



October 6, 2021

## Town Bills Report

- Town fund = \$44,990.64
- General Assistance Fund = \$84,130.39
- TOTAL: in expenditures = \$129,121.03

## General Assistance

***A monthly grant for Urbana residents who are disabled or out of work, alongside support to seek/train for work or apply for federal disability payments (SSI)***

- 63 current participants (down from 70 last month)
- 9 are homeless
- 41 males / 29 females / 0 transgender or gender non-conforming
- **Education and Employment Track:**
  - We have a number of participants who have successfully completed two months at Salt and Light and are eligible to earn hours working towards educational and training goals.
- **Disability and Wellness Track:**
  - 9 residents have been helped to date with intensive SOAR case management.
  - With support and guidance from Land of Lincoln, CTSO is beginning to support general assistance participants through the beginning stages of the SSI/SSDI appeals process. 3 residents are in the process of working with case managers to receive assistance with reconsiderations.
  - Participants in need of regular doctoring are being supported by case managers with filling out new patient paperwork. Having recent medical documentation will greatly benefit GA participants in the disability application process.
- **Transportation Assistance**
  - Based on our outreach, we have provided 30 annual bus passes at \$60 each, and signed up 35 people for DASH passes. DASH passes are free, saving the Township \$2,100 in annual bus pass fees.

## Rental Assistance

***Rental assistance for Urbana households behind on rent or homeless moving into housing.***

- 6 households were supported with CTSO Rental Assistance last month (up from 3 last month). These were payments made to households that were not COVID impacted or

were homeless and needed move-in assistance.

- CTSO is supporting residents in packaging and tracking their [Emergency Rental Assistance through RPC](#). We have recently experienced a spike in ERA applications as the eviction moratorium ends.

## Eviction Tracking & Prevention

***New CTSO initiative to reduce the number of evictions in Urbana through advocacy for residents threatened with illegal or legal evictions.***

- 65 eviction cases, 49 as first appearances, were heard Monday, October 4th, after the eviction moratorium expired. CTSO staff began to attend eviction court starting on August 2, 2021 to assist residents with connecting with local resources.

## Utility Support

***Utility bill support for Champaign County residents who do not qualify for other support programs.***

- 11 households helped last month - the vast majority are for shut offs.
- Our UU Utility fund is exhausted and we are now using our reserve of Angel Donor funds.

## Housing Advocacy & Housewarming

***Housing advocacy for participants who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to access all available subsidized housing opportunities, and help for homeless residents to furnish their new homes.***

- 204 participants representing 129 households received help applying to subsidized housing since our advocacy program began July 1, 2020.
- 43 households have successfully moved in or 33% of those helped to apply.
- Pinewood is a new 25 unit development in Urbana specifically serving residents who are disabled and are awaiting SSI determinations and those on the Statewide Referral Network. This population is one of the most at risk for homelessness as their disability prevents them from working and yet they are in a lengthy process to receive federal disability payments. To date, CTSO has provided 9 referrals for Urbana residents who meet this criteria.
- The Housing Authority has received 163 vouchers for homeless and high risk residents. 50 are expended and the rest must be used by December 31, 2021. September 6, CTSO started making referrals to this program. Our office has screened 117 people, and made 31 referrals to this program. CTSO represents 60% of all referrals.
- 17 homeless households have been assisted with the Township Housewarming, since the program began in February, 2021. It is entirely funded by private donations which are used to provide vouchers to formerly homeless households to buy furniture and

housewares at Salt and Light and Habitat for Humanity Restore. We have a partnership with HACC to offer Housewarming to their re-entry participants.

## Bridge to Home Rapid Rehousing

***A rapid rehousing program providing housing stabilization and up to 12 months of rent for literally homeless individuals and families in Champaign County, referred by Centralized Intake for the Homeless.***

- Last month we served 4 households with rapid rehousing services and 2 households moved into housing. We have 1 more referral in process.
- We are currently seeking a change in our ESG grant that will allow us to expand our street outreach and emergency housing services in light of significant service reductions at CU at Home.

## Emergency Housing

***Emergency Housing for families with children in Urbana schools of Crisis Nursery or residents with disabilities who are referred from CU at Home.***

- Total served to date: 36 households including 38 adults and 44 children (since July 2020)
- Currently served: 6 households.
- One household who moved from the hotel to the properties on August 26, 2021 moved out using a CTSO Rapid Rehousing voucher on September 26th.
- Progress this month: installing all new flooring, safety review of all program units, 35 volunteers cleaned and set up the apartments, 5 press pieces.

## Digital Inclusion Campaign

- Last month we held two events in the garden to sign participants and community members who qualify up for Lifeline phone benefits with unlimited talk text and data. Approximately 45 people signed up for the benefits.
- We have helped 25 Urbana households sign up for the Emergency Broadband Benefit which provides \$50 off their home internet service (essentially making the service free).
- In conjunction with the UI Community Data Clinic and PCs for People, we helped 11 participants access free laptop computers and portable hotspot benefit with free internet.

## Bucket Brigade

**Bucket Brigade is a collaboration with Channing Murray Foundation to provide a weekly food pantry delivery service to low income residents who request it.**

- Since the Bucket Brigade was launched with its first delivery on March 25, 2020, the

volunteer brigade has made 1543 deliveries to 4532 people, 1792 of them children.

- We are currently averaging about 10 Urbana households per week.
- **The Bucket Brigade has been entirely funded out of the Angel Donor fund to date. I propose that starting October 1, 2021, the Bucket Brigade be funded by Township funds through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Channing Murray Foundation. The MOU is currently before the town board.**

## Solidarity Gardens

*Solidarity Gardens CU is a collaborative project to reduce food insecurity in Champaign-Urbana by supporting existing and new gardens to produce food to those in need. The project provides seeds, tools, technical support, mini grants, and a distribution network, to Solidarity Gardens affiliates.*

- Solidarity Gardens Collaborative has developed an affiliate program and designed a mini-granting process to support gardens.
- Thanks to support from the Housing Authority's YouthBuild program, the Township garden is being rebuilt this month. YouthBuild also constructed two raised beds at the Wood Street garden last month.
- Thanks to the City of Urbana Landscape Recycling Center for a donation of soil,
- Thanks to Development Services Center for weekly support watering, weeding and helping maintain the garden beds.
- Thanks to the Urbana Public Arts program, the Township garden is getting a sunflower-themed shade sail to provide much needed shaded seating in the garden.
- We are planning a Harvest Festival in the garden on Saturday, October 23rd.
- **Solidarity Gardens is coordinated by Sola Gratia Farm - and this coordination was funded last year in part by the Consolidated Social Service Fund. I propose that starting October 1, 2021, Sola Gratia Farm be resourced to coordinate Solidarity Gardens through a Memorandum of Understanding with CTSO. This MOU is currently before the town board.**





**Thank you Housing Authority YouthBuild, Developmental Services Center, and City of Urbana Public Arts Program and Landscape Recycling Center for support with Solidarity Gardens!**