



increased need in the fall and winter – especially of households that are new to the homeless system. Several bills are in consideration through Congress, with the most recent being the HEROES.

- ii. HUD provided waivers for the FY2019-2020 and FY2020-2021 funds and MSHDA applied for all available waivers. The most significant is a waiver to go above FMR and MSHDA chose to set this at 120% in order to stay reasonable enough for households to take over rent at the end of assistance. Increasing this amount will widen the array of available units.
- iii. MSHDA made changes to its ESG policy to allow for funds to be used for hotels and motels as emergency shelter. This change is in response to the nature of the crisis and the need to de-congregate shelters and protect high risk individuals. These funds should be considered alongside other available resources.
- iv. Question from Dennis: Is all this funding working through the CoCs? Is it available to help with prevention?
  1. Answer from Kelly: Yes, CoCs make determinations about how to budget allocated funds and this includes services like prevention. MSHDA has highlighted the need to support homelessness prevention services within ESG budgets. MSHDA also engaged with Detroit recently to discuss how the ESG-CV funding is rolled out and comparing approaches.
- v. Question from Dennis: Is MSHDA engaging with PSH providers regarding increased rent receivables?
  1. Answer from Kelly: Yes, MSHDA is keeping track of financed properties that apply for payment relief. So far (April/May), the data looks good and the vast majority are paying rent. This is likely buoyed by unemployment benefits and once they are gone, we may see an increase.
  2. Dennis asked about comparisons between subsidized and unsubsidized properties (i.e. LIHTC). Kelly said she would try to set up a call on this to discuss further and include management companies.
- vi. Question from Kris: Is there any way to advocate for the deployment of funds more quickly? Communities like hers are struggling to cover costs like hotels with the funding currently available.
  1. Answer from Kelly: MSHDA clarified with HUD how to administratively release the funding and MSHDA is sharing this information with other direct recipients. MSHDA has taken all the necessary steps but cannot release funds until there is a signed grant agreement. As soon as funds are available, MSHDA is encouraging CoCs and local planning bodies to submit for an advance on the funds.
  2. Paula also shared that FEMA reimbursement is notoriously long and drawn out. Paula also noted that ICH leadership could reach out to Beverley Ebersold with USICH and Mercedes Brown with CSH for additional insight on the funding release timeline, as well as any timeline on the additional HUD guidance.
  3. Mercedes affirmed that she can follow up with additional information from CSH's connections to regular conversations in D.C. She also noted that some communities have been able to make funding available now.

Kelly suspects those communities are repurposing existing grant funds, which MSHDA allows under current ESG through grant amendments.

4. Kelly will seek out a time to speak with Beverley Ebersold and share the invitation broadly.
- b. FEMA pre-approval for Non-Congregate Sheltering (NCS)
    - i. Paula shared that the request letter submitted by the state to FEMA was approved May 1 for NCS reimbursement for 3 specific populations: those who are homeless and test positive for COVID-19; those who are homeless, have been exposed to COVID-19, and are awaiting test results; and those who are homeless and considered high risk by the CDC (i.e. over the age of 65, chronic disease). The approval provides 75% reimbursement and requires a 25% match. The state budget office and the Governor's office provided for \$1.8 million in match. This match will be released through a mini-RFP process for local health departments, as most served through these funds will be symptomatic and require support/coordination with local health. Twenty-two applications were received as of Monday (5/18) and the final awards will be determined in the coming weeks.
      1. The state is seeking feedback on any costs incurred prior to May 1 and if these costs will be reimbursed. Any shelter needs that are eligible for FEMA must be paid through other sources. MDHHS and MSHDA developed a one-pager to assist communities in determining which costs are eligible under specific resources.
    - ii. Question from Crissa Blankenburg: Do we know yet which counties have access to the match funds?
      1. Answer from Paula: MDHHS will share the final list of approved communities once it's complete.
      2. Kelly shared that the emphasis is for communities to first use FEMA for every eligible household, which will then free up more funding under ESG to assist with other needs.
  - c. COVID testing update
    - i. Lynn Hedges shared that numbers of positive COVID-19 cases among the homeless population have held steady for the last week – 282 individuals statewide. While testing among sheltered and unsheltered households has been intermittent (directly primarily to symptomatic or exposed), a testing strategy is underway through a new workgroup supported by MDHHS, local health departments, emergency shelters, and MDHHS epidemiology staff. The nature of sheltering requires that isolation and quarantine space is available to meeting any identified needs through testing.
    - ii. There is a concurrent workgroup that is NCS, especially in communities eligible for FEMA match. The group is focused on ensuring responsive supports for any testing results and as households exit from shelter into the next living arrangement.
    - iii. Question from Cylenthia Miller: Are these numbers of positive cases really statewide? If so, it is not tracking in the same way as those who are incarcerated and should really be applauded.
      1. Answer from Lynn: Yes, these are statewide figures and the credit should go to the providers. Detroit has set a great example on the practices for keeping numbers low.

2. Kelly shared that Kent County has the largest number of positive cases right now, followed by Detroit, Kalamazoo, and Oakland. Over 500 homeless individuals have been tested in Detroit and yet the numbers remain low. However, we should expect to see an increase as testing becomes fully implemented.
- d. Forecasting future needs
- i. Kelly shared that over the next couple of months, state partners will compile information to help advocate for additional funding around eviction and foreclosure prevention – especially since we know the need cannot be met with known funding. While it can be difficult to predict, there is data available from a study in Nevada (conducted over multiple years) and more information that can be learned from eviction rates across the state. Currently, Kelly and Paula meet weekly with staff from the Governor’s office and intend to share information through this avenue.
  - ii. Paula shared that MDHHS is paying special attention to the expiring moratoriums for both utilities and evictions. MDHHS is working streamline the SER process so that needs can be addressed quickly and they are also developing another one-pager focused on available eviction prevention funds across multiple sources. For example, CSBG is allocated to community action agencies and has expanded eligibility (120% of federal poverty limit to 200% under the CARES Act funds).
    1. Kelly added that ESG-CV funds allow for an increase to 50% area median income for households seeking homeless prevention assistance (as opposed to 30% under federal regulation). MSHDA is still talking to communities to ensure that the lowest income households are still served.
  - iii. Kris shared the importance of assessing future need in the fall and winter for emergency shelter, especially with ongoing social distancing, diminished capacity within shelters, and the possible resurgence of the virus. Added to this, the timing will likely play out that evictions and foreclosures will increase at the same time. It’s critical for everyone to plan ahead and brainstorm.
    1. Paula added the push nationally for shelter to become more non-congregate in design, which is not financially feasible at this point and will require communities to get creative. She also said the homeless action council, whose membership includes emergency shelters funded by ESP and some HARAs, will seek out support from The Salvation Army and MSHDA to further these conversations.
    2. Kelly added that now is the time for CoCs to discuss other congregate spaces that could be used in the coming months. She encouraged forming additional groups and providing webinars to talk on this topic.
    3. Mercedes added that this is timely given conversations taking place in communities now, like Washtenaw and Detroit.
  - iv. Question from Dennis: There is costs savings for properties that apply for the PPP loans and these savings could translate to rent concessions. His agency is doing it but unsure of others. Is there way to encourage this more broadly?
    1. Answer from Kelly: Yes, discussing this with management companies is a good idea and something to support.

- v. Suggestion from Cylenthia: CoCs should coordinate now with local legal aid and other legal agencies to help with evictions. For example, Detroit is already meeting together on this in order to get ahead.
  - 1. Question from Kris: Do you know how courts plan to respond to the backlog?
    - a. Answer from Cylenthia: Unsure what this will look like, as it will vary by community, but anticipating a slowed down process – especially when coordinating multiple parties through Zoom. Detroit previously saw 150 tenant cases in the morning and 75 in the afternoon. There is no way this could happen now. She will reach out for more information and provide feedback. She also noted that communities must provide a 4 phase plan to the Supreme Court for re-engagement and it must be approved by the Court. This is another reason why it is very important to engage with local legal aid – it helps identify other options for the households to make payment and can help the households move out without a strike on their records. It can also lead to stipulated arrangements.

6. **Adjourn:** Moved by Paula Kaiser Van Dam, seconded by Cylenthia Miller. Approved.