies will need support and working partnerships with everyone who serves or interacts with people experiencing homelessness - from law enforcement officers and librarians to peers and people with lived experience. It will take a coordinated, comprehensive effort to make sure the path to housing reaches every person experiencing homelessness in every one of our communities.

There’s no time like the present: with a public health imperative to focus on vulnerable populations, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to make Connecticut a state where we extend to every one of our neighbors a concrete path out of homelessness. It is an all hands on deck situation, and with hands, hearts, and heads together, we can accomplish so much together in the coming months.

Yours Truly,

David Gonzalez Rice
Senior Program Manager

There is No Place Like Home Forum

We had an amazing turnout for last week’s Facebook Live event on the proposed changes to HUD’s Equal Access Rule. You can view the recording to the event here.

However, people are still at risk from these proposed changes. This would have catastrophic impacts for transgender and non-binary individuals and we must work together to make sure that they do not go into effect. HUD’s specific proposed changes would mean that:

- Providers would be allowed to consider biological sex in placement and accommodation decisions in single-sex facilities.
- Shelters would be permitted to establish a policy that places and accommodates individuals on the basis of their biological sex, without regard to their gender identity.
- For example, under the proposed rule, if a single-sex facility permissibly provides accommodation for women, and its policy is to serve only biological women, without regard to gender identity, it may decline to accommodate a person who identifies as female but who is a biological male.
We need to hear your voices! If you think these changes are wrong, please visit housing saveslives.org to submit your testimony. Thank you!

Speakers Wanted: 2020 Annual Training Institute

CCEH’s Annual Training Institute is scheduled for October 5th-9th and we are looking for panelists. Sponsored by Bank of America, this year’s ATI will be a week-long virtual event with presenters focused on racial justice, criminal justice, and economic justice in the face of COVID-19. We are especially interested in speakers with expertise on topics including (but not limited to):

- The role of municipalities in addressing homelessness
- Approaches to addressing family and youth homelessness during COVID
- Engaging those with lived experience in shaping system improvements
- A statewide approach to housing unsheltered individuals
- Overcoming barriers to re-housing people with criminal records
- Building a grassroots movement around ending homelessness

Please note that we are actively looking for speakers who can bring a race equity lens and personal lived experience to discussions of these subjects.

If you would like to nominate somebody you know to serve as a panelist during the ATI, please send your nominations to info@cceh.org.

Survey on Connecticut’s Homeless Response

The CT Coalition to End Homelessness is conducting a survey to understand and improve how the CT Homeless Response System engages with the communities it serves.

This brief survey is open all CT community members ages 16+ who are not currently employed by an organization that falls within the CT homeless response system. Thank you for helping us end homelessness!

Supporting Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness During COVID-19

The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) has put together a document to outline suggested guidance to support the academic success and safety of children and youth experiencing homelessness during the pandemic. Please click here to download the document.

As students return to school during the COVID-19 pandemic, providers and systems leaders have a responsibility to ensure children are connected to school resources and appropriately set up to participate and succeed in academic endeavors.

Universal COVID-19 Testing at Homeless Service Sites

The National HCH Council and its standing Research Committee have partnered with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to collect data from universal testing events at shelter or encampment-based service sites during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please click here to get detailed information on your State’s testing efforts.

Feedback Requested on Challenges in Voting

CCEH is seeking feedback on challenges clients faced in voting during the primary elections or may face in registering to vote or voting in the upcoming election. If you have feedback to share on this issue, please email your comments to info@cceh.org.

Please note that CCEH’s website includes specific guidance on how to make sure clients receive information on their voting rights. We are trying to figure out if there is additional guidance that would be useful to providers and clients so your input will be highly valued.

Now Hiring for Re-Entry Project Coordinator

The CT Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH) seeks a Re-Entry Project Coordinator to work on a short-term contract basis to provide project management and coordination for a statewide housing program for individuals exiting incarceration and re-entering the community.

The Project Coordinator will complete the majority of their work on a remote basis. This contracted position will initially be for a three month period with the possibility of a longer-term extension.

Interested applicants should submit cover letter and resume through indeed.com.

Applications without a cover letter will not be considered.
Members’ Corner: We Want to Hear From You!

CCEH invites all our members to please submit any news items to be displayed on our Weekly Digest.

If you have any information you would like to share with the coalition please send the text and photos to Allan Vega at avega@cceh.org.

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!

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

Upcoming Webinars

Reading Between the Data
Thursday, September 3, 2020
11:00am-12:00pm

Motivational Interviewing Workshop
Thursday, October 29th & Friday, October 30th, 2020
9:00 am-12:00 pm

Previously Recorded Webinars

- Components of an Effective Outreach System
- How Vulnerable is the Homeless Population to COVID-19? Results from a National Study
- Addressing Racialized Trauma and Actively Engaging in Anti-Racism
- Having a Harm Reduction Approach During a Pandemic (Session 1)
- Having a Harm Reduction Approach During a Pandemic (Session 2)
- Update on the Status of Evictions in CT During the COVID-19 Crisis
- Working with Landlords to Rapidly House Successfully: Recruiting, Engaging and Retaining

Please click here to access our entire webinar catalog.

CCEH in the News

Giving Circles Helping with Homelessness, COVID-19 Response
Hartford Courant - August 2020