

COVID-19 Information & Resources for Supportive Housing Providers

Good Evening,

First and foremost, we want to thank everyone for your tireless efforts during these trying times. It has been an exhausting couple of weeks and we hope you know that we are so very grateful for everyone and the countless ways that you have all stepped up to meet the needs of Detroit's homeless population during this time of crisis. **We cannot express our appreciation for you enough.**

We know that you have received a lot of information over the past few days about shelter operations in light of COVID-19. **This email is targeted for our Supportive Housing Providers (PSH, RRH, and TH).** We know that your operations have been greatly impacted by COVID-19 as well and so we wanted to provide you with some focused resources and tips. Please know you can always reach out to us at HAND if you have any questions or concerns.

HELPFUL RESOURCES:

- CSH just released a COVID-19 brief targeted specifically to Supportive Housing providers. There's a lot of excellent information in there and we strongly encourage you to check it out. We will highlight some guidance below, but [click here](#) to review the entire brief.
- We also have a shared folder ([click here](#)) and google document ([click here](#)) that both provide a vast array of resources. We will continue to add to these as more things come available. Feel free to add resources to the shared space as you come across them as well. We're all in this together.
- If you need COVID-19 related supplies or assistance, fill out [this form](#) to let us know! As you know, supplies everywhere are limited right now, but we will do the best we can to assist.
- We've created an FAQ to answer your questions that we will continue to update. There are questions answered related specifically to supportive housing. We encourage you to check it out. Access it by [clicking here](#). **And submit your questions [here](#).**
 - Also, the Detroit Health Department has a 24 hour hotline for questions – **313-876-4000**
 - MDHHS similarly has a hotline they operate daily from 8am-5pm – **1-888-535-6136**
 - Lastly, you can submit a question to HUD by emailing answers@hud.gov

STAY IN THE LOOP:

- HAND has created a webpage that highlight's pertinent COVID-19 related information. You can access it at www.handetroit.org/covid19. We will be updating it as new information comes available so keep checking back.
 - At the bottom of the page we highlight important webpages that you should check frequently for updates.

IMPORTANT SYSTEM CHANGES:

- We expect TH and PSH providers who serve clients in congregate settings to follow the shelter guidance provided by the city of Detroit ([linked here](#)). The alternate shelter sites coordinated by the City of Detroit for clients who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 are available to these TH and PSH providers as well.
- MSHDA has modified the HCV process to allow for verbal ROIs and recertifications. They've also extended the application deadline from 5 to 15 days.
- We know that the CoC Board recently approved an RRH policy update which limited financial assistance to CoC and City-funded RRH clients to 12 months. In light of the rising financial uncertainty many Michiganders are facing across the state due to COVID-19, the CoC and the City are relaxing this limit. If an RRH client is nearing 12 months of financial assistance and would be put at risk of returning to homelessness due to the cessation of support, we encourage you to continue providing assistance (up to HUD's 24-month limit) until further notice.
- MSHDA ESG grantees can accept verbal "signatures" on ESG forms until further notice. Just make sure to notate as verbal signature and provide staff initials next to the notation.
- Please note, **CAM is still making referrals to PSH, RRH, and PSH.** If you have vacancies, please report them to CAM and make whatever modifications necessary to work with clients to help get them into housing. Clients are much safer during these times in their own housing unit than in congregate living situations.

TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

We ask that you remember that COVID-19 likely has and will continue to cause a fair amount of stress and anxiety for our clients. They need our support now more than ever. Clients may be experiencing increased anxiety and depression, feelings of isolation, and a sense of overwhelm due to a lack of access to community engagement and resources. Please do not cease contact with them. Here's some things you can do:

- **Educate your clients –**

- Agencies should be educating all clients on the risks related to COVID-19. There's a lot of myths out there and engaging, educating, and supporting our RRH and PSH tenants is the best way to keep them and the community safe. We've linked to some flyers that can help as you work to educate clients ([linked here](#) – the first 4 may be the most useful for your educational purposes). Tenants at higher risk should be engaged individually and educated on what will keep them safe and what they should do if they believe they have been exposed. Those most likely to become seriously ill from the virus includes people who are older and who are managing chronic health conditions such as COPD, cancer, diabetes, heart disease or lung disease.
- **Find ways to engage –**
 - We ask that providers use their discretion when choosing to enter a client's home, asking clients about symptoms and any recent travel. If providers choose to enter the home, we recommend that they keep at least 5-6 feet distance between themselves and the client. If in-person meetings are not possible, we encourage agencies and case managers to continue engaging with RRH and PSH tenants in the safest and most appropriate manner - over the phone, via email or texting, Facebook messaging and other innovative ways of using technology (based on what your agency allows).
- **Help your clients stay housed –**
 - There have been many initiatives released over the passed few days targeted towards ensuring that Michiganders, and Detroiters specifically, do not lose stability amid these tumultuous times. We have provided links to the updates and resources we are aware of. We encourage you to continue to check www.michigan.gov/coronavirus daily for the most up-to-date information.
 - Detroit has taken steps to re-start any shut-off water, prevent future shut-offs, and make water bills more manageable throughout COVID-19. Read more about it by [clicking here](#).
 - Governor Whitmer has expanded unemployment benefits to protect a wider range of people impacted from COVID-19. Read more about it by [clicking here](#). There was also recent communication from the MI Department of Treasury about the potential of additional resources for those laid off due to COVID-19. This communication can be accessed by [clicking here](#). If a consumer loses their job due to COVID-19, we encourage you to have them call the Treasury's Collection Services Center for support at **517-636-5265**.
 - Bagged Meals (breakfast and lunch) are available for families to access while their children are away from school. Read more about it by [clicking here](#). Detroit Public Schools also has an array of other resources posted on their website that could be useful to share with consumers ([access website here](#)).
 - We also urge providers to recognize that clients may experience a change of income during this time. We encourage you to check in with clients about this and to be open to adjusting the rent contribution expected of each household accordingly.
- **Help your clients stay healthy –**
 - Hopefully your agency tracks information regarding tenant health care coverage, their primary care physician, diagnoses, medications and other key health related information. Your case management staff should consider which residents are able to manage their own health and which ones will need extra support in order to be sure they report any symptoms and reach out to appropriate medical personnel as needed.
 - Recognize that your client may also need supplies that they may or may not be able to access. When prioritizing what to provide, know that hand soap and water is the most effective manner to prevent against the spread of the coronavirus. Check in with clients and make sure they have what they need to safely quarantine in their home. If a client is exposed or begins exhibiting symptoms, they will need to be quarantined for 14 days.

Lastly, please don't forget to take care of yourselves. We know this is an extremely stressful time. Please don't forget to check in with yourself and meet your own needs. And don't forget how grateful we are for you and all that you do!