



Cunningham Township

Danielle Chynoweth, Supervisor

205 WEST GREEN ST • URBANA, IL 61801

(217) 384-4144 • FAX: (217) 367-7063

WWW.CUNNINGHAMTOWNSHIP.ORG

Cunningham Township Supervisor's Memo March 9, 2022

Town Bills Report

- Town fund = \$36,997.80
- General Assistance Fund = \$56,578.40
- TOTAL in expenditures = \$93,576.20

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)

- 62 current participants
- 10 are homeless
- 38 males / 23 females / 1 transgender resident

Education and Employment Track

- We currently have 1 participant on our education track who is enrolled in online classes, 3 searching for educational opportunities, and 11 in the process of intakes.

Disability and Wellness Track

- 8 participants have been awarded SSI/SSDI since July 1, 2021.
- 16 participants were awarded SSI/SSDI last fiscal year.
- 14 residents have been helped to date with intensive SOAR case management since our program started September 1, 2020.
 - 10 applications have been submitted, 2 are close to completion. One case can take between 40-100 hours.
 - Our SOAR case manager is continuously assessing current and potential participants for the SOAR program.
 - She is also registering for SSA appointed representative services, which gives “real time and up-to-date access to your claimant's electronic folders for cases pending at the initial, reconsideration, hearings, and appeals levels.”
 - CTSO is supporting participants through the SSI/SSDI appeals process. 2 reconsiderations have been submitted and 1 is in progress.
- Case managers are currently in the process of registering all housing insecure participants on the disability track on the Statewide Referral Network (SRN).

Transportation Assistance

- MTD began charging bus fares again in July 2021.
- YTD: 43 annual passes at \$60 = \$2,580.
- 45 DASH passes, which are free for those who qualify, saving Township \$2,700.

Vaccination Assistance

- CTSO is offering \$50 to any current CTSO participant who presents a complete vaccination card at CTSO and \$25 for each child.
- 41 participants have received this incentive (out of 99 possible), same as last month.
- We are likely at a place of diminishing returns with this program which will continue with reminders to participants in their update appointments.

Rental Assistance

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

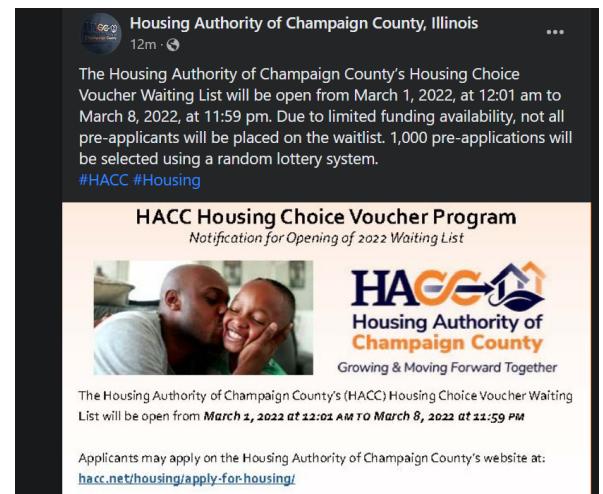
- 8 households were supported with CTSO Rental Assistance last month.
- Until further notice CTSO offers up to 3 months of rent as assistance within a 12 month period. Due to pandemic conditions, there is no minimum income requirement for support with back due rent.
- Last month, our staff met with [Bridgewater Sullivan Community Life Center](#) staff to learn how to package applications for rental assistance from COVID-impacted residents.

Housing Advocacy

Housing advocacy for participants who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to access all available subsidized housing opportunities and move in.

Subsidized Housing Advocacy

- 284 participants representing 173 households received help applying to subsidized housing since our advocacy program began July 1, 2020.
- 70 households have successfully moved in or 40% of those helped to apply.
- 112 households experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity were called when the Housing Choice Voucher Waitlist opened, resulting in 32 families being assisted with the application process, while others used the information to apply themselves.



Pinewood Transitional Housing

- Pinewood is a 24 unit development in Urbana specifically serving residents who are disabled and are awaiting SSI determinations and those on the Statewide Referral Network.
- 13 referrals have been made for Urbana residents on GA and 7 received housing.

COVID Housing Vouchers

- The Housing Authority has received 163 vouchers for homeless and high risk residents. 50 of these were distributed in the first round, housing many of participants who had been unhoused. September 6, CTSO started making referrals for the second round of 113 “EHV vouchers.”
- CTSO made 76 referrals for EHV.
- To date, 35 of those CTSO referrals have received these vouchers.

Housewarming Gifts

- Housewarming gifts are 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.
- 27 homeless households have been assisted with the Township Housewarming, since the program began in February, 2021.

Bridge to Home - Homeless Services

A continuum of services for the homeless at CTSO that includes street outreach, emergency housing, tenant based rental assistance, support accessing market rate and subsidized permanent housing – accompanied by housing stabilization services.

Street Outreach

- CTSO has engaged with 46 residents who were unsheltered prior to the opening of CU at Home’s Low Barrier shelter December 27, 2021; a very few remain unsheltered.

Emergency Housing

- **If no other shelter option exists, short term emergency housing will be considered as long as the resident is meeting with a case manager, pursuing goals, and seeking permanent housing.**
- Last month 6 individuals were sheltered in a hotel. One individual exited to CU at Home’s Emergency Shelter.

Good Morning! Hot Breakfasts for Homeless Residents

To support residents in the shelters, CTSO launched a hot breakfast delivery at the three shelters operated by CU at Home.

Our partners at Piato's Catering, Red Herring Restaurant, and Bridgewater Life Sullivan Center alternate in heating and delivering pre-made hot breakfast sandwiches plus fruit to 100 residents.

It is important to start the day with a warm, protein rich meal.



Rapid Rehousing

- CTSO provides 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.
- 6 active households. 5 households are single males. 1 household is a married couple with no children.
- 4 of those households are in housing and working or actively looking for employment.

Emergency Housing for Urbana families

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: 43 households including 46 adults and 68 children (since July 2020)
- Last month we served 6 households. 2 Families have moved out of emergency housing. 1 exited with an Emergency Housing Voucher. We are currently serving 8 Urbana children with housing.

Utility Support

Utility bill support for Champaign County residents who face shut offs.

- 112 households served since program start Nov. 2020
- 87 households served this fiscal year
- 4 Households helped last month (Compared to 2 in January '22 8 in December, 11 in November, 18 in October, 10 in September and 15 in August).
- Dozens were referred to RPC's LIHEAP & the new COVID relief Water/Sewer Assistance.

Eviction Tracking & Prevention

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

- 18 visits to eviction court to help residents facing eviction apply for support.
- Below is a table that shows the data we have collected on the volume of eviction hearings in Champaign County that have occurred since the expiration of the eviction moratorium on 10/3/21. (NOTE: Not every first appearance is a unique case, sometimes due to errors in filing, first appearances have to be rescheduled, etc.)

Champaign County Eviction Court		
Date	1st Appearance*	Total Cases
10/4/21	49	65
10/12/21	6	11
10/18/21	13	31
10/25/21	31	48
11/1/21	34	59
11/8/21	57	64
11/15/21	17	30
11/22/21	36	56
11/29/21	34	44
12/6/21	24	60
1/3/21	40	73
1/10/22	23	49
1/18/22	16	26
1/24/22	23	57
1/31/22	20	50
2/7/22	28	72
2/14/22	11	31
2/28/22	40	101
TOTAL	509	970

Digital Inclusion Campaign

A campaign to supply low income Urbana residents with smartphones, computers, tablets, and internet access.

- Distributed to date:
 - # Smart Phones and Lifeline service: 123
 - # Internet benefits: 18
 - # Laptops/tablets: 23
- This month's events:
 - On March 11th and 25th we will have two phone events at Lincoln Square Mall outside of Common Ground Co-op from 12pm-6pm

Bucket Brigade

CTSO funds Channing Murray Foundation to provide the Bucket Brigade weekly food pantry delivery service to low income residents who request it.

- We are currently averaging delivery to 15 Urbana households per week.
- Bucket Brigade served over 276 neighbors last month, of them 98 were children.
- BB has served 5,548 people including 2,051 children since we started on March 25, 2020.
- We have noticed a desire for a wider range of hygiene and household items to be included with delivery, and we are refining/expanding our request system through our online sign-up form to fulfill individual requests for things like Toilet-paper, shampoo, dish soap and other essentials.

Solidarity Gardens

Solidarity Gardens grows and gathers healthy food and nourishes creative community in Urbana-Champaign by coordinating residents and affiliate gardens through land access, education, events, funding, supplies, and volunteer support. CTSO funds Sola Gratia to coordinate the Solidarity Gardens collaboration.

- Solidarity Gardens Collaborative launched its affiliate garden and granting program on March 5 with an afternoon convening of representatives from gardens interested in becoming affiliates and donating produce for free to community members in need.



- **Gardens interested in becoming an affiliate and applying for up to \$500 in support can email Fiona Monro at Sola Gratia for materials: solagratiayoutreach@gmail.com**
- Interested and participating gardens attending the meeting included:
 - Lierman Avenue Community Garden
 - Randolph Street Community Garden
 - Habitat for Humanity Garden
 - Japhia Ramkumar's Solidarity Garden Plot
 - Wesley Foundation Garden
 - CU Public Health Give Back Garden
 - Wood Street Neighborhood Garden (operated by CTSO)
 - Meadowbrook Solidarity Garden
 - Victory Park Solidarity Garden
 - Douglass Park Solidarity Garden
 - Cunningham Township Community Garden

Low Barrier Winter Emergency Shelter

The Low Barrier Winter Emergency Shelter provides safe, warm, shelter space for homeless residents dealing with mental health of substance abuse.

- The LBS is operated by CU at Home and funded by CTSO, Champaign County, the Cities of Champaign and Urbana, and guided by a Steering Committee chaired by the Cunningham Township Supervisor.
- The shelter staff trained starting December 20th and opened to the public December 27th.
- Male identified residents stay at New Covenant Church for men and female identified residents at First Presbyterian Church.
- CTSO's Street Outreach team is actively engaged with a number of residents in the LBS, working on options for detox or substance abuse counseling, as well as housing.
- Last month, the LBS regularly had 3-5 more men wanting to access shelter than beds available. CU at Home has opened additional space at 70 E. Washington to accommodate.
- In late February, due to a sewage issue at the shelter, the men's LBS was relocated for three nights to CU Public Health with cots and blankets from the Red Cross - huge thanks to Public Health!

Source of Income Protections

HB 2775 would prohibit discrimination against tenants based on their source of payment, such as using a housing voucher. The bill passed the Illinois House last Fall and is awaiting action in the Senate. The Town Board voted unanimously to support a resolution in support of the bill. As Township Supervisor working with numerous tenants struggling to find housing with vouchers, I convened a meeting to discuss the bill with Senator Bennett (co-sponsor) and local advocates to discuss strategies for passage. Read more:

<https://www.housingchoicepartners.org/soi-campaign>

Get My Refund Campaign

CTSO received a \$20,000 grant from the Heartland Alliance to conduct outreach to Urbana low income Urbana residents to help them access Stimulus Funds, Child Tax Credits, Earned Income Tax Credits, and Child care tax credits. We are partnering with the VITA program supported by the UI College of Business who will prepare taxes through April 15, 2022. CTSO is providing support in setting up bank accounts, accessing photo IDs and social security cards, and providing an address for homeless residents. Other partners so far include University YMCA, Urbana Free Library, Urbana School District. Since March 1, we have:

- Mailed 270 flyers to low income residents
- Posted 30 yard signs
- Sent out an eblast to 995 contacts
- Worked with Urbana School District to send out an eblast to their list
- Send e-blast resources to other partners such as the Office of State Representative Carol Ammons and Silverwood Hearts
- Received requests for help from 24 participants

Get your tax refund!
FREE Tax Preparation



Get money back from your tax returns to cover your essential needs. You might receive up to thousands of dollars by claiming tax credits like Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit.

FREE tax help is available to individuals with low to moderate income, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and those with limited English speaking ability.

Filing your taxes is as easy as 1-2-3.

1. Bring your documents (*any tax forms received, a photo ID, and social security cards for all dependents*) to Salt & Light **by April 8** (*see the hours of operation below*)
2. Answer a few short questions from our trained volunteer
3. We'll contact you when your tax returns are ready for pickup

Questions? Contact Cunningham Township: (217) 384-4144.

Tuesday 1-7 pm | Wednesday-Saturday 1-5 pm

Salt & Light, 1819 S. Philo Road, Urbana



In partnership with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)
Program with Gies College of Business at the University of Illinois