



Cunningham Township
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August 5, 2020

Town Bills

See attached town bills for details.

- Town fund = \$68,678.13 in expenditures
- General Assistance Fund = \$73,365.10 in expenditures
- TOTAL: \$142,043.23 in expenditures

General Assistance

Monthly support for Urbana residents who are disabled or out of work.

- 145 Current Participants
- 66 are homeless (71 last month)
- 88 males / 57 females / 0 transgender or gender non-conforming
- 44.3 is the average age
- NOTE: Community Work Program remains closed in August 2020

Rental Assistance

One time assistance to prevent eviction and homelessness.

- 0 Rental Assistance (down from 11 last month)

Bucket Brigade

Stay-at-home food and safety provisions during COVID-19 for very low-income residents.

- Buckets: 471 (Since March 25)
- People served: 1044 (Since March 25) Including 364 children
- Shared information about the Bucket Brigade with a group of Champaign School District parents that are assisting the Spanish speaking and new immigrant community within that district, the Urbana School District social workers and homeless liaison, and Daniel Loveall from CRIS-Healthy Aging.

Solidarity Gardens CU

A collaboration to support #NeighborsFeedingNeighbors fresh vegetables.

- Up to 95 Solidarity Gardens volunteers.
- Set up two produce donation locations at Sola Gratia Farm and Channing Murray and have already received our first donations.



- Made new connections in the community by giving out information at the USD116 meal pick up at Dr. Williams School.
- Currently planning our fall crops.

State Grant for Rapid Rehousing

Cunningham Township is partnering with the City of Urbana as fiscal sponsor to submit proposals to the State of Illinois for Emergency Solutions COVID response grants. If awarded for both round 1 and 2 of funding, **Cunningham Township would have \$217,020 for our proposed Bridge to Home Program:**

“With unemployment rates rising and evictions re-starting, we expect an increase in homelessness. Bridge to Home provides rapid rehousing services and stabilization case management to local residents to achieve housing stability with dignity. Support will include rent and utility assistance for 3-24 months depending on need, tapering off support over time. All participants will be supported in applying for all available subsidized housing options. We expect to serve 15 literally homeless residents referred from Centralized Intake for the Homeless, serving the most vulnerable participants first.”

Stimulus Check Assistance (August only)

As a result, in mid-July, CTSO applied and received a \$10,000 grant from Heartland Alliance aimed at helping 150 homeless and very low income local residents receive their Stimulus Payments. In April, when stimulus payments were announced, CTSO researched and produced a fact sheet, sent out a written letter, and distributed fliers to participants about how to access this entitlement. Case managers have been tracking participant success in their normal update appointments and found an alarmingly low level of success in participants accessing this entitlement. We have called 13 participants, emailed 121 participants. **Of 75 people we have made contact with, only 3 received their payments so far.** We have set up 8 appointments so far to assist. Starting the week of August 10th, we will have a tent outside CU at Home and Salt and Light to help visitors.

Housing Advocacy

This summer, with the help of our three MSW Social Work Interns, we **launched a structured Housing Advocacy program** wherein we:

1. Identify participants with the highest housing needs (street homeless, staying in emergency shelters, or precariously housed) using our [housing status tool](#),
2. Offer assessment using a national Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool - a survey administered to individuals and families to determine risk and prioritization when providing assistance to homeless and at-risk of homelessness person

3. Forward assessments to Centralized Intake for the Homeless to be considered for any available Emergency Family Shelter space or Permanent Supportive Housing or Shelter Plus Care vouchers.
4. Sign eligible households up for [Statewide Referral Network](#) units that are targeted for households earning at or below thirty percent (30%) of the Area Median Income (AMI) with a head of household who has a disability or illness, substance abuse disorder, or is homeless or at risk of homelessness.
5. Offer support in applying for any and all available subsidized housing options - whether that is through the Housing Authority or other subsidized units in the community.
6. Support participants in follow-up paperwork, appointments, and securing housing.
7. Supporting participants in accessing move-in assistance (deposit, first months rent, paying off old utility bills, paying off old HACC bills, acquiring basic furnishings through local volunteers).
8. After this, our General Assistance case managers continue to monitor their housing situation in update appointments and in some cases are called by their property manager, or another local case manager, if they get behind on rent.

With this new system, we have helped 16 of our most vulnerable participants so far apply for subsidized housing to 7 housing opportunities. 4 have moved in with several more almost complete.

Disability Advocacy

With support from our Social Work Interns, CTSO has improved our disability advocacy. We have two staff members and one intern 40-hour-trained in SOAR - a process to assist participants who are disabled and homeless or at-risk of homelessness access SSI payments. We now have a robust system to track where our participants are in the complicated process of accessing SSI. **61 participants with disabilities have been assessed. 3 participants were approved for SSI this last month.** CTSO receives reimbursement from Social Security for GA payments made during the time of their disability.

Thank You!

Our summer internship program is coming to an end. We will have 8 interns starting in September for the Fall. We would like to thank our amazing interns for their service: **Andrey Dombro, Jazmine Hernandez, Sophie Davenport, Keziah Buabeng, Lilyia Garcia, Smita Nair, Fiona Munro, Mitzy Castillo-Maldonado, Yasamin Khoshpour, and Melissa Stone.**

We also want to thank our [organizational, business, and individual friends of Township](#) who have made financial and in-kind contributions to support our mission.