

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** June 8, 2020

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

**From:** Lauren E. M. Everett  
Graduate Research Assistant, PSU-HRAC

**Subject:** Updates on COVID-19 response and people experiencing homelessness nationwide, June 1- 7.

### News

1. The [Bakersfield-Kern](#) Regional Homeless Collaborative (CA) is launching its own non-congregate hotel shelter program, inspired by the state's Project Roomkey model. They aim to have 45 rooms available for unsheltered, high-risk individuals. While they are seeking funding from the county, the program will be run by the homeless collaborative rather than the state.
2. [Atlanta](#) has filled all 250 contracted hotel rooms with clients, who were identified during outreach at encampments, parks, and the airport as candidates for the program due to their age or medical vulnerability. The city is paying the \$3 million cost, evenly split between emergency funding and philanthropic dollars.
3. In [San Francisco](#), one community member chronicled bureaucratic inefficiency when she tried to assist an elderly houseless person in a wheelchair in finding a Project Roomkey hotel room. The demand for spaces at the city's first '[safe camp site](#)' location has already exceeded supply, while more than 1,000 hotel rooms and camp sites remain empty. The situation in the [Tenderloin](#) neighborhood continues to deteriorate, despite promises from the Mayor that a plan is in place.
4. In [Minneapolis](#), ten blocks from where George Floyd was murdered, a Sheraton hotel was taken over by houseless people and volunteers, and is being run communally. The owners relinquished control of the hotel, and have been supportive of the effort. Many of the hotel's new residents came from a large encampment near the Third Precinct Police Station, which was burned down Thursday. Volunteers have [secured funding](#) to pay the daily cost of the rooms, and for food. The city's [Interagency Council](#) has also been working to secure shelter for unhoused people who have been sheltering in places that have been impacted by the protests.

5. In [Victoria, B.C.](#), the provincial government has purchased a second motel to house the city's homeless population. The \$15 million hotel will provide 75 temporary homes for at-risk individuals during the pandemic.
6. [Connecticut](#) has set a goal of moving 1,000 houseless people into permanent housing using \$8 million in CARES Act funding.
7. Governor Newsom plans to send [California](#) counties \$600 million in federal funding, starting next month, to purchase vacant hotels and turn them into permanent housing.
8. Advocates in [London](#) worry that thousands of houseless people could be turned out onto the streets at the end of June, as government funding for non-congregate hotel shelters is [set to expire](#). About 15,000 people are currently participating in the [Everyone In](#) program, which requires local councils to provide hotel rooms to every unhoused person, and has thus far placed 90 percent of unsheltered individuals in hotels. Meanwhile in [Worcester](#), England, an upscale hotel has been housing more than 45 people for free during the pandemic, which includes three meals a day. Some of the guests have been helping out with various odd jobs in thanks.
9. In the Westwood neighborhood of [Los Angeles](#), where UCLA is located, the neighborhood council passed an initiative urging the city to secure hotel rooms for houseless community members by commandeering the rooms. Meanwhile, police tactics responding to the protests around racialized police brutality catalyzed by the death of George Floyd in many cities are having a detrimental impact on unsheltered houseless community members. [A lawsuit](#) filed Friday by the National Lawyers Guild, Black Lives Matter, and the Los Angeles Community Action Network accuses the LAPD of violating protesters' rights, including arresting homeless people for violating curfew when they were not able to avoid doing so, and shooting several individuals in wheelchairs with rubber bullets.
10. As eviction moratoriums expire across the country, many tenants are worried about paying their current and past-due rent. Reporting from [City Lab](#), [The Hill](#) and [Next City](#) details the unfolding crisis, where for "tenants who were already vulnerable before the pandemic, and who may have lost work and income during the crisis, the expiration of eviction moratoria could mean sudden homelessness..." (Next City). In response, Councilmembers in [Philadelphia](#) have proposed the Emergency Protections Act - a package of six bills and one resolution designed to protect renters from losing their homes.
11. This year's [hurricane season](#) is predicted to be more active than usual, which requires urgent emergency response planning that incorporates consideration of COVID safety measures, with an emphasis on equity.

12. In [New York City](#), the debate about relocating the unsheltered houseless population to congregate shelters versus hotels continues.

## National Low-Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) Weekly Call (Tuesday, June 2) and Weekly Updates

(Register for the next call [here](#))

- **Zach Neuman & Sam Gilman, Co-founders, COVID-19 Eviction Defense Project (Cedproject.org):** The Colorado-based organization was founded in late March by a small group of lawyers. They posted a Facebook message asking if people needed legal assistance in the event of an eviction, and woke up to 500 requests. They're working on extending the eviction moratorium in CO, advocating for housing funding, and working on eviction modeling locally and across the country. Accounting for a 35% unemployment rate, their risk model predicts that 26 million people are at risk of eviction. Disproportionately this will fall on people of color and low-income folks. Forty-six% of BIPOC are in at-risk industries, but they're 30% of the population. About \$46 billion in rental debt will accrue by Sept. and \$90 billion by the end of the year if current conditions don't change.
- **Mike Koprowski, National Campaign Director, Opportunity Starts at Home Campaign:** They conducted [a survey](#) about the extent to which people are worried about housing, and what kind of action they would like to see. Over half of respondents expressed concern that they will lose their housing if they don't get any additional assistance to help cover costs. Nearly half (45%) have made sacrifices since the beginning of the pandemic to pay rent/mortgage, such as cutting back on food, accumulating credit card debt, borrowing money from a friend or family member, skipping bills, etc. Many did not feel that unemployment would cover the costs. Support was also very high for rental assistance, eviction moratorium, and homeless assistance programs. 80% of respondents think it's important for the government to provide assistance. This is much higher with progressives, but also numbers in the 60s with conservatives.
- **Rep Delia Ramirez, State Rep., Illinois:** \$396 million was secured in rent relief funds, with \$100 million going to disproportionately impacted communities. Forty percent of Latinos who are being tested have tested positive, and 60% of Latinos in Illinois live in multigenerational homes, which makes it difficult to isolate. The \$396 million fund is available to renters making less than 50% AMI who can prove economic hardship as a result of the pandemic, and to landlords who have been unable to pay their mortgages. A comprehensive [housing bill](#) introduced by Rep. Ramirez, which included rent and mortgage forgiveness for 180 days, failed to advance in an emergency session.

- **Phillis Chamberlain, ED, Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania:** Their Come Back Strong campaign partners with tenants, tenant groups, nonprofits, and local governments to advocate for the state to dedicate additional funds for rental assistance. They're also deepening engagement and partnership with some less obvious actors, like landlords. The messaging is: because low-income tenants are impacted by job loss, rental assistance is the best way to stabilize tenants. [The state has allocated](#) \$175 million for rental and mortgage relief with a \$150 million for rent relief/\$25 million for mortgage relief split, as well as \$10 million for homelessness assistance and \$8 million for legal services. The Eviction Defense Network data has been really helpful with making the case.
- Up to \$100 billion in housing spending is also in the HEROES Act, as well as the universal eviction and foreclosure moratorium. **NLIHC emphasized that it is important for your organization to [sign the letter](#) of support.**

## Other resources

1. HUD's office of Community Planning and Development issued a Memorandum with [a second set of regulation waivers](#) for various funding sources and programs.
2. A map of [federally-assisted homes with subsidies that expire](#) in the next five years.
3. An overview of CARES Act eviction moratorium and its effect on the Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS ([HOPWA](#)) program.
4. COVID-19 FAQs for [Public Housing Agencies](#).
5. Homeless System Response - [Rehousing Activation](#): Planning and Implementation Tips.