

MEMORANDUM

Date: June 29, 2020

To: Marisa A. Zapata, PhD
Director, PSU-HRAC

From: Lauren E. M. Everett
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Subject: Updates on COVID-19 response and people experiencing homelessness nationwide, June 22 - 28.

News

1. The [landmark Supreme Court decision](#) about discrimination against LGBTQ individuals may weaken the Trump administration's efforts to remove Fair Housing protections around sexual orientation and gender identity.
2. A [new NAEH report](#) asks Continuums of Care (CoCs) how they are responding to the crisis in screening, tracking data, placing people in housing, acquiring and using personal protective equipment, and navigating staffing issues. It finds that CoCs are increasingly focused on swiftly placing people experiencing homelessness into housing, with 74% rating permanent housing as either the 1st or 2nd priority for future funding.
3. House Democrats recently released the \$1.5 trillion infrastructure package, the [Moving Forward Act](#). This bill includes \$100 billion to construct and preserve 1.8 million affordable homes, and an expansion of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program.
4. Even in jurisdictions with [eviction moratoriums](#), there are reports of landlords threatening to evict tenants.
5. Nonprofit Miracle Messages just launched their pilot [Miracle Friends](#) program in the San Francisco Bay Area. The program is a "virtual buddy system that matches people experiencing homelessness with volunteers for short weekly phone calls and text messages" and to "offer basic companionship and support." As for the area's [hotel programs](#), advocates blame the slow pace of matching clients with rooms on bureaucratic red tape. In the wake of a lawsuit against the city about conditions in the [Tenderloin](#) neighborhood of San Francisco, where over 400 tents were counted earlier this month, social workers have placed 264 people in hotel rooms as of Wednesday morning. The goal is placement of 70% of people living in tents in hotel rooms by July 20. Some homelessness advocates have [criticized the plan](#), saying that it will lead to increased policing of people living on the streets.
6. The Fownes Hotel in [Worcester, England](#) continues to operate as a community-driven shelter for people experiencing homelessness. The hotel's management decided to remain open to assist community members who needed shelter due to the pandemic, and has been operating with a small crew of staff and two security guards.

7. [Los Angeles County](#)'s plan to house 15,000 people experiencing homelessness in hotel and motel rooms has fallen dramatically short of its goal, with only 3,601 rooms secured in four months. The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) released a [COVID-19 recovery plan](#) on Tuesday that outlines steps to reach that initial goal by placing high-risk individuals in "bridging" units where they will have deeply subsidized rent and supportive services. The three-year plan will require [\\$800 million](#) in funding.
8. Public officials in [Minnesota](#) are requesting a large funding package to address homelessness and housing insecurity.
9. [Washington DC](#) has been using several hotels as bridge housing for families experiencing homelessness for the past five years. The city is transitioning away from this program, and moving all of the residents of one of its motels into permanent housing and other shelters by mid-July.
10. In [New York](#) state, 100 individuals who were recently released from Rikers Island prison and are being housed at a local hotel. They were released due to pre-existing medical conditions, and the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, who is overseeing the program along with the Office of Emergency Management, are working to place them in permanent housing. In [New York City](#), 20% of the city's hotels are housing people experiencing homelessness.
11. In this Op Ed, an unsheltered man who has experienced the transformational benefits of the [UK's emergency hotel program](#) writes about his anxiety as the program's July 3 expiration date looms.
12. As state eviction moratoriums expire, renters who aren't eligible for government assistance or who are still waiting for it, like [this Las Vegas man](#), are at risk of losing their homes.

National Low-Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) Weekly Call (Monday, June 22) and Weekly Updates

- **Cathy Alderman, VP Communications & Public Policy, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless:** The Coalition did an initial testing program, and 20% of asymptomatic people tested positive. They did outreach and education to the community about testing, and made sure there was a way to get test results easily, which was critical. Results need to come back within 24 hours for the program to be effective. Their most recent testing effort was conducted in partnership with the Denver Department of public health. They tested 50 people with zero positives. Eight of these people were high-risk, and they were able to get these individuals into hotels and motels. They've partnered with the city of Denver to acquire these spaces, with funding through FEMA. They're trying not to move people around and subject them to potential exposure, but rather focusing on serving them in-place with hygiene stations, medical care etc.
- **Roxy Caines, EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit) Campaign Director, Center of Budget and Policy Priorities:** Outreach is needed to ensure everyone is getting their stimulus

payments. About 12 million people haven't received automatic payments because they haven't filed taxes in 2018 or 2019. Nine million of these individuals receive SNAP or Medicaid, and three million don't receive those services. The online form must be completed by October 15 to get a payment this year.

- **Dylan Waguespack, Public Policy & External Affairs Director, True Colors United:** HUD's new legislation that allow shelter providers to consider sex and gender identity when deciding on accommodations will allow providers to refuse shelter to LGBTQ people. True Colors United is launching a campaign to drive public comments in opposition to this new policy, at [Housingsaveslives.org](https://www.housingsaveslives.org). This legislation is especially troubling now, because a lot of trans houseless people rely on emergency shelters and would be forced to enter shelter with another gender.
- **Gary Blasi, Professor of Law Emeritus, UCLA School of Law, UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy:** [*UD Day: Impending Evictions and Homeless in Los Angeles*](#) was released by the Luskin Institute in late may. It found that two thirds of evictions are extra-legal (not served formally through the court system). They were able to get real-time data from the state and real estate industry, and focused entirely on people who lost their jobs and had not received the resources they were eligible for. They estimate 365,000 renter households have no income at all. This number includes 558,000 children. These households are at a very high risk of eviction, and tenants without lawyers rarely win in court. Additionally, low-income households' social networks are usually other poor people, and they are only functional sources of support under conditions where not everyone is in crisis at once. So in other words, there's little social support for these households. The report's most conservative estimate is that one in ten households—or 36,000 households—that are evicted will become homeless. At the Institute they're working on new reports on how to prevent evictions, and ideas for interim housing. In summary, this is a catastrophe for LA's low-income population.

NAEH webinar (June 24) - *State of Homelessness Findings From The 2020 Edition*

- **Joy Moses, Director, Homelessness Research Institute (NAEH):** The goal is to use the data in the [2020 report](#) to tell the story of homelessness in the US and to encourage states and CoCs to ponder and tell their own stories. The current moment—Covid and policing reforms—is likely rewriting the story:
 - There will be potential growths in homelessness
 - There are infusions of new resources (e.g. CARES)
 - Rethinking services (e.g. congregate shelter, rehousing best practices)2019 PIT counts revealed 567,715 people experiencing homelessness, or 17 out of every 10,000 people. Of that number, 70% are individuals (not in families), and 70% of individuals are male. 37% of the population is unsheltered, and it is disproportionately POC,

especially Pacific Islanders, American Indians, and Black people. Two-thirds *do not* belong to a special population (e.g. veterans, chronic, unaccompanied youth). Homelessness has been trending upwards in 2017-2019. Providers are unable to provide emergency shelter to all so a long-term shift toward permanent housing is needed. Between 2007 and 2016, counts were on the decline and decreased by 14%. Counts are now only 4% lower than in 2007. The vast majority of unsheltered houseless people are individuals (93%). The likelihood of an individual houseless person being unsheltered is 50%. This is the highest this number has ever been. Demographics that have seen the biggest increases overall are trans, Asian, and Native people. For unsheltered, it is trans, Asian, and Latino people.

- **Jackie Janosko, Research Associate, NAEH:** It is important to look at the data from a gender perspective to ensure you are serving the population appropriately. E.g. Men increased by 8% overall over 3 years, but unsheltered men increased by 20%. There's been an increase in Permanent Supportive Housing beds (PSH) over the past few years. Currently 41% of system beds are PSH, which is a 96% increase since 2007. There are also 87% more Rapid Rehousing (RRH) beds than five years ago. The number of Americans who are severely cost burdened is 13% higher than in 2007. Doubling up has been trending downward, but it's still 12% higher than 2007. One of the newest features of the State of Homelessness is the data dashboard: [Click on your state to start exploring](#). Does the configuration of your shelter system reflect your community's homeless population? Is your CoC increasing or decreasing investments in permanent housing? With the pandemic, how can we think about the best use of federal dollars for connecting housing resources to the existing homeless population? The capacity tab is a starting point for thinking about your system's configuration
- **Joy Moses:** In state and local data, counts within the context of the population is extraordinarily useful. You can compare to the national rate, and to other states, especially similar ones. You can measure how your state is doing over time and compare state level disparities for an individual group. This section begins at the CoC level, so you can identify the groups with the greatest and the least numbers. This can be helpful for comparing the area with the rest of the state, and then beginning to ask why that is.

Other resources

1. [Information](#) on the CARES Act eviction moratorium for public housing and voucher residents.
2. NYU has added a "[COVID Local Risk Index](#)" field to their City Health Dashboard.
3. National Health Care for the Homeless Council's [anti-racism resource](#) compilation.