



CCEH Weekly Digest

A Letter From CCEH Youth Special Projects Coordinator Roy Graham

Dear Friends,

First of all I want to state that it is with great honor that I have the opportunity to write a feature article on Black History Month, in this week's CCEH Newsletter. Black History Month first originated from Negro History Week which began in 1926 during the week of February 12th – February 20th, in order to honor the Birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglas. The Black History Month that we celebrate today was first proposed by a club at Kent University called Black United Students in 1969, with the first official celebration commencing in 1970 from January 2nd - February 28th.



Generally when the month of February comes around every year and we celebrate the usual heroes that everyone knows about – Rosa Parks, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We can add to that list now recent heroes such as President Barack Obama, first Black President of the United States and Vice President Kamala Harris, first Black Female Vice President of the United States. But let's not forget other Black heroes of the past, who may not be as well known: Shirley Chisholm, first African-American Congresswoman who ran for the Democratic Party nomination in 1972; Bayard Rustin, a Civil Rights leader who fought for gay rights; Bessie Coleman, first African-American woman to hold a pilot's license; and Jane Bolin, the first Black woman to graduate from Yale Law School.

With all of that history about great Black/African-American heroes, there is still much to do! In 232 years there have only been 11 Black Senators. We are coming off a year in 2020 where we saw the killings of George Floyd, Breanna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and others that rocked this nation, bringing back painful images of the 1960's. We've seen the COVID-19 pandemic despairingly taking the lives of black and people of color, because of the lack of equity in our healthcare system. We've seen the rise of white supremacy and other right wing terrorist groups. What did we see the people do in response to all of this? Young people, old people, white people, people of all races and ethnicities from this country and around the world took to the streets and social media to rise up and said **NO MORE!** No more to systemic racism, no more to racial injustice, no more to voter suppression, no more to police killings. They said YES to police reform, yes to healthcare for all, yes to equity in education, employment and housing!

We here at CCEH have always been committed to Racial Equity and combatting Racial Injustice and Systemic Racism, and have also stepped up our commitments. We are honoring Black Leaders who work in field to end homelessness throughout the state of CT during Black History Month. We have formed an Internal Race Equity Task Force to ensure that that we remain committed to Race Equity internally and externally. We will be partnering with local and statewide BIPOC community agencies and leaders. We are introducing legislation to address housing inequality, to ensure that everyone has a Right to Housing. We are publicly endorsing the Clean Slate bill to address the disparities of people of color in the criminal justice system. And lastly, but not certainly not least, we will be holding ourselves accountable to these commitments.

So what you can do? **Nominate somebody** from the homeless response sector who deserves recognition for their leadership, either formal or informal, this Black History Month. Testify about how homelessness affects people of color. Share your experiences. Share your story. Tell the world that Housing Equals Justice, particularly for communities of color.

I thank you for your commitment to making the world a better place. Together, we can make change happen!

Yours truly,



Roy Graham
Youth Specialist Program Coordinator

CCEH Celebrates Black History Month

During our last newsletter, CCEH announced that in honor of Black History Month, we will be featuring the contributions that Black leaders make to our field every day in our weekly newsletters during the month of February.

Black History Month Spotlight of the Week: Martha Rae Nelson of the Hartford Public Library

A special thanks to Julie Styles for nominating Martha Rea Nelson for recognition for her leadership and service to people experiencing homelessness in the Hartford area.

Senior Library Assistant Martha Rea Nelson greets every library visitor with a warm smile and a welcoming hello. Sometimes, she shares a favorite mantra or even a poem. But she really shines when working with customers who are facing housing or food insecurity.

She has helped organize library social hours, which have allowed visitors to sit together, enjoy a snack, and converse



about improvements to the library, services they need, favorite books, poetry...anything they want.

She was a part of the team that helped run our "Warm Welcome" program. In 2019, the library piloted a program that opened the doors to the building 90 minutes before we officially open for business, allowing folks coming directly from nearby shelters and food pantries to have a warm place to wait.

She is always looking for ways to better serve our customers, particularly those struggling with basic needs. Her positive attitude and energy make the library a vibrant, welcoming place for all of Hartford.

Do you have somebody who deserves recognition during Black History Month? Click [here](#) to read about how you can share your nomination.

2021 Legislative Priorities

HOUSING EQUALS JUSTICE



Right to Housing Press Conference

Last Wednesday we had an incredible press conference with Sen. Saud Anwar on **S.B. 194, An Act Establishing a Right to Housing**. We heard powerful stories from Anderson Curtis from the ACLU-CT, Myra Smith from Christian Community Action and Mothers and Others for Justice, and Deni Young from LEAD, an advocacy committee of the Coalition on Housing & Homelessness and activated by advocates to get involved in the movement to make Connecticut the first state in the nation to ensure a right to housing.



[Press Conference on Housing as a Right](#)

If you are interested in joining this movement, and fighting for a right to

housing in Connecticut, please email Carl Asikainen at casikainen@cceh.org. Click [here](#) for the Right to Housing bill summary and fact sheet.

The Appropriations Committee Hearings

Please save these two dates on your calendars to testify! Be on the lookout for talking points from the [Reaching Home Campaign](#) and further information on how to make your voice heard during these important hearings.

- Department of Housing Public Budget Hearing is scheduled for Friday, **February 19th, beginning at 5:00 P.M.**
- Department of Mental Health and Addictions Services Public Budget Hearing is scheduled for **March 2nd beginning at 10:00 A.M.**

If you are interested in testifying at the upcoming Appropriations Committee Hearings, and have any questions about how to participate in the process, please feel free to email CCEH Director of Policy at sfox@cceh.org.

Click [here](#) to review our 2021 Housing Equals Justice legislative agenda and be on the lookout for ways to join us in making your voice heard this legislative session.

Become a CCEH Member

CCEH is a coalition organization, and we could not do the work we do without a strong and varied group of members.

Last year we were honored to provide our members with support in the face of an unprecedented pandemic, including supplies and financial reimbursement. We also established a Members Advocacy Roundtable, to ensure that our members are actively involved as we craft our legislative agenda. Finally, we continue to offer significant discounts to our members on trainings throughout the year.

We aim to keep member dues affordable, and the 2021 price will remain **\$225**. We also kindly ask our members to Sponsor the Annual Training Institute for an additional \$100 if possible.

To renew your membership, or become a member for the first time, please click [here](#).

If you have any questions, please contact Ryan Beach at rbeach@cceh.org.

COVID-19 Vaccine Resources for Homeless Shelter Providers

CCEH and our members has helped ensure that the current phase of Connecticut's COVID-19 vaccine distribution include residents and staff of homeless shelters.

Connecticut shelters began receiving the COVID-19 vaccine as part of the Governor's plan to serve congregate settings through Phase 1b. Several shelters have been served with many more

scheduled in the coming weeks. CCEH continues to coordinate with DOH to monitor progress in reaching this key population. Please click [here](#) if you want more information on vaccine access for congregate settings.

CCEH encourages you to monitor communications on the State's [website](#). Please also feel free to contact us at info@cceh.org (Subject: COVID-19 vaccines) if you need more information or need any assistance.

Please utilize the following resources from HUD for your organization:

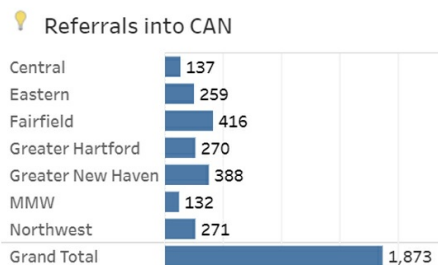
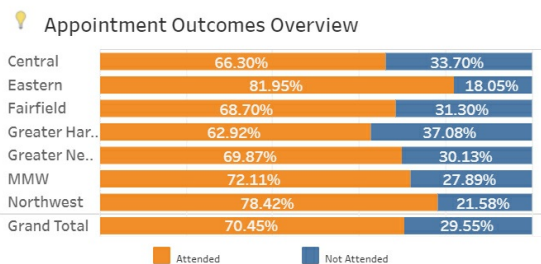
- [How to Build Staff Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
- [Preparing Staff for the COVID-19 Vaccine: Communication and Confidence Checklist](#)
- [Preparing Staff for the COVID-19 Vaccine: Meeting Template](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccination Conversation Tips for Homeless Service Providers](#)

We also encourage shelter providers to check the [CDC's toolkit](#) for additional valuable resources.



Feedback Requested on CCEH Dashboards

CCEH is currently reviewing and updating the data dashboards on our [page](#). Check out the updated CT CAN Data Dashboard. We are looking to streamline the visualizations and ensure that the dashboards display the most impactful data. Feedback is welcome at data@cceh.org.



[CT CAN Data Dashboard](#)

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Would you like to volunteer and help an elderly or disabled neighbor? The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), managed by [Thames Valley Council for Community Action](#) offers the support someone needs to remain

living at home either with grocery shopping needs or phone reassurance. This is a wonderful opportunity to help the most vulnerable in your community. Please click [here](#) to learn how you can sign-up.

President Biden Enforces the Fair Housing Act

We are happy to report that on January 20, 2021, President Biden signed an executive order that extends **Title IV protection** against sex discrimination in the workplace to include discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. HUD recently issued a memorandum directing all HUD-funded programs to adopt an interpretation of the Fair Housing Act that follows President Biden's executive order. That directive applies to all state and local agencies operating under the Fair Housing Assistance Program. In order to qualify for HUD funding, those agencies must operate under state or local law that either explicitly prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender or sexual orientation, or is written in a way that can be interpreted to extend protections to LGBT+ people.

We at CCEH are very excited about this major step toward ensuring that all people are able to access affordable and safe housing without fearing eviction or mistreatment because of their real or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity. We hope that state and federal legislators continue to support policy that upholds a Right to Housing for all people—no exceptions.

Help Advocate for National COVID-19 Relief

The next few weeks will mean the difference between housing and homelessness for thousands of Americans, and advocates can make that difference.

We need your help to convince the full House of Representatives and US Senate to include this funding in the final COVID-19 bill. Please click [here](#) to contact your representative.

Millions of tenants are on the brink of homelessness because they can no longer pay their rent. Hundreds of thousands of Americans are already living on the streets and in shelters, highly susceptible to catching this virus. Thousands more have been placed in hotels as a temporary place to stay, but will soon face the streets again without long term housing.

While the House committee has taken the right steps, there's no guarantee this funding will stay in the bill.

My Town Cares Updates

We were thrilled to have so many municipal employees turn out last week to attend the training ***My Town Cares: Local Efforts to Address and Prevent Homelessness***.

Please note that CCEH will be holding



technical assistance office hours for municipalities during the month of February from 1-2 P.M. on Tuesdays for municipal employees and from 2:30-3:30 P.M. on Tuesdays for providers seeking assistance in connecting with municipalities in their regions. We will also be offering trainings leading up to the April 6th Sustainable CT submissions deadline.

For background information on this campaign please click [here](#).

We Are Hiring!

CCEH is hiring! Please spread the word about our search for this available positions:

Director of Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

This position leads and manages CCEH's team of professionals that provide technical assistance, training, and program performance improvement to providers within Connecticut's statewide homeless response system. The Director will lead CCEH's effort to improve and ensure the performance, responsiveness, and equitable impact of homeless services; supervise technical assistance and training team members; align efforts with state government, regional entities, homeless services providers, and Connecticut's two Continuums of Care; track and report on the team's deliverables and budget; and serve as part of CCEH's leadership and management team.

For full descriptions and links to the job postings, click [here](#).

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 \(IRS\)](#)

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 cceb.org/covid19.

Upcoming Trainings:

Working with Youth

Thursday, February 25th
2 P.M. - 4 P.M.

Join us for a very comprehensive training on working with youth in the homeless response system. This training will thoroughly discuss the CAN system and how it operates for a youth that is experiencing homelessness. This training is ideal for Youth Navigators, YHDP Rapid Re-Housing case managers, YETIs, and all those that work with youth in the homeless response system. [Register now.](#)

Advanced Motivational Interviewing and Case Planning Workshop

Tuesday, March 16 & Friday, March 19
9 A.M. - 12 P.M.

Join the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness and international author, Raymond Chip Tafrate, PhD, for fast-paced, virtual, interactive learning sessions that will focus on cutting-edge applications of Motivational Interviewing. Participants will increase their overall MI proficiency by participating in advanced exercises targeting the core skills of reflecting and summarizing. Participants will fine-tune their ability to recognize, reinforce, and respond to key client verbalizations to set the stage for developing an effective case plan. [Register now.](#)

This Week's Feature Webinar:



**Rights of and Resources for the
Most Vulnerable Populations**



[Rights of and Resources for the Most Vulnerable Populations](#)

Previously Recorded Webinars:

- [My Town Cares](#)
- [PIT 'People Count' Training in the PIT Database](#)
- [Reporting the Unsheltered Homeless Population](#)
- [PIT 2021: Using the new PIT Outreach Program](#)
- [Shelter Diversion 101 Training](#)
- [Cleaning Up Your System Performance Measures](#)
- [Rights of and Resources for the Most Vulnerable Populations](#)
- [2021 Housing Inventory Count \(HIC\) Training](#)

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

CCEH in the News

[Criminal justice advocates push for more policy change after Gov. Lamont announces closure of CT prison](#)

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