

Food Security & Shelter Working Group

UPDATES: APRIL 17, 2020

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUPS

- Established Food Security and Shelter Stakeholder Advisory groups
- Councilwoman Cabello Havrda leading Food Security & Councilwoman Andrews-Sullivan leading Shelter

SHELTER

Shelters

- 215 Haven clients have been moved to leased hotel space; meals, mental health, physical health services are being provided; some homeless are refusing to go
- Food and water is a critical need for unsheltered homeless; Haven, COSA, church groups are distributing shelf-stable meals at "homeless hubs"; also equipping COSA SAFE Officers to provide as well
- COSA is opening an overflow homeless shelter next week to mitigate demand on smaller providers
- Need to explore how we are providing mental health and substance rehabilitation for unsheltered homeless

Rental Assistance

- COSA City Council will consider \$15.8 million COVID-19 Emergency Housing Assistance Program next week
- Program will be expanded to provide gift cards for groceries, gas, baby supplies, toiletries, medication, and internet service; \$800k will be reserved for those who are not eligible under CDBG and who are undocumented
- County in talks with COSA about administering County rental assistance program; the goal is to have an item for the Commissioners Court to consider on April 21st
- College students seeking relief for rent payments & leases for apartments they no longer occupy & can't afford

Other Protections

- COSA City Attorney evaluating proposal for "notice of proposed eviction"; talking to other City Attorneys across the state about how they are implementing similar measures
- Need to determine if COSA/County will continue 30-day moratorium on evictions
- Landlord with tenants who have not paid rent are struggling with property tax payments and late fees; they have requested support for relief; the authority to make changes is at the state-level

FOOD SECURITY

- STAR application amended application from \$12 million to \$9.4 million and have received favorable response
- Food Bank continues to serve 120,000 households a week and looking to diversify how to get food to families
- Made a request to Senator Cornyn to increase SNAP Benefits; opportunity to explore expanding online SNAP
- Need to explore opportunities to leverage underutilized school meal budgets
- SAHA expanding food distribution programs at public housing sites

IMMEDIATE NEEDS/ACTION

Item	Status	Lead
Food/water for unsheltered homeless	Asking the Shelter Advisory Group to consider	TBD
Moratorium on Evictions	Need to determine if this should be extended	J. Rod

OPPORTUNITIES UNDER CONSIDERATION/PENDING

- Create dashboard for eviction filings, unpaid rent, assistance requests, etc.
- Expanding capacity for food delivery to vulnerable populations
- Expansion of Healthy Food Box Pilot
- Addressing how to reach/inform those who aren't paying rent because they know they won't get evicted
- Preliminary discussions on strategy for long-term shelter needs once hotels are no longer used

REFERRALS TO OTHER COMMITTEES

- Social Services - Need to explore how we are providing mental health and substance rehabilitation for unsheltered homeless
- Government – Expanding Federal Funding for SNAP Benefit Program & authorization for online SNAP benefit transactions
- Government – BCAD is asking the Governor to roll take from 2019-2020 so they can avoid protest overload and provide relief to those economically affected by COVID-19
- Government – Coordinate with Shelter group on a constituent request to temporarily waive late fees for existing property tax payments