



CCEH Weekly Digest

A Letter from CCEH's Senior Program Manager David Gonzalez Rice

Dear Friends,

When I worked as a provider in Eastern CT, the work I took most pride in was homeless outreach. There's nothing as powerful as getting out of the office, going where underserved people are living, and asking what you can do to help. It's a vital service for people who are otherwise disconnected from programs and services.

These days, the vaccination effort is giving all of Connecticut a lesson in the importance of outreach to vulnerable populations. Though vaccine supply is ramping up and our state is widening eligibility fast, we've learned in Connecticut that getting more than 70% of eligible people vaccinated isn't just a question of supply. Traditional appointments aren't enough. Closing the gap takes persistent and strategic outreach to underserved communities. In Connecticut, that means clinics in homeless shelters, mobile vans at soup kitchens and church parking lots, peer education, and other targeted strategies to bring vaccines to people rather than the other way around.

That shift in the state's vaccination effort – from careful prioritization to strategic outreach - holds an important lesson for the homeless response system. For years we've had to triage and prioritize to ensure scarce resources reach the most vulnerable households for the greatest overall impact. I often point out that Connecticut providers usually work with about 1 housing resource for every 7 eligible households we are tracking.

But change is coming. The American Rescue Plan represents the most significant public investment in housing and services in a generation. If those resources are available or allocated to the homeless response system at scale, it should allow us to widen criteria and offer timely housing supports to more households than ever before.

How far the American Rescue Plan drives an end to homelessness will depend – like the vaccine effort depends - on scaling up persistent and strategic outreach. Neither careful prioritization nor adequate supply (or both together!) can ensure that services reach those who need them most. Closing the gap takes outreach, and Connecticut's homeless outreach providers are up for the job.



Since November, CT's homeless services providers have been planning and staffing up for a modest but significant increase in homeless street outreach, made possible by a Department of Housing's allocation of 2020 COVID-related federal funds. Their aim is to ensure the CAN system reaches individuals who are living outside and face additional barriers to calling 2-1-1 or keeping an appointment. I am so encouraged when I join these planning sessions and hear all the innovative ways CT's providers plan to increase their reach to serve this population.

We have the tools and the know-how. With the right planning and smart investments in persistent, strategic outreach, we can ensure the American Rescue Plan is a plan for everyone, including our neighbors experiencing homelessness.

Yours truly,



David Gonzalez Rice
Senior Program Manager

Legislation Updates



HOUSING EQUALS JUSTICE

S.B. 194, An Act Establishing a Right to Housing was voted out of the Housing Committee on March 9th. Thank those who testified in support. There is still much work to be done, we will be putting together a virtual project of those experiencing homelessness to help tell the story of why housing is important. The project will be launched in April.

Action Needed - Contact your representative and tell them to support S.B. 194 Housing as a Right.

S.B. 340 An Act Concerning Funding for Housing Services - CCEH would like to invite leadership of homelessness and housing organizations to join us virtually next **Friday March 26, at 3 P.M.** to discuss S.B. 340. We anticipate that there will be a subject matter public hearing in early April, and we want to ensure that as language is crafted, your voice is included in the dialogue. Please click [here](#) for meeting access.

The bill would require state agencies to ensure that funding levels for homelessness and housing assistance services reflect the true cost of services delivery, namely, to pay suitable wages to front-line workers who staff shelters, Coordinated Access Network appointments, homeless outreach, and housing navigation and case management services. Specifically, state agencies should review and adjust funding levels for existing contracts, as well as adopt standardized services costs for new contracts, such that non-profit homeless services providers can:

- Pay living wages, overtime, hazard pay, and benefits for front-line staff;
- Maintain client caseload sizes to meet industry standards; and
- Adequately fund other-than-personnel costs such as supplies/PPE, staff training and professional development, technology, etc.

We want to thank all of our members who continue to post on social media your staff photos with the **#IamEssential** and **#SB340** hashtags.

S.B. 987 An Act Concerning Reinvestments of Savings Achieved Through a Reduction in Correctional Facility Population Into Reentry and Community-based Services and Programs - A public hearing was held on March 10th. We want to thank all those who testified in favor; however, you can still contact your representative in support of the bill. The Joint Favorable (JF) deadline for the Judiciary Committee is April 9th so you still have time to impact whether or not members of the committee vote the bill to its next phase. CCEH is advocating for Creation of a 'reentry housing assistance' line item within the Department of Correction budget and reallocate no less than \$2 million annually to contract with community-based organizations to provide housing-related case management, housing search and navigation, temporary rental assistance, and other basic needs for any inmate assessed as needing reentry housing assistance.

Action Needed - Contact your representative and tell them to support S.B. 987 Justice Reinvestment.

Please email Sarah Fox at sfox@cceh.org if you need further information.

Updated Information about Economic Impact Payments for Non-filers

With stimulus checks on their way to most households, providers once again need to understand how to help clients who haven't filed federal income tax returns. Information and options have changed since the last round of Economic Impact Payments. You can find the most current information by clicking [here](#).

COVID-19 Vaccination Tracking in HMIS

COVID-19 vaccination fields are now available in HMIS. In addition to recording vaccination status, users can enter the dates when vaccines are scheduled as well as when and where they are administered. Basic reporting is included. This functionality will allow providers to track and report on the vaccination status of all clients. Click [here](#) for more information.

The National Vulnerable Populations Conference Call

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is hosting a national conference call to learn how your organization can help deliver critical financial assistance to vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The call is scheduled

for:

**Thursday, March 25, 2021, from
1 P.M. – 2 P.M. ET.**

Many people continue to experience COVID-19 related hardships, especially those who cannot conduct business via telephone, the internet, or who frequently require third-party assistance. To address the challenge, SSA is asking for your assistance raising awareness of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) programs.

Please click [here](#) to register online by Wednesday, March 24th. After registering, you will receive a follow-up email with the meeting agenda and call-in number. You will also receive all of the outreach resources that we will cover on the call.

If you have any questions about this call, please contact OEA.Net.Post@ssa.gov.

Welcome Omena McCoy!

Please join us in welcoming Omena to our team as the Senior Policy Analyst. Omena is responsible for supporting the Director of Policy in policy analysis, agenda development, and execution of advocacy efforts to advance the mission of the Housing Equals Justice Campaign.

By examining federal, state and local policy, Omena works to identify opportunities to works towards the goal of ensuring that homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Prior to joining CCEH, Omena worked for the City of New Haven and the Connecticut General Assembly. She holds a B.A. degree in English and a M.S. degree in Sociology from Southern Connecticut State University.

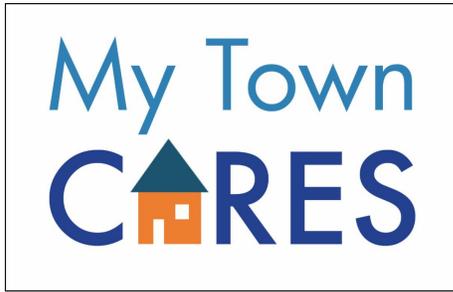


CT Realtors and CCEH Distribute Over 100 Mattresses

Thanks to our partners, the CT Realtors, who raised over \$12,000 to provide mattresses for people who were housed during the pandemic. To date, we have been able to send over 100 mattresses safely, and directly, to individuals and families as they move into their new homes.

We also want to thank the case managers and provider staff who submitted requests to ensure that clients received mattresses quickly. As with all our work, we could not do this without collaboration, and thanks to these efforts there are 100+ more people in Connecticut who don't need to worry about where they will sleep tonight.

My Town Cares Updates



We were thrilled to have so many municipal employees interested in getting involved in **My Town Cares**, CCEH's partnership with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and Sustainable CT to engage towns in ending homelessness locally and around the state.

You can also join Sustainable CT Coffee Hour for an informal discussions the third Friday of each month. They will share program updates and resources, explore your questions, and strengthen the network of Sustainable CT champions. These sessions are open to all and will be recorded. Please click [here](#) to register.

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

Your Voice Matters to Us! Join the CT Race Equity Network (CT REN) Today

CT REN is looking for new members!

The purpose of the CT REN is to advance the work of centering race equity in efforts to address housing and homelessness disparities in Connecticut. It provides a platform for stakeholders to share, collaboratively develop, and coordinate anti-racist projects and initiatives that advance racially-equitable housing outcomes.

Our intent is to create a safe space for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color. Allies are welcomed.

Applications are due by Monday, March 22nd, 2021. Please feel free to share the flyer broadly within your network. Click [here](#) to apply.

We look forward to being in community with you all!

A flyer for the CT Race Equity Network (CT REN). At the top, it says "Let's Transform Equity In CT Together!". Below this is a collage of photos of diverse people. The text "JOIN THE CT Race Equity Network" is prominently displayed. A green box contains the purpose of the network: "The purpose of the CT REN is to advance the work of centering race equity in efforts to address housing and homelessness disparities in Connecticut. It provides a platform for stakeholders to share, collaboratively develop, and coordinate anti-racist projects and initiatives that advance racially-equitable housing outcomes. It fosters a cohesive community that eliminates the impact of institutional racism on housing by:". Below this is a list of bullet points: "• Amplifying current racial equity efforts", "• Prioritizing cross-sector collaboration", "• Advocating and supporting programs", "• Race equity resource sharing", and "• Providing mutual support and encouragement during difficult times". At the bottom, it says "CLICK HERE TO JOIN" next to a QR code. Below the QR code is the text "For more information contact us at ct.renetwork@gmail.com" and the CT REN logo.

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.

Resources for Providers

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

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

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 Trainings:

Equal Access to Shelter Training

Tuesday, March 23rd

1 P.M. - 3 P.M.

Transgender individuals are significantly more likely to experience

homelessness at some point in their life than the general population. Many do not enter the shelter, but the majority of those who have stayed in a homeless shelter have reported some form of mistreatment, including harassment and refusal of service, due to their gender identity. This must stop! CT Coalition to End Homelessness has partnered with CT Department of Housing, CT Fair Housing Center, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), and Anchor Health Initiative to provide you with an 'Equal Access to Shelter' training. [Register now](#).

Entering COVID-19 Vaccination Information into HMIS

Tuesday, March 23rd
3:30 P.M. - 4:30 P.M.

A new feature is being added in HMIS that will allow tracking of Covid-19 vaccinations for clients, including whether a client has been partially or fully vaccinated. This training is for all HMIS users and will discuss the importance of tracking and reporting one's vaccination status as well as walk you through how to do it within HMIS. [Register now](#).

Shelter Diversion 2.0 Training

Thursday, April 8th
11 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

Join us for this advanced diversion training that will thoroughly discuss the practice of shelter diversion, with an emphasis on how to have efficient and effective diversion conversions in a person-centered, trauma-informed, and housing-focused way. During this training we will also focus on the importance of problem solving, diversion funding, and linkage to services and community resources. [Register now](#).

This Week's Featured Webinar:



[Data Changes in HMIS During the COVID-19 Crisis](#)

Previously Recorded Webinars:

- [Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy and COVID-19](#)
- [Working with Youth](#)
- [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**

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

CCEH in the News

Committee Debates Housing As A Human Right Bill

NBC Connecticut | March 2021

Committee on Housing to hold hearing Thursday on right to housing bill

The Day | March 2021

