

**CHAPA
COVID-19 Affordable Housing Response Meeting
Friday, May 15th, 2020 at 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.**

For the most updated information on affordable housing and the COVID-19 crisis, visit:
<https://www.chapa.org/housing-news/covid-19-affordable-housing-updates>

Notes

Welcome

Rachel Heller, CEO, CHAPA

Heller welcomed everyone to our tenth weekly call and reiterated CHAPA's intention to keep the community informed and updated on all housing and non-housing issues, resources and solutions. Heller acknowledged the work of everyone on the call for their tireless work to secure safe and affordable housing and communities for all.

Federal Update & HEROES Act

Kim Johnson, Policy Analyst, National Low Income Housing Coalition

Johnson reported that the House of Representatives passed the HEROES Act on May 12th. The \$3 trillion bill includes almost \$200B in additional funding for housing and homelessness programs to help communities respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Key funding priorities included \$100B in emergency rental assistance through the "Emergency Rental Assistance Act and Rental Market Stabilization Act", \$11.5B to prevent and respond to COVID-19 outbreaks among people experiencing homelessness, and a national, uniform moratorium on evictions for all renters. Other proposals contained in the bill include funding for 100,000 new emergency housing vouchers, \$5B for Community Development Block Grants, \$300M for rural rental assistance and additional funding for public housing providers to offset increased costs and lower revenues after rental adjusts reflecting decreased incomes. For the full text of the legislation, including a detail on all housing priorities, NLIHC has published an overview of the [Housing and Homeless Provisions of the HEROES Act](#).

Recognizing that passing this legislation in final form remains an uphill battle, Johnson encouraged the audience to contact members of Congress to advocate for these housing priorities in the final relief package.

[Link to Kim Johnson's slides](#). For any questions, Johnson can be reached at kjohnson@nlihc.org

Federal Update

Ryan Dominguez, Senior Policy Analyst, CHAPA

Dominguez thanked Johnson and her colleagues at NLIHC for their tireless advocacy for housing and homelessness priorities as well as keeping us up to date on data analysis and the recent waivers that benefit MA.

The New England Housing Network completed policy meetings last week with key staffers at HUD and several Congressional committees including Appropriations,

Finance, THUD, and banking in both the House and the Senate. Dominguez reported strong support for all housing related provisions of the HEROES bill as well as the 4% LIHTC fix although the latter did not make it into this legislation. David Gasson of Boston Capital indicated that Speaker Pelosi and Chairman Neal are both supportive of the LIHTC correction but stated that it did not fit within the suite of emergency priorities in the current bill. Gasson indicated that advocates are working now with the Senate to include this priority in any bill coming out of the Senate. Dominguez added that there remains the opportunity to consider this fix in the tax extenders that will come up at the end of the year.

Senator Elizabeth Warren hosted a call on housing and homelessness in the time of COVID-19. Rachel Heller introduced Senator Warren who spoke about her housing priorities, in general, and about her immediate priorities in response to COVID-19 as embodied in the HEROES bill.

Dominguez encouraged the audience to reach out to our Senators and committee chairs to support our housing advocacy and has provided [the New England Housing Network Housing Priorities](#) as well as [Projected Needs and Costs for Rental Assistance by State](#).

The COVID Community Data Lab

Callie Clark, Director of Policy, MHP's Center for Housing Data (the Center)

Clark provided an update on the launch of the [COVID Community Data Lab](#) (the Data Lab), a collaboration among the Center, Boston Indicators (The Boston Foundation) and the UMass Donahue Institute (UMDI).

The Data Lab is a research partnership using real time data, including many “non-traditional” sources, and establishing baselines so that changes in people’s day to day lives can be measured as policy shifts occur as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Six areas of impact are being measured including equity analysis, housing, economic impact, social assistance, mobility patterns and census 2020. The partners each took the lead across different sectors with UMDI’s [Donahue Data Dash](#) providing data and analysis on racial disparities in health impacts of COVID cases. The housing analysis, created by the Center, can be found at [housing trends](#). Clark referenced examples of “out of the box” data such as 211 calls to provide data on social assistance demand and MBTA ridership to determine mobility and traffic volume.

Focusing on the housing section, Clark reported that Data Town established baseline tracking along a number of indicators including rent and mortgage payments, eviction filings and the state of the housing market. To date, a few key findings supported by the data include stability in rent collection in April and May, possibly due to public assistance. With regard to the spring housing market, data indicates homes are on the market for a longer period of time and median prices have fallen. Eviction rates will be closely watched when the moratorium expires on August 18, 2020 or 45 days from the end of the state of emergency, whichever comes first. With this new tool in place, Data Town will be closely monitoring trends in all sectors as new policies are enacted.

Clark referenced the MAPC report on [COVID-19 Layoff Housing Gap](#) which is used in the Data Lab analysis. Data from all indicators will be used to report on COVID-19 related health impacts for the annual Housing Report Card as that resource is “re-imagined” for next year’s publication.

For questions on data, or suggestions on additional sources of data to include, Clark invited all to reach out to by email to Callie Clark at cclark@mhp.net or Tom Hopper at thopper@mhp.net or tweet them at [@mhpdata](https://twitter.com/mhpdata).

Housing Authority Updates

Colleen Doherty, Executive Director, Taunton Housing Authority & Chair of MassNAHRO’s Housing Committee

Doherty provided an overview of the responses of local housing authorities (LHAs) to the challenges they are face in light of COVID as providers of homes to vulnerable older populations.

Doherty opened her remarks on an upbeat note expressing her delight for the several significant “wins” including Governor Baker’s very recent submission of his supplemental budget to the legislature. Doherty thanked partners Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI), Mass Union of Public Housing Tenants (Mass Union) and others for their advocacy for the LHAs noting that the increase in funds will go a long way to keep residents safe and properties operational.

Doherty also acknowledged the work of DHCD in developing procedures for timely rental adjustments. And, notably, with a shout out to Ben Stone, Associate Director of Public Housing at DHCD, Doherty acknowledged the recent delivery of pallets of 3M masks by the National Guard to shelters and housing authorities for distribution to both residents and staff. Stone was also credited with arranging delivery of cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer, an “amazing lift” according to Doherty. The deliveries could not have happened without support of both DHCD leadership and the National Guard.

Property operations have changed during COVID to assure the health and safety of all residents. Doherty indicated that LHAs are going the extra mile to reach out to residents thorough weekly phone calls, Facebook connections and websites to connect residents to all any service they may need, including food drops. On a day to day basis, maintenance staffs continue to sanitize the properties following current best practices. This is especially critical with mid and high rise buildings which house some of the most vulnerable populations.

Doherty closed on a high note, applauding the LHA partnerships with DHCD, Mass Union, MLRI and others which have only grown stronger during the pandemic as everyone in the public housing community works to assure safe housing for all residents.

State Updates

Eric Shupin, Director of Public Policy, CHAPA

Echoing Doherty's comments on the Governor's supplemental budget, Shupin reported that Governor Baker had filed a \$1B spending bill to cover incurred and expected costs related to COVID-19. Needs of the LHAs and shelters are included within this budget. Shupin indicated that CHAPA will advocate for up to \$15M for LHAs with partners Mass Union and Mass NAHRO.

To date, no time table has been announced by House and Senate leadership on the timing for the remainder of the current legislative session. Shupin expects that the House Ways and Means Committee will take up the supplementary budget followed by a review of funding guidance under the CARES Act. To date, MA has received \$2B for the FY 2020 State budget. While it remains unclear what programs can be added to this budget, CHAPA will be advocating for LHAs, shelters and \$50M for an increase to RAFT.

As the call was about to end, Shupin noted that DHCD had just posted a NOFA for non-entitlement communities that includes \$10M of CDBG funds to be used for rent loss and mortgage assistance and \$9.65 M for microenterprise assistance, also for entitlement communities. Deadline for application is June 5, 2020 and details about the [NOFA](#) are on the link.

Discussion/Q&A

Next Meeting scheduled for May 22nd from 2:30-3:30