

Webinar from Tuesday, April 21, 2020: Encampment

The following summary highlights some of the talking points that were presented during a stakeholder Webinar that was limited to 30 provider agencies (to test the format and gauge the interest), which is why this summary is provided. Future Webinars will be facilitated by different providers on specific topics. We will also explore using a platform that allows for more participants.

Purpose:

The goal of this limited Webinar is to provide information exchange among service providers on different topics. Today's topic is on Nashville's encampment coordination in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Call Format:

One-hour call.

Presenters each have 10 minutes.

Q&A will be held to the end of the call.

First Presenter: Sally Lott, Coordinated Entry Manager, Metro Homeless Impact Division (MHID)

- **Street to Home**
 - Current outreach coordination that started with outreach supervisors meeting in January – the goal is to set minimum service expectations to ensure every person in encampments/on the street receive the same minimum services.
 - Street to Home focuses on coordination for Coordinated Entry access, geographic coverage, with a main focus on people moving to permanent housing quickly.
- **Currently about 14 organizations are collaborating on Street 2 Home**
 - Grassroots effort to help individuals stay in place, practice social distancing – began with food coordination.
 - Open Table Nashville, Village at Glencliff, Park Center, Mental Health Cooperative, Colby's Army, SAFAW, People Loving Nashville, MHID, The Salvation Army, Shower Up, Shower the People, Second Harvest, Nashville Food Project, The Bridge Ministry.
- **Goal to ensure food needs are met & utilize this as an opportunity to identify additional needs.**
 - Google sheet was created to identify encampments to ensure that gaps are filled, and encampments are not left out.
 - Teams were able to designate themselves as the primary team delivering food and be the point of contact for the camp.
 - Having outreach workers designated to camps also limits everyone's exposure and helps reduce potential for transmission
 - As teams are delivering food boxes, they can also be recording what other needs they are seeing

- 5 large encampments were identified for greater coordination: Jefferson St. Bridge, Tent City, Charlotte Walmart, Chestnut Ave./ASC, Smoke for Less, Madison
- Ingrid created a google form allowing teams to 'order' food boxes for each week. Orders go in on Mondays and Wednesdays for pick-ups on Tuesdays and Thursdays
 - Some teams are using their own food sources
 - Continuing to get feedback to make the process run smoother. Help both outreach workers and people in camps have more consistency
- Meal coordination is also happening with Nashville Food Project. Currently providing 50 meals a day Tues – Friday.
 - Tuesday meals are going to Charlotte Wal Mart. Wednesday-Friday are going to Tent City.
 - Teams pick up meals at 11:30 and then take to camp to distribute
 - Currently working on expanding this effort.

That's a general overview of the food box coordination and the food coordination. The goal is to keep these coordination efforts going even after the crisis. I am trying to continue to get feedback to improve.

For feedback, please email sally.lott@nashville.gov

Second Presenter: April Calvin, Director of Social Services, The Salvation Army (TSA)

- TSA is a disaster relief organization. Typically, a whole team of TSA officers deploy to a location to address a disaster (example: the tornado). In this situation, where COVID-19 is a national disaster, there is not a team that deploys to Nashville because everybody helps in their own state or location.
- TSA deploys a mobile canteen to provide hot means at 2-3 encampments per day. TSA also deploys hygiene kits. TSA also provides emotional and spiritual care for people affected directly by a disaster and for workers/first responders.
- TSA is applying for resources through the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). We are in daily communication with OEM, TEMA and FEMA about what we see on the ground and what the needs are.
- It is not just TSA to design these needs. TSA compiles these needs with input from the community and moves them up to OEM or FEMA.
- Major Frizzell likes to focus on community resilience on how to utilize community resources and move the entire community forward. He would hate to see the stimulus funds come to Nashville and we go back to doing business as usual, missing the opportunity to move us to the next level.
- TSA is looking how to create a local flex team. As mentioned earlier, usually in a disaster TSA deploys people from other areas in the country to come in and help, but with a national pandemic everyone is staying in place to address their own local needs. TSA is working closely with Neighborhood Health and has reached out to Brian Haile. Looking at how to deploy vehicles for transportation.
- TSA requested funding for encampments including (among other things) generators, battery packs, hot spots, iPads – things to help with tele health, unemployment and other service connections in encampments. Those requests are submitted to OEM/TEMA and FEMA (funneled up the chain). In a pandemic, the response is slower than in a typical disaster because of the national aspect of the crisis.

- Major Frizzell was appointed to head a state task force on homelessness prior to the tornado and the coronavirus pandemic. He's been working on this for months and was now activated by the state to coordinate around homeless encampments.

Third Presenter: Brian Haile, CEO of Neighborhood Health:

Neighborhood Health has taken the lead in creating a Pandemic Handbook for Outreach Workers Visiting Encampments. This guide has been posted on the National Health Care for the Homeless Council: <https://nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Pandemic-Handbook-for-Outreach-Workers-Apr-2020-v07.pdf>

- What we put together is the first of its kind in the country. The handbook meets several goals: first part to make sure is that outreach workers who visit encampments, keep those numbers as low as possible because we could be leaving more than food supplies, we could be leaving COVID-19.
- When we go out there, we need to make sure we take all appropriate precautions so we're not putting anyone at risk.
- This is a huge effort of solidarity. We are all in this together. Neighborhood Health (NH) offers support. Anyone may call NH at 615-227-3000 to get assistance.

Brian Haile went through the different sections of the handbook:

- How to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and the appropriate sequence of putting it on and taking it off.
- The sensitivity of how to approach an encampment to protect people in the encampment as well as be protected. NEVER EVER lower your mask... those kinds of tips are included. It may feel natural to do so in certain situations, but the handbook points out why that is not appropriate.
- What to look for in COVID-19 and what to do if someone shows symptoms. Where to get for help, when to call 9-1-1, etc. Never transport someone that you think is infected. Call Neighborhood Health and we can help you figure out how to assist the individual.
- How to protect yourself if you think you have been exposed. If you are practicing good hygiene, properly use PPE and follow this guide, the risks are lowered. But if you still have concerns, Neighborhood Health is here to help and support you and your family.

There have been several questions since this handbook was put together and published. Neighborhood Health is working on an updated version to be published in two weeks. That version will address some of the questions that have come in and include additional information (for example, harm reduction).

Q&A: facilitated by Traci Pekovitch, Special Teams Program Director, Mental Health Cooperative

Open Table Nashville: The Salvation Army talked about deploying vehicles and also getting generators and hotspots into encampments. Would these be available to larger camps or would they rotate by utilizing the vehicles?

April Calvin: The discussions are still going on and include working with Brian at Neighborhood Health to ensure that COVID is not transmitted through the touch of the material (battery packs, etc.). The main

goal was to use the vehicle as a charging station. If you have any suggestions or helpful thoughts, we're open to all of that.

Park Center: 1. Is there universal testing for camps and shelters? 2. Are other organizations looking into hazard pay? 3. Is there a community effort to help people sign up for the stimulus checks?

- Brian Haile: Right now, Metro it's still a symptoms-driven testing protocol. Neighborhood Health is also in talks with federal government entities to look into the possibility quick tests would bring.
- Traci Pekovitch: MHC has a rep payee service. At this point, we frankly need access to Internet to get online. There is still a question out there to clarify whether stimulus checks would come to payee services or to individuals directly.
- April Calvin: That's another reason we have the hot spots and battery packs to charge up phone to help people with the refunds. That would be a great opportunity for them to fill out the online form.
- Jesse Call has been doing this a lot with The Contributor vendors. Contact him with questions.
- Matt Preston: our financial empowerment team is consistently making itself available, go to the Website where there is an online form. To make an appointment, go to fec.nashville.gov or call 615-748-3620. You can have folks call and work with a counselor to talk about whether to file, how to do it, and how to receive funds with you don't have a bank.

People Loving Nashville: We're getting a lot of questions about how to access counseling and employment services. Is there already something in place and could the iPad used for telehealth be part of the employment counseling?

Judith Tackett: The initial focus has been on food distribution, gauging need, and access to health care. But this is a good point. MHID will look into available opportunities and send information back out.

United Way: Is there an opportunity to get out resource cards to encampment through the food distribution coordination?

Sally Lott: Yes. Just today, we are picking up laminated information cards that Brian showed in his presentation about basic information of how to access Neighborhood Health Services and Mobile Crisis. Those will then go out to food boxes. If anyone has material that should go out, send Sally an email at sally.lott@nashville.gov, and she will make sure it gets out.

A summary of this call will be posted online at www.homelessnashville.com

We will be sending out a survey after the call to gain feedback.

Signed off at 11:30 am