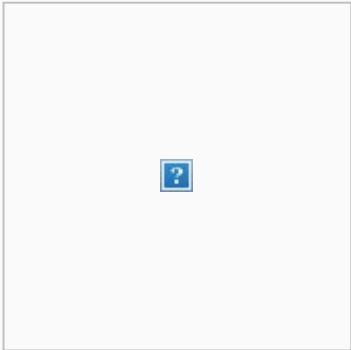


From: [MSHDA-HS](#)
Subject: MSHDA Homeless Solutions Newsletter 3/25/2020
Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2020 10:40:55 AM

[View this email in your browser](#)



From the Office of Homeless Solutions

- *Latest Updates for ESG Grantees*
- *COVID-19 Resource Page on Campaign Website*
- *MSHDA HARA Webinars on Thursday*
- *Where to Direct COVID-19 Questions*
- *MCAH Update: ROIs*
- *Survey from MCAH for CoC and LPBs*
- *Update: BMCC*
- *Got a Question?*

UPDATE: Message to All ESG Grantees

Governor Whitmer issued a ["Stay Home, Stay Safe" order](#) that requires Michiganders to remain in their homes for at least the next three weeks in an attempt to slow the spread of COVID-19. This follows multiple states and cities across the country that have already issued similar orders.

MSHDA and our state partners encourage all individuals experiencing homelessness to seek shelter and for those service agencies to continue to provide services whenever possible. The [CDC](#) and the [National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty](#) recommend ways that communities under a stay at home order

can coordinate and build partnerships to best assist unsheltered individuals or individuals living in places unfit for human habitation, including encampments and vehicles.

This is especially true for HARAs and emergency shelters.

Please consider the following:

Remain open and accessible to those most in need: As a HARA, consider how staff can be still responsive to requests for emergency housing assistance, diversion and mediation, and any way to support households to gain shelter and shelter in place. This is the time to think creatively about providing services in ways that reduce unnecessary contact and travel for all involved. Consider technology where feasible (phone, web-based).

Take steps to ensure safety for everyone: Follow CDC guidance on social distancing, frequent cleaning of spaces and items, lessening congestion in public spaces, and remote work where feasible. You can find this information and more on the [State of Michigan website](#).

Review ESG budgets and consider any changes your CoC or LPB may need: HUD provided guidance on eligible purchases through approved budget lines. You can view this guidance [here](#). If your CoC or LPB would like to adjust budget line items to complete these purchases, please contact your MSHDA Homeless Assistance Specialist.

NEW - Signatures for ESG Forms:

ESG grantees can accept verbal "signatures" on ESG forms during this time.

- Notate as "verbal signature" for each form completed.
- Provide staff initials and date when collecting the verbal signature.

- Track verbal signatures and plan to secure actual signatures on ESG forms when feasible and safe to do so.

Specific HARA Request:

Please submit HARA operation plans to your MSHDA Homeless Assistance Specialist as soon as possible. Specifically, please include any changes to operations during this time and how community members can still access services (i.e. phone assessments, etc).

HCV Homeless Preference - Updates:

- HARAs can secure verbal ROIs for HCV Homeless Preference at this time. Please note the use of verbal ROI on the HCV ROI document.
- Effective 3/20/20, deadlines for re-certifications of homelessness for all current applications will be extended an additional 60 days during the period of the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order. New applications completed during this time will still be subject to the 120-day re-certification deadline and all re-certifications will still need to be completed within the 30-day window prior to the deadline.
- The timeline to complete HCV Homeless Preference applications is extended from **5 days to 30 business days** until further notice.

ESG and Rental Unit Inspections:

- If your agency helps households move into new rental units during the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order, it is still necessary to complete a Habitability Standards Inspection.
- Inspections can be completed virtually as long as the Habitability Standards can be checked and completed in real time. For example, landlords could use Facetime or other platforms to engage directly with agency staff and walk through the unit to demonstrate each requirement

and standard of the inspection checklist.

- Inspections of occupied units can be postponed until the unit can be safely accessed.

Rapid Re-Housing - Extension of Rental Assistance Cap:

MSHDA ESG's six (6) month cap for Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) rental assistance is currently extended to nine (9) months, as needed. Please be aware that without direction from HUD, we cannot extend the rental assistance cap for households accessing homelessness prevention rental assistance.

Thank you all so much for your continued service. MSHDA staff remain accessible to answer questions and provide support during this time.

Stay connected to the latest updates with [HUD](#), the [State of Michigan](#), and the [CDC](#). **Also, please send any ESG questions to the [Homeless Solutions email](#) and we'll work with you as quickly as possible.**

COVID-19 Resource Page on the Campaign Website

The Michigan Campaign to End Homelessness website is now hosting a [new page](#) for homeless service providers to access information regarding COVID-19 from state partners and other national resources.

View the page [here!](#)

This page will be updated regularly as new information becomes available. Please continue to send questions regarding homeless services and COVID-19 to MDHHS-homeless@michigan.gov.

MSHDA ESG HARA Webinar Opportunity: Peer-to-Peer

During this time of rapid change and evolving information, **MSHDA would like to provide HARAs** the space to engage with one another through a **Community of Practice webinar**. MSHDA staff will be available to help answer questions regarding ESG and provide other support as needed, but the focus is on sharing practices, approaches, and ideas from the HARA perspective.

We will offer two webinars times – one for rural-based HARAs and one for urban-based HARAs. HARA staff are welcome to attend both. The goal is to help share relevant information based on similar capacity, community size, and resources. Each will be kept to an hour to honor your time and notes from each discussion will be shared for those who cannot attend. You can register at the links below:

Community of Practice: Rural HARAs

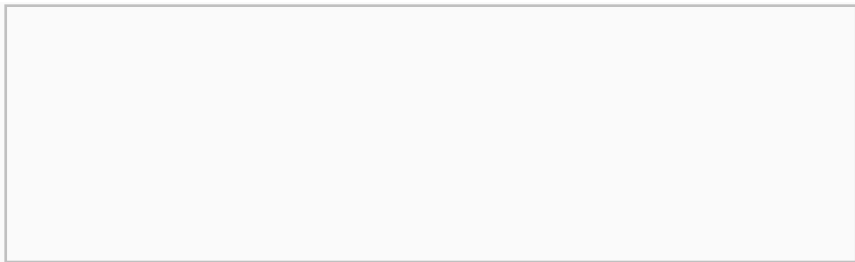
Thursday, March 26 at 10am

Register [Here](#)

Community of Practice: Urban HARAs

Thursday, March 26 at 1pm

Register [Here](#)



Homeless Providers: Where to Direct COVID-19 Questions

In order to best assist homeless providers through this difficult crisis, we want to encourage you to **send any questions you have about the Coronavirus outbreak and providing services during this time to MDHHS-homeless@michigan.gov**. MDHHS Housing and Homeless Services will be working with our state partners to get you the answers you need as quickly as possible.

In addition, we will be routinely sharing frequently asked questions and answers to help broadly share information.

Thank you for all your efforts,
The MDHHS Housing and Homeless Services team



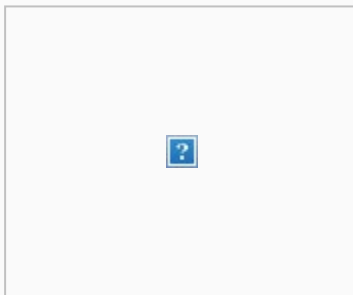
Oral ROI for COVID-19 Intakes in HMIS

MCAH received a critical ask from agencies about how to handle client

intakes in cases where agencies are conducting phone only interviews due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. The following is an oral release of information document that your agencies can use in lieu of getting a signed paper ROI. Of note, this oral ROI was developed specifically for the COVID-19 emergency and should only be used during the pandemic itself. Agencies should revert back to their standard release protocols when they resume normal operations.

[HMIS COVID-19 Oral Release of Information Guidance Document](#)

If you have any questions, please submit them to the [MCAH Help Desk](#).



MCAH, Coronavirus, and You

We are in uncertain times in Michigan. The Coronavirus and the disease it causes, COVID-19, is spreading through our communities. Our government has taken action to try to contain it and many communities are working independently to find ways to protect some of our most vulnerable members.

We all know that individuals experiencing homelessness are going to be some of the hardest people to protect and serve right now.

The Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness (MCAH) is working with

our partners from the [Michigan Campaign to End Homelessness](#), including MDHHS and MSHDA, to coordinate and inform our communities as they work through this unique situation. Things are changing rapidly, and will continue to do so for a long time to come. **We hope in the following days to be able to share resources and information with you and to continue to be your partner throughout this entire public health emergency.**

In the meantime, we are asking that you help us understand how the Coronavirus is affecting your community and what you need to best address the challenges you're facing. **We know it's a busy time, but please take a few minutes to answer these short questions [here](#).** This information will help us and our state partners to understand what we can be doing with our advocacy, coordination, and more to best help Michigan communities.

As we all fight to provide the best care for the people we serve, we at MCAH want to pause to say thank you. Right now you are all making hard decisions and working in difficult circumstances. We are grateful for you and all that you are doing. Thank you.

Stay healthy,

The MCAH team



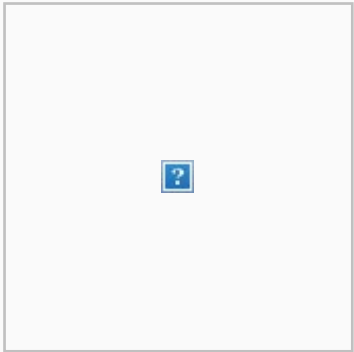
In accordance with Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' [recommendations designed to help prevent the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#), the **Building Michigan Communities Conference scheduled for April 28 – 29 has been canceled.**

The state is taking proactive steps to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in Michigan.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in reducing the risk of coronavirus to Michigan residents.

For current and up-to-date information regarding the Coronavirus visit <http://www.Michigan.gov/Coronavirus> or <http://www.CDC.gov/Coronavirus>.

We are working to process refunds and expect to have that completed by the end of the week.



Got a Question?

We want to hear from you! Send us an [email](#) with questions you have about Homeless Solutions and we'll follow up. If we receive a lot emails with the same question, we'll share the question and response in the next newsletter.

Our mailing address is:

735 E Michigan Ave, Lansing, MI 48909

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