

COVID-19 Community Response Advisory Council Kick-Off Meeting Highlights

Tuesday, April 21, 2020

2:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Welcome Remarks

Jay Williams, President, Hartford Foundation

- Would like to acknowledge the frontline health care and safety workers, as well as those who help direct resources and support those organizations
- Sobering statistics across the state as of 4/17/20
 - 16,809 confirmed COVID-19 ; 1,946 hospitalizations; 1,036 deaths
- Each of what you are doing is so important and why we are so honored and thrilled to be partnering with you
 - Your time is not taken for granted
 - We want to hear about what you are seeing, what your organizations are experiencing, both challenges and problems
 - But also uplifting news; no matter how small, as it will uplift each of our spirits as we deal with immediate crisis, start thinking cautiously about the intermediate need and then long term recovery
- Each of you represent a very essential part of our community that is helping inform our collective response and deepen the relationships we already had, but each of you have networks
 - Please bring forth your knowledge, insight but also your networks and their insights
 - Will help inform how we can leverage limited resources at the Foundation
- In the spirit of not doing anything alone, the Foundation is pleased to work with and have had a long standing relationship with the United Way
 - Paula Gilberto and her staff bring invaluable tools, mechanisms and expertise (to a large community) and will help identify where the most pressing needs are

Paula Gilberto, President, United Way of Central and Northeastern CT

- Appreciation for being partners and co- conveners of this Advisory Group
 - Acknowledge those involved (Liz Buczynski, Judy McBride, Elysa Gordon, Melanie Tavares and Annie Scully)
- United Way of CT manages United Way 2-1-1 (states info and referral line)
 - Annie Scully to share more about this next meeting
- We have always valued collaboration and coordinating
 - Several instances of doing that by focusing in on child success, youth success, economic mobility, meeting human needs
 - We need to coordinate and complement now more than ever ... but need to do so informed
 - We need to hear from you [direct service providers] as you are on the frontline
- Sharing an uplifting sentiment allows for learning from one another as well as shares spirit and resiliency with one another

Luke Bronin, Mayor of Hartford

- We are going through something that will shape and impact the rest of our lives
- Silver lining is that we a community who has an unbelievable set of partners who have a long history of working together and moved quickly to put the framework in place to make this additional response possible
- On behalf of the city, thank you to the Foundation, United Way and their teams as well as everyone on this call
 - The city is working with many of the organizations on this call as a city and are greatly indebted to you all
- We are all aware of the extensive impact this is having on individuals, families, jobs and businesses
- Encourages everyone to think about the gaps in relief
 - Rapid and strong response at Federal and to some degree at the State level
 - But gaps in that response as well
 - Currently there is temporary relief, prohibition on evictions, but plenty of people won't be able to catch up with their rent down the road; what could mean for thousands of families?
 - Plenty of small businesses may have issues accessing funds from PPP due to something as small as keeping up their payroll
- Hartford Foundation to help mitigate the latter with small business grant to be announced

Hartford Foundation's COVID-19 Response

Elysa Gordon, Vice President and Senior Advisor, Hartford Foundation

- Assisting existing grantees by providing options to repurpose open grants, accelerate payments on multi-year grants and relax reporting requirements
- The COVID-19 Response Fund has been open about three and a half weeks and has seen more than 150 applications so far (seeded with \$1M Foundation dollars and growing)
- Provide opportunities for nonprofits to connect to our Nonprofit Support Program (NSP) and other capacity building supports; supporting nonprofits and small businesses experiencing loss of revenue as result of pandemic through a new grant
- The Foundation will draw on this Council to inform outreach going forward and as we develop recovery plans

Brief Introductions

Moderator, Judy McBride, asks providers to introduce themselves, share what they are seeing on the ground, what's on their mind and any bright spots:

Food Security/ Basic Needs Programs

Lena Rodriguez, President & CEO, Community Renewal Team

- CRT is still open and running, taking applications for energy assistance (extended to June 1) and SNAP applications
- Serving 2,000 meals a day through Meals on Wheels and congregate sites as well as continuing to operate shelters and offer case management services
- A recognizable gap in service: CRT is also feeding people who tested positive for COVID-19 and need meals delivered as well as vulnerable populations afraid to leave their home

Jason Jakubowski, President & CEO, Foodshare

- Leading State emergency service function response on food
- Piloted food distribution at Hartford Regional Market and exhausted capacity
 - Moved to Rentschler Field: over 900 cars in 3 hours
 - 61% who have participated have been Hartford residents
 - Residents who have never experienced food insecurity before are accessing services
 - Have seen the community rally together to help

Housing Security

Matthew Morgan, Executive Director, Journey Home

- Has relocated 2/3 of people staying in shelters to hotels to better isolate them
- There is still a need for significant rental assistance to get people housed outside of hotels and into more permit housing
- Concerns about the number of people unable to pay rent; potential surge in people who might become homeless

Madeline Ravish, Development Advisor, Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness

- Working to decompress shelters; foresee future needs for staffing, emer-

gency funding and apartment vacancies

- The sector has come together, working fast - not just nonprofit but state government and philanthropic partners - to continue to mobilize and stop the spread of COVID-19

Workforce/employment security - nonprofit/for-profit

Alex Johnson, President & CEO, Capital Workforce Partners

- Two crises: COVID-19 and the dislocated worker crisis; last week 390,000 people in CT were separated from employment, really pushing capacity
- Need to focus on serving populations like young people who are graduating, aren't in the workforce or won't be, won't have the benefit of receiving unemployment; second chance individuals [returning from incarceration]; individuals with barriers as well as the dislocated workers

David Griggs, President & CEO, MetroHartford Alliance

- Regaining the momentum has been a challenge, but coming together as a region has allowed us to realize how interdependent we are

Regional Economic Impact

Jim Horan, Executive Director, LISC

- CT has some of the strongest eviction protections in light of COVID-19 but those will end
- Large, out-of-town landlords take over rental markets and this could accelerate if we do not find a solution that benefits tenants and landlords
- Concerned about small businesses accessing the next round of PPP as well as future of community development organizations
- Recently opened a small grant from Citizens Bank (exhausted in just a few hours); 100 applications for \$100,000. The need is great. We need to find ways to keep businesses going in the short term and long term

Health /Health Access

Pat Baker, President, CT Health Foundation

- Concerned about the disproportionate impact on people of color this crisis has had which has only laid bare the racial and ethnic health disparities in our community and in our state
- How to support basic needs, stability of a safety net? How can we support tele-health? Need access to testing and services for at risk populations of color and

contact tracing. Need targeted interventions and actions

- Community health centers are losing over \$900,000 a month
- Some hospitals are dealing with surge, but we need to think of the health delivery system overall
- How are we thinking strategically around access to testing and services to at risk populations of color?
- Hope to coordinate, get transparency surrounding federal dollars and where they are going and how to work collectively to address these challenges

Vulnerable Populations

Enid Rey, Our Piece of the Pie (includes Opportunity Academy)

- Top of mind is that our young people on a good day are at risk for things not to go right
- Advocating for young people aging out of foster care at this time so they don't lose their benefits; advocacy to ensure young people returning from the juvenile justice system don't get put back due to small parole violations; engaging young people in education
- We as adults are playing in the sandbox of young people (use social media); should re-envision how young people can play a role in activism

Jamey Bell, Executive Director, Greater Hartford Legal Aid

- Justice system is shut down, but no there is no moratorium on injustice
- Ensure people living in poverty (disproportionally people of color) are not imperiled by the lack of access to justice
- Actively reaching out to clients and community partners
- New legal advice hotline

Sarah Eagan, Connecticut's Child Advocate, Office of Child Advocate

- Concerned surrounding the most vulnerable children in our community: infants, toddlers, their caregivers as well as children with disabilities
- How we can strengthen targeted outreach and support organizations that can do coordinated and collaborative outreach to support parents, pregnant women and people with new babies

- Unmet needs for food; some people do not know where food pantries are located
How can we communicate with people in a way that is accessible to them to ensure information like food service locations reaches those with food insecurity?

Family Support

Toral Sanghavi, Associate Vice President, Management and Analytics, The Village for Families and Children

- Concerned about the impact of stressors on children, what it will do to socio-emotional health
- Access does not mean utilization
 - There is an information overload, but needy families are not getting the information

Statewide Philanthropic Response/Emergency Management Response Representative

Karla Fortunato, President, CT Council for Philanthropy, and member, Governor's Emergency Management Response statewide coordination taskforce

- How are we able to support undocumented friends/neighbors during this time?
- Seeing the fierce generosity that people are coming to these big challenges with is a silver lining

Education

Richard Sugarman, Hartford Promise

- Concern that these urgent needs don't squash the aspirations, hopes and ambitions of young people; equally concerned the adults around them hold onto their expectation and ambition for these students
- Collective action is possible

Faith Organizations

Michael Elfenbaum, Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Hartford, VP of Grants

- Created a food program to get food out to people
- Working with local agencies and synagogues on PPP and transitional operations support
- Launched a campaign to raise funds: \$850 dollars from the community so far

Reflections (0:51:00)

- There is going to be a huge, exacerbated need for eviction prevention, security deposits, mortgage protection, utilities and food
- Things will not go back to normal right away; the impact this will have will be felt for a period of time after, if employment stays at a high rate. Foodshare will likely see lines for 12-18 months after, there will need to be a recovery after the recovery that many need to brace for
- Concern for youth: if they had a lack of opportunities previously, post- COVID they will be competing with adults for those few entry jobs and opportunities

Jay Williams, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

- We will pivot our strategy as we pay attention on the acute, immediate needs as well as pivot to think about intermediate and longer term assistance mechanisms we need to provide
- We will look where we are in June, the resources we have at our disposal, and thus inform our resources for next year to deal with this
- May be a near instantaneous rebound of stock market, but does not translate to the populations we are talking about

Paula Gilberto, United Way of Central and Northeastern CT

- Resilience is critical through all this as is the importance of hope; ensuring the hopes and aspirations of others don't get squashed by all this
- On behalf of partners, ask that we remember this and hold it up; this is the beginning of the conversation

Next Steps Between meetings we welcome your sharing data and developments that we can circulate to the group and post on our websites, as well as suggestions for additional guests to meet with the Council in future meetings.