# Housing Stability COVID-19 Virtual Town Hall Meeting 5/19/2020 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Participants: 84

#### Questions:

- 1. Nicki: Families on MFIP and wanted information on direct support or coordination of services that exists and opportunities that may be outside of CHS- also to access housing a bit quicker?
  - Our family shelter system is first managed by Ramsey County. A family would call into 211. If that family is eligible, they get transferred to a family shelter waitlist. It's the longest in the summer, there's more people on the waitlist usually in the summer than in the winter, which is sort of unusual. But we know that in Ramsey County we do not have enough housing for families to move out of shelter and we do not have enough family shelter beds in general with this. Those are both capacity barriers that we have is the best if someone is seeking emergency shelter to enter that system because we also have a rapid restabilization program that is run by that very same team. And when families are on that waitlist they can work with that team to try to get off the waitlist before they even need to go to shelter and so that's another way to try to avoid even starting shelter. I would say there's major capacity issues, but that team is super helpful and willing to help and ready to go. In terms of once you're in shelter Project Home run by Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul, as well as Catholic Charities who runs the Family Service Center both have social workers to help connect people to housing and that is the goal to move into permanent housing from the shelter beds so that other families can then use that shelter bed for an emergency.
- 2. Mary Boyd: What are the expectations of landlords and what is your power to enforce them to cooperate. Can Ramsey County be involved?
  - Ramsey County does not have a department to enforce landlords. That comes from the city level through code enforcements. We do not play a role in landlord assistance.
- 3. Facebook Questions: How do one find out about the resources for stable housing during COVID? Are we able to apply for emergency assistance again now even if we already received it in January? How long will the shelter help happen and how do one find out about the resources of this?
  - Yes, Emergency Assistance is now available twice in a 12-month period for both singles and families. Another resource is the FHPAP which is a network of a dozen providers who work on homeless prevention. Those are great places where families can get connected. 211 is the best way to enter that network and then through Catholic Charities.
  - Financial assistance: please call FAS on benefits for general assistance because there are some changes.
- 4. Suzanne: What are specific sanitation and hiking options for the unsheltered?
  - The county along with the City of St. Paul and other partners Coordinate to provide portable toilets and handwashing stations at encampment locations in Ramsey County.
- 5. Ruby had asked how we could further help people who are in the homeless encampment and Ben had his question about increasing shelter capacity for families with kids.

- We have really great outreach providers through People Inc and Radius Health, and they
  have specific things that they provide people who are experiencing homelessness so you
  may connect with them to see what they need. Another thing is just honoring people who
  are experiencing homeless on the street as people and just saying hi or treating them and
  engaging in conversation. Also, try and help people with basic need items such as food.
- 6. A comment from Facebook: I was almost homeless a couple weeks ago. There is very little prevention, awareness and resources or proper support, especially for single patents, disabled folks, etc. I reached out to numerous folks, organizations, politicians etc. it makes me sad my family had to deal with these stressors especially during COVID. Luckily, I finally found something but trying to recover physically, mentally, financially has been hard the past few weeks. Plus, my rent went from 840 to 1350. Most landlords don't want us to use assistance because they feel we can't pay rent otherwise. Sometimes we just need help. How are we responding. Any feedback?
  - Thank you for sharing your story. The system is broken pre-COVID and how do we fix it long term. We need to share resources and provide the communication, so people know the resources whether that be emergency assistance or FHPAP.
- 7. Earlier, someone was talking about resources related to people on chemical dependency in need of mental health and so forth. But now, if we have people who are homeless, how are they able to access those resources and help?
  - Low barrier shelter is so important for people who are chemically dependent whether it's alcohol or drugs and know that they are not going to be judged because they are intoxicated or high is super important. Our providers provide Rule 25, which is a chemical dependency assessment, so we should provide more information on how to access this type of assessment. As for housing support or formerly known as GRH has many providers who are looking who can house people who have chemical dependency. Again, there's not enough capacity. There's not enough capacity, but how do we connect people who are on our coordinated entry list and have their assessment to either low barrier or sober housing as well as that would be housing plus services.
  - I am Natalie Gasser from Radius Health. My team goes out with People Incorporated to the unsheltered homeless folks and we're able to bring clean needles for people that are using heavily and refer them to clinic 555. We can have a doctor go and see the encampment homeless on the spot and assess them for mental health.
- 8. Who assist residents who might need such help learn how to care of their living space?
  - There's a lot of organizations and partners providing this service. If you can get connected to
    the organizations providing those services. And there are those who have case managers
    who can get them connected to services.
- 9. Joseph: I was wondering with the low barrier such shelters, has anybody reached out to Simpson Housing Services in Minneapolis who operated the low barrier shelter at the encampment along Hiawatha, they learned a lot of information on just operating a low barrier shelter and public health and safety of staff and residents protocols. I don't know if I haven't heard any discussion on reaching out to them to hear what they learned or best practices.

- Our main low barrier shelter here in St. Paul would be the safe space, run by Model Cities. I
  think learning from Simpson House would be a great addition to our learnings from safe
  space. So maybe that should be included in plans moving forward on anything related to
  low barrier shelters.
- 10. Would someone talk about healthcare for the homeless?
  - Helen Freint: That's our health care for the homeless program, which is part of Minnesota Community Care. It is not part of Catholic Charities. We're just a partner with them, sharing the courtyard. But we are there, providing care, five days a week. Its primary care behavioral health with counseling, social services, chemical dependency, we have a psych NP. So, we could work with people who need medication and support, have the primary care going as well. A little bit different is right now during COVID but a whole set of services that also provides complimentary care. We have dental care which right now again is not operational coming soon. And do foot care and all kinds of services. In addition to the mobile health going out to the camps visiting, bringing medical care right to people where they are. And trying to really get our arms around the whole psycho-social piece that people are dealing with. We do coordinated entry help them link into housing just really trying to be a part of helping people move forward.
- 11. What specific steps is Ramsey County taking to increase shelter capacity for families?
  - It cannot be done right now, but we are working with our partners to scope out new places to increase shelter capacity for families in thinking about new service models that might improve the lives of families, as well as those in shelters.
- 12. How is Ramsey County involved in helping residents, whether they be tenants or homeowners help take care of their property like using some of the skills that Home Depot teaches on taking care of your home? And also, if they get involved in anything related to smaller units because people are talking about homes as far as tiny homes, buses and RVs and so forth.
  - I'll start with that kind of homeowner property tax keeping people in their homes. So for many people who are at risk of homelessness. The it's really an income question. And so how do we connect people to FHPHP and emergency assistance or emergency general systems so that they can keep so that they can stay in their current apartment. Or pay their property tax if they're in an emergency. There's also our property tax department has programs to help prevent property tax delinquency. Connecting with them as an important part. And so maybe we should provide some more information on Property Tax resources there in terms of keeping people in their homes due to maybe code enforcement or quality. We have one program in our public health area called house calls. And that's a partnership with Minnesota Community Care. And that's really to prevent people from getting displaced from their homes, whether they own them or they're renting due to hoarding, unsanitary conditions so that social workers can go in there and help them deal with that issue. And so that they can stay in their home or apartment. In terms of fixing up a place that doesn't fall into disrepair. There's a series of nonprofits that I am not remembering the names of off the top my head that can help.
- 13. What is Ramsey County's plan to end homeless with families?

- Right now, I don't know if we have a collective vision as a community to end family homelessness. I want to reengage our partners in that, but I'll give you a couple steps that we're working on. One over the next year or so we hope to increase shelter capacity and create a new service model for one of our shelters. And that would mean more shelter beds and then increasing access to apartments for those families. And then how do we expand homelessness prevention, so that families don't slip into homelessness in the first place, either through increasing FHPHP or increasing access to emergency assistance. So yeah, increase shelter capacity increase access to our hotel rooms, increase homelessness prevention and, new service models and rapid rescore utilization models to connect people who did fall into homelessness, make them right back into housing before they needed in each of those are the things that we're working on. I don't think it's enough to completely end family homelessness.
- Ramsey County Commissioner Reinhart: Max and Maria did a really good job of talking about what are we trying to do in the short term and in the longer term, but the fact of the matter is, we do have plans in place. We have groups in place, a homelessness group, prevention of homelessness, excuse me, and trying to put different steps in place. We're also part of a statewide group that's working right now with the Lieutenant Governor Flanagan being the Lead on that. There's a lot of activity that's going on. But the reality is Ramsey County is not going to end homelessness on its own. This takes partnerships and so is there a plan. Yes, there's a plan, but it includes a whole lot of partners and what Max and Maria were talking about is really what is our part of that. It is a partnership and that's an especially with the state of Minnesota. And I think there's finally a recognition of that in the inequities that have taken place over this, you know, many, many years in trying to address that. There's a lot of work that's being done there's funding requests that are into the state. We are doing things with the shelter with the things that Max just talked about. There is a lot, but I felt like I generally just want to listen on these things, but I felt like I felt compelled to say that we can't end it on our own. That we need to have the partners and the funding and people working together to make this a long-term solution because you know band aids aren't going to help right now and they never have. I'm sorry for interrupting, but I felt really compelled to do that.
- There is a group called Heading Home Ramsey and that is the continuum of care for Ramsey County and all the partners who are serving people who are experiencing instability and homelessness are there. We welcome the participation of citizens and providers who are not currently associated. We are right now in the process of reinventing how we work together as a community.
- 14. On Facebook: Heard that the St. Peter old hotel is being discontinued. Is this correct?
  - We are housing single adults' families and youth 18 to 24 in various hotels around Ramsey County right now during COVID. This allows everyone to physically distance and have their own bathroom and bedroom. And then providing them with essential needs like meals and health and wraparound services as well. We are currently housing up to 138 I think has the 138 people 18 and over in the singles category. That's amazing that we've done that in such a short period of time. And that's going to continue to expand through our homeless operations team. Our goal is to depopulate our congregants shelters by 50 by at least 50% so if we have 597 people who normally live in congregate shelter. How do we depopulate them and move them into their own spaces? So that's something that we're actively working. This is a COVID response and so after COVID will have to think about how we move

people towards permanent housing and how do we make sure that people don't just enter back into homelessness.

- 15. Is the Cold Weather Hotel Program for unsheltered families with children still going to end for the year on June 9<sup>th</sup>?
  - I plan to continue that program until COVID starts to die down.
- 16. A question from Facebook: I received emergency assistance in January to move into my home now. After being homeless for 3 years and within the week (literally) we were released from work (still employed, just not working right now due to COVID) can we apply for emergency assistance again?
  - Yes, they can re-apply. FAS temporarily suspended the 12-month rule.
- 17. What type of documentation is required to deem a family as disabled on the basis of mental health to be able to access disability housing-- does a simple Diagnostic Assessment(DA) work or is a more intensive assessment to allow for families to be deemed as a 'disabled'-- such as a waivered service or is a SMRT-- required? Thank you in advance.
  - DA is not a requirement for Housing Support (GRH). A person could have a disabling condition signed off by a qualified professional. Let me know if you need more info: <a href="mailto:amy.blair@co.ramsey.mn.us">amy.blair@co.ramsey.mn.us</a>
- 18. What do folks think of the upcoming eviction surge after the moratorium ends?
  - I think it's a big concern. I'm very concerned about it a lot and I think we need to continue to think about how to connect people that we could, if we can identify anyone now that we think is at risk of not being able to pay their rent after the eviction more time and how do we connect them with emergency assistance or emergency general assistance now or how do we connect them with FHPHP now before it becomes a crisis. And also, please encourage all of your clients that you are working with now to continue to pay their rent to the best of their abilities, because that will help prevent emergency when the eviction moratorium ends. So just things that we've been encouraging clients to do as well.

#### **RESOURCES**

CSP is in Rondo/Frogtown area. CSP is Community Stabilization Project. They work with renters. More info on Heading Home Ramsey: www.headinghomeramsey.org or email: <a href="https://hhramseycoc@gmail.com">hhramseycoc@gmail.com</a>

From Lynae's Hockett to Everyone:

Lynae Hockett, Employment Guidance Counselor, Ramsey County Workforce Solutions

From Jessica Jerney to Everyone:

Jessica Jerney, Ramsey County

From Mary Boyd to Everyone:

Mary K. Boyd, Equityy Action Circle

From Grace.Mativo to Everyone:

Grace Matio- HWAD Ramsey County

From shellie rowe to Everyone:

Shellie Rowe - Neighborhood House

From max.holdhusen to Everyone:

Max Holdhusen- Ramsey County

From Cindy McGowan to Everyone:

Cindy.McGowan-St Paul Schools

From Emily Cheesebrow to Everyone:

Emily Cheesebrow- Thies & Talle Management - Resident Support Program

From Katrina Mosser to Everyone:

Katrina Mosser, Ramsey County

From Lily Tharoor to Everyone:

Lily Tharoor - St Paul Public Schools

From Ben Weiss to Everyone:

Ben Weiss, Southern MN Regional Legal Services, ben.weiss@smrls.org

From Ryan P to Everyone:

Ryan Possert - People Inc.

From Joseph.Desenclos to Everyone:

Joseph Desenclos - Ramsey County

From Ryan Eckdahl to Everyone:

Ryan Eckdahl The Experience of Neshama ryan@exnesh.com

From Loni Aadalen to Everyone:

Loni Aadalen, Ramsey County Health and Wellness Administration Division/Housing Stability

From Deng Dimayuga to Everyone

Deng Dimayuga, YMCA Services Program Manager at Prior Crossing Apartments, deng.dimayuga@ymcamn.org

From Amy.Blair to Everyone:

Amy Blair Ramsey County

From Kathi Blomquist to Everyone

Kathi Blomquist, St Paul-Ramsey County Family Health

From Frank Alarcon to Everyone

Frank Alarcon - Ramsey County (Public Works Department)

From Sara Hollie to Everyone:

Amber Gail

From Linda Mahoney to Everyone

Linda Mahoney from Ujamaa Place. linda\_mahoney@ujamaaplace.org

From Ryan Eckdahl to Everyone

Eric Bacon CCC ebacon@continuumcarecenter.com

From Molly.O'Rourke to Everyone

Molly O'Rourke, Ramsey County Incident Management Operations Section

From Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt to Everyon

Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County Commissioner, Cities of White Bear Lake, Maplewood and North St. Paul, and the Hillcrest neighborhood in St. Paul. Victoria.Reinhardt@co.ramsey.mn.us

From Greta Huff to Everyone:

Greta Huff Neighborhood House ghuff@neighb.org

### From Donnell Bratton to Everyone:

Donnell Bratton Face2Face brattond@face2face.org

# From phiengtavanh.savatdy to Everyone:

Phiengtavanh Savatdy Phiengtavanh.savatdy@co.ramsey.mn.us

## From Maria Wetherall to Everyone:

Maria Wetherall, Ramsey County Veterans Services

# From phiengtavanh.savatdy to Everyone:

Public Health/Family Health Division

### From Kim Lieberman to Everyone:

Kim Lieberman, Justus Health, kim.lieberman@justushealth.org

# From jgrothe to Everyone:

Julie Grothe Guild Incorporated jgrothe@guildincorporated.org

### From josephine.ochi to Everyone:

Josephine ochi, family health . Josephine.ochi@co.ramsey.mn.us

# From amin omar to Everyone:

Amin Omar horn of Africa a.omar@hornofafricausa.org

From Alfreda to Everyone:

Alfreda Flowers, Family Values for Life, alfreda@familyvaluesforlife.org

From Clara Ware to Everyone:

Clara Ware-Dayton's Bluff- A Concern Parent Group- claraware1@gmail.com

From Megan Peterlinz to Everyone:

Megan Peterlinz, Children's Minnesota megan.peterlinz@childrensmn.org

From Lucy Zanders to Everyone:

Lucy Zanders, Theresa Living Center - Housing Provider- lucy.zanders.tlc@gmail.com

From Ruby to Everyone:

Ruby Rivera, Saint Paul Public Libraries Social Worker, Wilder Foundation

From mwenzel to Everyone:

Melissa Wenzel, east side resident, organizer of toiletries/clothing drive for those experiencing homelessness. Melissa.a.wenzel@gmail.com

From Stevenson's iPhone to Everyone:

Stevenson Morgan, Ujamaa Place- stevenson\_morgan@ujamaaplace.org

From Mary Hernández to Everyone:

Mary Hernandez, Public Health Nurse, SPRCPH Family Health

From Patrick Moore to Everyone:

Patrick Moore, Property Solutions & Services Inc. patrick@propertyss.com

From Altreisha Foster to Everyone:

Altreisha Foster

From Sara Hollie to Everyone:

Feel free to start adding your questions here for our community dialogue

From Zachary Hylton to Everyone:

Zachary Hylton, Senior Policy Analyst, County Manager's Office

From Sara Hollie to Everyone:

Ask your questions for Max here

From Ellen Watters to Everyone:

Ellen Watters, Program Manager for Outside In collaborative

From Ryan P to Everyone:

Can the power point be emailed to me after, so I can share with my agency? ryan.possert@peopleincorporated.org

From Rich... to Everyone:

Richard, McLemore Holdings, LLC - Ramsey County Contractor

From Sara Hollie to Everyone:

Yes the PPT will posted after this town hall

From Ryan P to Everyone:

Thank you!

From Sara Hollie to Everyone:

If you have questions feel free to start asking them here

From Suzanne Madison to Everyone:

What are the specific sanitation and hygiene options for the unsheltered?

Tournently have a caseload of about 80 on MFIP Employment Services. I would say about 60-75% of the families I work with are homeless or in a housing circumstance that is not reliable by any means and temporary. Can you please share any direct support or coordination of services that currently exist for this or the opportunity to do so outside of CAHS? Thank you in advance!

What are expectations of landlords and what is your power to enforce cooperation?

Shelter capacity for families was at a crisis point prior to COVID, with more families on waiting lists than actually in shelter. We can anticipate increased need due to the economic downturn. What specific steps is the county taking to increase shelter capacity for families with children

04:17 PM Suzanne Madison Ramsey County along with the City of St Paul and all of our partners coordinate to provide portable toilets and hand washing stations at encampment locations in Ramsey County. Encampments where portable toilets and hand washing stations are placed are agreed upon locations that can be accessed for delivery and maintenan

How are substance dependency, mental health etc. issues addressed?

Question from FB: How do one find out about the resources for stable housing during covid?

04:19 PM

Are we able to apply for emergency assistance again now? If we already received it in January? How long will the shelter help happen and how do one find out about the resources of this?

From Ben Weiss to Everyone:

Amee: Yes, Emergency Assistance is now available twice in a 12-month period, for both singles and families.

From Mary Boyd to Everyone:
Who assist residents who might need such help learn how to care fof their living space?

From Me to Everyone:

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From Mary Boyd to Everyone:

Who assist residents who might need such help learn how to care fof their living space?

From Nicki to Everyone:

Thank you MAx

From Anne McInerney to Everyone:

Is there an official notice from Ramsey about EA availability?

From Ben Weiss to Everyone:

Anne: I can forward the email I received.

From Ruby to Everyone:

How can Individuals help the homeless population living in encampments?

From Sara Hollie to Everyone:

Be sure to send out Homelessness resources

211 - for families

A comment on Facebook: I was almost homeless a couple weeks ago. There is very little prevention, awareness and resources or proper support, especially for single patents, disabled folks, etc. I reached out to numerous folks. organizations, politicians etc. it makes me sad my family had to deal with these stressors especially during covid. Lucky I finally found something but trying to recover physically, mentally, financially has been really hard the past few weeks. Plus my rent went from 840 to 1350. Most landlords don't want us to use assistance because they feel we can't pay rent otherwise. Sometimes we just need help.

We will get FAS information to this group

I don't think my question was actually answered. It is: Could someone please print the attached closing letter on letterhead, sign it on my behalf, and mail it to the address on the letter? Thanks!

#### From Ben Weiss to Everyone:

Sorry, cut and paste didn't work. My question is: What specific steps is Ramsey County taking to increase shelter capacity for families?

### From Me to Sara Hollie: (Privately)

Thanks.

#### From Sara Hollie to Everyone:

How to access Rule 25 assessment

GRH housing support has providers that can help house people with chemical dependency

Housing plus services

#### From Joseph Desenctos to Everyone:

When we are discussing "low barrier" shelters, has anyone reached out to Simpson Housing Services regarding lessons learned and best practices for operating a "low barrier" shelter?

#### From Sara Hollie to Everyone

Healthcare for Homeless at St. Paul Opportunity Center

#### From Clara Ware to Everyone:

Do You Have A Plan in Place to End Homelessness for Families?

#### From Me to Everyone:

A comment on Facebook: My family had 14 years on St. Paul Public housing voucher. It was canceled due to COVID-19 last March and now we can't pay rent.

From Nickl to Everyone:  What type of documentation is required to deem a family as disabled on the basis of mental health to be able to access disability housing—does a simple Diagnostic Assessment(DA) work or is a more intensive assessm for families to be deemed as a 'disabled'—such as a waivered service or is a SMRT—required? Thank you in advance.	04:37 P ment to allow
From Amy,Blair to Everyone:  Amee: if the person who lost their voucher is comfortable sharing contact information, Mike or myself can follow-up with St. Paul public housing	04:38 P
From Me to Everyone: OK, I will check with them on FB.	04:38 P
From Ben Weiss to Everyone:  Arnee: The person can also contact SMRLS.	04:39 P
From Nicki to Everyone: Also curious about the answer to the question Ben Weiss has posed a few times please what specific steps is Ramsey County taking to increase shelter capacity for families? Thank you	04:39 P
From Me to Everyone: Thanks, Ben. Will inform them. Question from FB: I heard at 10 and St. Peter old hotel was being discontinued?	04:41 P
From Sara Hollie to Everyone: Provide property tax info Provide house call info Frog Town Community Groupget info	04:44 P
From Ben Weiss to Everyone:  Is the Cold Weather Hotel Program for unsheltered families with children still going end for the year on June 9?	04:45 P
From Suzanne Madison to Everyone: Max, CSP is located in Rondo/Frogtown area. CSP is Community Stabilization Project. They work with renters.	04:45 P
From Betsy MV, Southeast Community Organization to Everyone: Yes! CSP - they do great work and are really, really underfunded. They need support	04×
From Me to Everyone: A question from Facebook: I received emergency assistance in January to move into my home now. After being homeless for 3 years and within the week (literally) we were released from work (still employed, just not vnow due to COVID) can we apply for emergency assistance again?	049 working right
From Sara Hollie to Everyone: Heading home Ramsey	04.4
From Ben Weiss to Everyone: Amee: Yes.	04%
From Loni Aadalen to Everyone:  Amee: Yes, they can re-apply. FAS temporarily suspended the 12-month rule.	04:4
From Me to Everyone: OK, thanks.	04:4
From Amy,8lair to Everyone: Nicki: DA is not a requirement for Housing Support (GRH). A person could have a disabling condition signed off by a qualified professional. Let me know if you need more info: amy,blair@co.ramsey.mn.us	04:!
From Nicki to Everyone: Amy- Thank you very much. I will follow-up to learn more. I really appreciate this clarification!	04:!
From Amy Blair to Everyone: No problem!	04:!
From Clara Ware to Everyone: Please! Send Us Resources and Contacts for Homeless Families and Youth! Email: claraware1@gmail.com Thanks, Clara	04:1

From Loni Aadalen to Everyone:

More info on Heading Home Ramsey: www.headinghomeramsey.org or email: hhramseycoc@gmail.com

From Sara Hollie to Everyone:

Please reach out the racialequity@ramseycounty.us

From John Slade to Everyone:

For now or another time - what do folks think of the upcoming eviction surge after the moratorium ends?

From Rich... to Everyone:

Thank you....

From Pedro Bustamante (He/Him/His) to Everyone:

Thank you Sara for being a great host

From Betsy MV, Southeast Community Organization to Everyone:

thank you

From John Slade to Everyone:

thanks! Bye

From Deanna Pesik to Everyone:

Thank you bye

From Nicki to Everyone:

Thank you for your time and taking the time to engage with individuals and the community! Your effort does not go unnoticed.