COVID19 Updates & Report-outs w/ Homeless Service Providers

Friday June 19, 2020 9:00 AM

Meeting Recording:
Topic: COVID19 Updates & Report-outs w/ Homeless Service Providers (April 8-June 30 invite)
Date: June 12, 2020 09:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)
https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/yfROAjtzt9IIIWqfwVvfrQgQKj8T6a82iNN8_RYmB1qGg-vG64zLACySAlgizmh

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Meeting Agenda

Austin/Travis County

COVID19 Updates & Report-outs w/ Homeless Service Providers
June 19th Agenda

- City of Austin / Austin Public Health
- Implementation Team Updates
- Agency Updates
- Wrap Up – Next Call: Wednesday, June 24th @ 9:00am

Meeting Notes:

COA – Laura Foss

- Emergency Operations Center began updating the software on the dashboard yesterday therefore
  - There were intermittent outages and
  - The data was not updated June 18th
  - Dashboard should be up this afternoon
- Data from Wednesday June 17th indicated 4,991 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Travis County; 3,817 recovered; and 109 deaths
- Demographic information on cases available at http://www.austintexas.gov/covid19
  - At least 56 individuals experiencing homelessness have tested positive, including 30 that have recovered
    - The count of cases among people experiencing homelessness is likely an undercount due to private labs and providers not necessarily recording each person’s housing status when they test.
- City has extended stay at home orders till August 19th due to a spike in cases
- Austin/Travis County Health Authority stating **masks when outside the home or in public are recommended and critical to stop the spread of the virus**
• Physical distancing of at least 6 feet between individuals in also recommended

• Quarantine and Alternate Facilities
  o Pro-Lodges 1-4 are operational
    ▪ All Pro-lodges are secure and not open to the public
    ▪ If any agency is interested in learning more about the Pro-lodge operations and services please contact Robert at Robert.Kingham@austintexas.gov
  o If programs have capacity to work with people staying at Pro-Lodge sites, please contact Vella Karmen, vella.karmen@austintexas.gov

• Eating Apart Together (EAT); Food access for people experiencing homelessness
  o Has delivered the following to people experiencing homelessness
    ▪ 37,886 prepared meals
    ▪ 14,000 shelf stable bags of food
      ▪ Contain 7-14 meals in each bag
    ▪ 16,025 shelf stable meals
    ▪ 30 pallets of bottled water
    ▪ 6,000 1-gallon jugs of water
    ▪ 300+ bags of dog food
    ▪ 3,000 face masks
    ▪ 6,000 rolls of toilet paper
    ▪ Hygiene and feminine hygiene products
    ▪ COVID19 educational flyers
    ▪ US Census educational flyers
  o Extended through the end of July
  o Will continue to operate in its current form receiving shelf stable food from the Central Texas Food Bank
  o City has extended its contract with Revolutions Food for prepared meals for 4 additional weeks
    ▪ Will extend to July 21st
  o EAT Initiative will continuing to investigate food access needs for those experiencing homelessness
    ▪ To determine the scope and length of need as a response to COVID19
  o The EAT 123 survey
    ▪ Include information on encampment trash pickup needs
      ▪ EAT has the hopes of providing or increasing trash pickup in the identified locations
    ▪ Or send information to Michelle.miles@austintexas.gov
  o If you want to participate in any aspect of Eating Apart Together Initiative Zach Shlachter at zack.shlachter@austintexas.gov

• Communications Update
  o To reduce technology barrier to accessing testing Austin Public Health has expanded the public testing enrollment to Nurse’s Hotline
    ▪ Those who want to complete the COVID19 public testing enrollment form over the phone can call 512-972-5560
• Once the assessment interview is completed the call taker will assist with scheduling a test
  • Hours for Nurse’s Hotline are
    o 8 AM – 6 PM Monday through Friday
    o 9 AM – 1 PM Saturday
  • Access it here
• City of Austin launched the How to Help Campaign-a new hub for opportunities for Austin community members to help during COVID19 yesterday June 16th
  • If your organization has opportunities for people to help with COVID19 related activities or you know of organizations that do
    • Please sign up on the Hub
    • We are using Give Poles as the platform
    • If you sign up your organization Give Poles is offering a free Silver Account to post your opportunities
  • Between 25 – 30 opportunities currently up with over 2,000 visits to that sight
  • Press release went out this morning
  • You can access the website here
    http://austintexas.gov/department/covid-19-how-help-austin
• City’s committed to a transparent and inclusive budget development process that utilizes resident and stakeholder feedback to ensure budget priorities are being met
  • City’s looking for feedback on the city’s budget through July 1st
  • Access it here https://www.speakupaustin.org/budget-2021
• 2 Upcoming virtual City Forums
  • Will be about available resources including COVID19 testing, food assistance, rental / utility assistance, health / mental health care, and substance use resources
  • One in English held on Saturday June 27th at 11 AM
  • 2nd forum will be held in Spanish on June 27th at 1 PM
• 2nd Community Event focusing on persons of color July 11th
  • More information to come
• Hygiene Update
  • City working with Family Eldercare and The Other One’s Foundation on setting up and maintaining showers at
    • I 35 and 7th
    • The Methodist Church on Guadalupe
    • Slaughter Creek
    • The Other One’s Foundation has a mobile shower making rounds around the city
  • Access it here http://toofound.org/mobile-hygiene-clinic/
- City has it on the basic needs map as well, access it [https://www.austintexas.gov/department/resource-sites-map-covid-19-response](https://www.austintexas.gov/department/resource-sites-map-covid-19-response)

- City is still maintaining the following
  - 4 Tech charging stations for mobile phones and technology
  - 8 food access sites
  - 8 hand washing stations
  - 10 restrooms
  - 14 basic needs sites (any three of those basic needs)

- Downtown Austin Community Court Update (DACC)
  - Continue to offer walk-in triage case management services 8am-5pm Monday through Friday
    - Added a 2nd triage staff member due to the volume of individuals experiencing homelessness requesting assistance
    - Triage case manager provides flyers to all clients with information on COVID19 and safety planning
  - June 17th and 18th DACC served 57 individuals through triage case management
  - And since March 16th they have served 1,550 individuals, an average of 19 individuals a day
    - Individuals accessing basic hygiene resources or client’s case managers reach remotely are not factored into this number

- City’s Homeless Support Strategy
  - Posted an open solicitation for CBDG and ESG Cares Act Funding
  - Seeks qualified applicants from social service providers that can demonstrate experience providing services using Rapid Rehousing, Homelessness Prevention, and/or Diversion Interventions to persons experiencing or at eminent risk of experiencing homelessness in Austin and Travis County
  - Social Service Providers encouraged to submit application by June 24th no later than 12 PM

- HUD Announcements
  - Allocation of $2.96 billion in Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Funding
    - To support homeless Americans and individuals at risk of becoming homeless due to hardships such as job loss, wage reduction, or illness due to COVID19
    - Will be in addition to the $1 billion of ESG grants
  - Released notification that $10.8 million in additional ESG cares funding will be allocated to Austin
    - Waiting on more information on this
ECHO Updates:

- The Approved Austin COVID19 Homelessness Response Implementation Structure Plan
  - Project Management Team spearheading efforts with the joint collaboration between City and ECHO leadership
  - Underneath, made up of and informed by members of the homelessness response system, members of the social service cabinet, executive directors, there is
    - Hotel/Motel Implementation Team
    - Emergency Shelter and Unsheltered Implementation Team
    - Funding Strategies Implementation Team
    - Rehousing Strategies Implementation Team
  - Each is connected to some of the different objectives of the overall plan

- Emergency Shelter and Unsheltered Implementation Team
  - Discussion Items
    - Continuing to address the need for testing in congregate and shelter settings
      - New CDC guidance will be coming out soon
      - NHCHC webinar will be out soon as well but is postponed till CDC guidance is out so in alignment
        - Will share learnings and invite to community members
    - Recent discussions around creating a testing protocol for Emergency Shelters as well as Outreach
      - HealthCare for the Homeless is doing surveillance testing when they have capacity
      - Will update you all
    - Continuing to gather shelter resource needs and nightly bed utilization numbers
    - Prolodge waitlist continues to be staffed
  - Next Steps
    - Hoping to get approval of CDC Guidelines Document developed for our homelessness response system
      - Added addendum around clients that might not be as compliant with CDC guidelines in the shelters
      - Once finalized we will send it out

- Hotel/Motel Implementation Team
  - Discussion Items
    - Identifying funding to fill staffing needs at Prolodges
    - No one from the waitlist was pulled for Prolodges due to a spike in cases in the community which lead to a spike in people entering into the IsoFac that are experiencing homelessness
      - After those people are not contagious while being high risk, might go into Prolodges
• Will try and ensure space is available for them
  ▪ Reviewed Prolodge guest surveys in order to determine participant needs and how to better serve individuals
  • More came in (65)

○ Decisions
  ▪ Reviewed and approved Guest Grievance Policy during the middle of the week
  • So people at the Prolodges can have a way to get their grievances heard by staff

○ Next Steps
  ▪ Develop a plan for decommissioning Prolodges as they are temporary
    • Make sure we serve individuals as best we can
    • Determine end date to know what we are working towards
    • Work to transition Prolodges away from current use
  ▪ Continually talking about staffing plans for operations and onsite services
    • Difficult as it is only a temporary need for staff
    • Figuring out funding and how to get people in the door to staff Prolodges

• Funding Strategies Implementation Team
  ○ Discussion Items
    ▪ City of Austin needs to submit the FY19-24 Consolidated Plan changes to HUD
      • Which needs to be approved with the plans for the first tranche of funding
      • Will need to resubmit again once the plan for the 2nd allocation is finalized
      • Once HUD approved the updated to the consolidated plan, we can then contract out with the RFA awards

○ Decisions
  ▪ Updated the city’s RFA page with information and questions as they have been coming in
    • Thank you for your work City of Austin Public Health’s contracting department
    • Included the approved Priority Population Criteria for COVID19 funds
  ▪ Evaluation criteria tool was approved by the Project Management Team and the appropriate evaluators have received training on RFA and the requirements

○ Next Steps
  ▪ Update Action Plan for Federal Strategies Team to project upcoming deliverables, specifically
    • Around the 2nd tranche of funding
      ○ Finalizing
• Getting the funding out
  • Looking at modeling work and how we suspect tranche 1 funding will affect our community and
  • What needs are currently in our system and where we should prioritize tranche 2 resources

• Rehousing Strategies Implementation Team
  o Discussions
    ▪ How to target the programs being created with COVID19 funds to the needs identified
    ▪ Looking at pros and cons of targeting resources specifically to the Prolodge residents versus the broader CDC high-risk clients
      • Having community discussions before decision in made
  o Next Steps
    ▪ Sharing the pros and cons of the potential different focus populations with the Project Management Team for consideration
    ▪ Determine if there is a consensus decision on the targeting of funds within the Rehousing Team and sharing those recommendations with the Project Management Team
    ▪ Building upon existing system modeling to include tranche 1 funding and project unmet needs for tranche 2

• Project Management Team
  o Recent Discussions
    ▪ Reviewed key discussion points and deliverables provided by Implementation teams
      • Working to synthesize the work across all 4 Implementation teams to ensure there is no duplication of work and
      • There is strategic alignment of work and timelines match
        o So work is not bottlenecked by any one team
    ▪ Discussed plan for modeling Part 2 activities and process
      • Will be a group of ECHO, City staff, and city consultants that will look at
        o Impact of first RFA funds
        o How many people we can expect to serve and house
        o How to strategically deploy the 2nd RFA round of funding
  o Decisions
    ▪ Approved Evaluation tool for RFA 1 released by the City of Austin in response to the 1st tranche of CARES Act funding
    ▪ Approved format and 1st iteration of deliverables identified by each Implementation Team
      • Will guide work completed from 6/1/20 – 7/31/20
    ▪ Agreed on strategy for Modeling Part 2 and approved the participants and activities associated with Modeling Part 2
Next Steps

- Asked Implementation Teams to provide more detailed deliverables from their teams
  - To see what other deliverables and scopes of work they are planning on completing in June and July
  - And the Team’s internal timelines
- Continue to work to help get the voices of lived expertise included in the Implementation phase of work
  - We are doing well in some areas will some need more focus in on
  - We need to give more support to people with lived expertise in order to build access to those spaces
- Continue to focus on racial equity lens of the response
  - Will take place through the modeling and
  - Data collection and the synthesis of the data around racial equity in the Prolodges, unsheltered, and congregate spaces

Agency Updates
None

Chat Box:

From Andrew Willard to Everyone: 10:04 AM
Feel free to drop any comments, questions, or agency updates into the chat!

From larafoss to Everyone: 10:12 AM
For demographic breakdowns and more information, you can visit the http://austintexas.gov/covid19 web site

If any agency is interested in learning more about the Pro-lodge operations and services please contact Robert at Robert.Kingham@austintexas.gov. All Pro-lodge facilities are secure and not open to the public.

If any programs have capacity to serve clients at these Pro-lodge sites, please contact Vella Karman at Vella.Karman@austintexas.gov.

Please include information regarding trash pickup needs for encampments in the EAT Initiative 1,2,3 survey when food is distributed in the community or send this information to michelle.myles@austintexas.gov.

If you are interested in participating in any aspect of the Eating Apart Together Initiative please contact Zack Shlachter (zack.shlachter@austintexas.gov).

To reduce the technology barrier to accessing testing, APH has expanded public testing enrollment to its nursing hotline - 512-972-5560 https://covid19.austintexas.gov/s/?language=en_US
How to Help Campaign:
http://austintexas.gov/department/covid-19-how-help-austin

Budget engagement:
https://www.speakupaustin.org/budget-2021

Hygiene update:
http://toofound.org/mobile-hygiene-clinic/

From larafo to Everyone: 10:12 AM
The City has posted an Open solicitation for CDBG & ESG CARES Act funding
Social service providers are encouraged to submit an application by June 24, 2020 no later than 12 PM CST.


HUD released a notification that $10.8M in additional ESG CARES Act funding will be allocated to the City of Austin (awaiting more details from HUD)