



CCEH COVID-19 Response Newsletter

A Letter From CEO Richard Cho



Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe that it is already December, that the winter holidays are already upon us, and that 2020 will be soon behind us. I, for one, am looking forward to the New Year and the change that I hope it will bring in so many ways: the promise of a COVID-19 vaccine, new leadership in Washington, and further progress in our fight to end homelessness and for advancing housing justice.

Looking forward to 2021 with hope may seem Pollyanna-ish. After all, it's not like January 1 will roll around and everything will be better overnight.

COVID-19 and its effects will still be among us. We will still be in the midst of cold weather season and grappling with the constant balancing act of meeting shelter needs while keeping shelter density low. And no President or Congress can snap their fingers and fix the multitude of challenges on day one or even in the first 100 days.

The reason I'm optimistic about 2021 is not because I am expecting miracles. I'm optimistic about 2021 because of what 2020 has taught us. About ourselves, about our community, and about our resilience. We've learned that we can face and weather unprecedented and complex challenges. We've learned that we can be adaptable and creative and to experiment and innovate. And we've learned to turn **crisis into opportunity**.

If there is any phrase that we can use to characterize 2020, it is that: 'turning crisis into opportunity.' Just look at what's happened over the last nine months. A public health crisis has led to new and deeper partnerships between homeless services and community health centers and local public health departments across the state. The need to keep shelters at lower occupancy has led to greater investments in shelter diversion from government and philanthropy, along with new homelessness prevention and rent relief pilot programs. The urgency of housing shelter clients faster is spurring new partnerships between public housing authorities and Coordinated Access Networks. At a time when reentry from prison to the community has never been harder, the need to prevent homelessness among people discharged from prisons led to the creation of a new DOC Re-entry Housing Assistance Program that is giving returning citizens a stable home in which to rebuild their lives. The fact that we cannot safely rely on volunteers to conduct a Point-in-Time Count in January 2021 is forcing us to make long-needed improvements in the systematic and routine data collection of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. And while so many of you are struggling yourselves—with the loss of loved ones, with job loss and economic

challenges, or just with isolation and loneliness—we have seen an overwhelming outpouring of generosity and support from all of you, donating funds, donating goods, and donating your time to help our coalition to help others.

Together, we've turned a time of extraordinary crisis into a time of extraordinary opportunity. It is that fact that gives me hope as we count down the final weeks of 2020 and look ahead to 2021. Thank you all for sticking with us in this time of crisis and for continuing to help us turn crisis into opportunity.

Yours Truly,



Richard Cho
CEO

COVID-19 Test Results

The state of Connecticut continues to see daily increases in the COVID-19 testing positivity rates, surpassing both the probable and confirmed cases since May. In the homeless response system, more than 1,500 tests have been administered and recorded in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) since March. To date, there have been 42 positive cases and no deaths reported; the homeless management response system currently has three positive cases in the state. As the average daily COVID rates rise in nearly every corner of Connecticut, the Eastern, Hartford, and Greater New Haven regions are experiencing the highest levels of COVID-19 cases among emergency shelters, although these areas also have some of the most frequent testing rates among the regions. Mask-wearing, hand-washing, social distancing, and regular testing in shelters continue to be paramount in the battle to contain the coronavirus and the shelters should be commended for their fantastic efforts in keeping those experiencing homelessness as safe as possible during these times.

Vaccinating Critical Workforces



CCEH is working with the state Department of Public Health to ensure homeless services providers are fully included in the state plan for early vaccine access for critical workforces. In early November, we distributed a DPH survey to providers, and in the coming week we are reaching out to agencies that have not yet responded. If you have questions about that process or are unsure whether your agency responded, please contact [David Gonzalez Rice](#).

Call for Connecticut Shelters to Issue LGBTQ-Friendly Policies

The need for transgender people to have fair and equal access to shelters is dire. One fifth of transgender individuals report experiencing homelessness at some point in their lives due to discrimination or family rejection.

We ask that shelter providers adopt a written policy to foster an inclusive environment for all transgender individuals seeking access to the benefits or services provided by your facility. For examples of inclusive policies, please see:

- Click [here](#) for GLAD Gender Identity Non-Discrimination Best Practices for Homeless Shelters.
- Click [here](#) for Transgender Law Center Model Policy & Legal Guide for Homeless Shelters & Housing Programs

For additional resources please visit our [resources](#) page for more information.



Update on the Point-in-Time Count 2021

As there is not a safe way to mobilizing hundreds of volunteers to conduct the annual Point-in-Time Count, CCEH has had to work with partners to develop a different approach for the January 2021 count. The approach that we have developed will include the usual reporting of HMIS data on sheltered homelessness, but will rely on the expertise and diligence of homeless outreach teams to locate, identify, and report data on people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. While we are saddened about missing the chance to work alongside so many volunteers, this modified approach may help us to make some long-needed improvements in the coordination and data collection efforts of homeless outreach teams.

To those of you who have donated your time for the Point-in-Time Count in past years, please consider [donating funds](#) instead or contact us at info@cceh.org to find out other ways to support our effort this year.

It's time to be *homeful* for the holidays!



The *be homeful* project gives kids, families, and communities tools for learning about how homelessness affects local children and taking action to help by raising much-needed shelter diversion funds to help local families stay at home. The Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness and its members have helped over 1,000 children and their

families stay in their homes. Join the effort and help end family homelessness in Connecticut for good.

This holiday season, give a little bit of comfort to a child in shelter and help a family remain housed in the process. Between now and Christmas, for every \$25 you donate to the be homefull project, we will donate an adorable Paddington™ plush bear to a child in a local shelter. The best part is that thanks to underwriting from our funders, all donations go directly to help local families.

You can get involved this year by starting a Bear-Raiser using the link below. To promote your bear-raiser, we are providing you with social media posts to share along your journey. Thank you for your help in supporting families in need this holiday season!

Visit our website to donate a bear today, or start your own virtual bear-raiser by clicking [here](#).

Seeking Municipalities to Sign On to our Municipal Campaign

CCEH has partnered with the [Connecticut Conference of Municipalities](#) and [Sustainable CT](#) to engage towns and cities in efforts to end homelessness. As part of the launch of this campaign, towns and cities will have the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to ending homelessness by signing up to hold virtual town halls focused on municipal services currently available to residents experiencing homelessness, committing to passing a resolution to end homelessness, and designating a municipal staff member to serve as a point-person for efforts relating to homelessness. Towns will also be able to participate by designating a high-school age youth to serve as "be homefull" ambassador who will lead local youth in efforts to end homelessness as part of a larger state-wide initiative championed by youth volunteers.

Visit our [Municipal Campaign website](#) to learn more about how your town can take action to end homelessness. Please reach out to [Carl Asikainen](#) with specific questions about how your town can get involved.

Helping Homeless Students Succeed During COVID-19

CCEH is actively engaged with the State Department of Education in understanding the unique needs of students facing homelessness during the pandemic and we would like to hear from you about your experiences establishing and maintaining connection to students in your district who may be struggling with housing instability. Please outreach to [Carl Asikainen](#) to share your experiences and let us know how we can assist you. Stay tuned for an educational roundtable during December hosted by CCEH.

Mattresses Available for Clients Moving into Apartments



Everyone deserves to sleep on a nice cozy bed. We still have mattresses available for your clients! CT REALTORS Foundation has generously donated 100 twin mattresses for clients moving out of the shelter system into permanent housing. Please click [here](#) to submit your requests. Mattresses will be available on a first come, first served basis. Mattresses can be shipped directly to your client's new home. Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity.

PLACE YOUR ORDER

We Are Hiring! Join Our Team

CCEH is hiring! Please spread the word about our search for a Data Project Manager/Business Analyst:

Data Project Manager / Business Analyst

CCEH is seeking an organized, results-driven individual to serve as a Data Project Manager/Business Analyst for CCEH's data and research team. Reporting to the Director of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and Strategic Analysis, this position is responsible for managing and ensuring execution of a wide variety of tasks related to data collection and analysis, including through the Connecticut Homeless Management Information System (CT HMIS), relating to programs that serve people experiencing homelessness in Connecticut. This position will be remote during the COVID pandemic.

For the full description, click [here](#).

Get Your Housing Equals Justice Merch!

Yes the ATI is over but our work continues. You can still be a part of our movement by visiting the [online store](#)! All proceeds will go towards making homelessness, rare, brief, and non-recurring in Connecticut. Place you order right away!



Wear it proud! Available Warm up your body and What better way to send

in many styles including t-shirts, hoodies, and baseball tees.

soul! Start each day right drinking from a mug that says it all.

a message than wearing a Housing Equals Justice mask!

Resources for Providers

[**Remote Supervision Tips for Homeless System Providers \(HUD\)**](#)

[**Rapid Rehousing Ramp up \(HUD\)**](#)

[**Guide to Using the IRS Non-Filers Tool to Get an Economic Impact Payment \(IRS\)**](#)

[**Governor Lamont Extends Eviction Moratorium To End of 2020**](#)

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

[**Shelter Diversion 101 Training**](#)

Thursday, December 17th, 2020
1:30 pm-3:30 pm

[**Working with Youth**](#)

Friday, December 18th, 2020
10:00 am-12:00 pm

Previously Recorded Webinars

- [**2021 Housing Inventory Count \(HIC\) Training**](#)
- [**Rights of and Resources for the Most Vulnerable Populations**](#)
- [**Housing Stability for People and their Pets**](#)
- [**APR Bootcamp**](#)
- [**Components of an Effective Outreach System**](#)
- [**How Vulnerable is the Homeless Population to COVID-19? Results from a National Study**](#)
- [**Having a Harm Reduction Approach During a Pandemic \(Session 2\)**](#)
- [**Having a Harm Reduction Approach During a Pandemic \(Session 1\)**](#)

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

CCEH in the News

[As Winter Approaches, Connecticut Works Toward Safer Solutions for Homelessness](#)

CT Examiner | November 2020

[Eviction moratorium in place, but advocates for homeless wary of winter](#)

myrecordjournal.com | November 2020

[Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness launches *be homeful for the holidays 2020*](#)

FOX 61 | November 2020

