

Notes Responding to the COVID-19 Crisis Resident Services Call 4.14.20



Virtual service delivery:

Julianna Stuart - POAH Communities

- POAH Communities has been running a Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program for about 4 years- HUD funded program enabling residents to save increases in rent attributed to increases in earnings.
- POAH's FSS program was in the process of converting to a virtual model, so it was a fairly easy transition to comply with the COVID-19 mandates. Right before the stay at home mandates, POAH had educated property management and site staff to let them know that if they do not see a coach on-site it doesn't mean they are not doing work. A core value of the program to work around client needs, many of whom are working full-time and can only meet with coaches virtually or during convenient times (evenings, lunch breaks, while commuting). Decision to communicate by phone vs. FaceTime/zoom/video chat is driven by client data plan and whether they have internet.
- POAH is in the midst of launching two FSS programs - one designed to see if you can fully run the program remotely, and a second which is a modified in person program that was supposed to launch in Mid-March.
- POAH is struggling more to deliver other resident services virtually because they have not set up infrastructure. Found in other parts of country (e.g. Mid-west) POAH had more time to prepare b/c stay at home order came a week later – started teaching residents to go on to zoom (how to download app, etc.). Might consider doing more training once stay at home restrictions are relieved so they can prepare for a potential second wave.
- Digital Divide: A good portion of POAH's residents are using devices provided by child's school - maybe they have device, but no email address. We tend to think of devices as phones and laptops - can we expand to smart TVs and gaming systems that also have chat features. Many of CommonBond's kids still don't have access. There are many charter schools in MN who haven't all provided devices to kids. Internet is easier because Comcast and others giving for free but hardware access more difficult. CB is doing zoom programming, but that doesn't reach everyone.

School closures and summer programming

Melanie Finke - AHC

- AHC has a team of 12 that provides educational services - primarily after school programming, summer programming, teen support, career readiness.
- Virginia public schools are closed for the remainder of the year, AHC is planning for a normal 6 weeks summer program, but may adapt this based on local regulations and recommendations from the Arlington school district. AHC is considering a longer program (8 or 10 weeks) to give students more support. There is also a chance they will have to convert to a virtual program. If so, they will use lessons learned from this past academic year and implement tools like zoom tutoring, Facebook support groups, YouTube lessons, etc. Internal deadline for committing to a plan is Mid-May. This year not providing new content and lessons, but more providing office hours to ask questions and provide support for psychosocial aspect of students
- AHC measures many academic outcomes such as reading progress, STEM classes offered, etc.
- To help students who have behavioral challenges or face difficulties staying engaged, AHC's first approach is to make contact with parents and develop relationships. They are also focused on providing diverse activities (physical fitness, hang-time support, and academic time with students). Try to make programming as fun and engaging as possible for students. AHC is sending reminders to tell kids AHC is here to support when they are ready to re-engage. Sent mail to each student

that was personalized - started one on one pen pal process to individually target students. At various schools, AHC tries to connect with different teachers and coaches to coordinate academic support and also things like resource distribution – e.g. PTAs did a drive to get grocery cards to students but didn't know how to get them delivered - AHC was able to coordinate distribution

Resident needs and engagement:

- POAH is seeing two changes in how they engage with residents. 1) more frequent, shorter communications with residents who are comfortable with technology, and 2) a lot of much longer/more intense calls with coaches walking residents through how to do something on their computer. A key learning has been to follow the lead of resident (what do they want to use to connect? What time works?) and be flexible/transparent (recommend coaches at home let client know 'hey, I have kids here but I am in private space. Is that ok?') Use a human centered approach.
- CommonBond put together a needs assessment for resident services staff to do over the phone with residents. They are using the results to determine if there are themes of needs that CB needs to address across their portfolio (shared on the resources page). Levels of staff engagement and support varies depending on the property and needs of residents. RSCs are reaching out to residents they know are most vulnerable to see if basic needs are being met. CommonBond is seeing so much unpaid rent and interim re-certifications. RSCs are focused on helping PMs with rent collection and re-certs, but once this is done they will do more proactive needs assessments and call all residents to ask about unmet needs (help applying for unemployment, school work assistance, getting medication, etc.). Common issues are access to internet for seniors and social isolation.
- Mercy's next big priority is helping residents with benefits acquisition, including 1) unemployment insurance - helping with online applications during regular phone calls, hoping helps with rent collection, 2) health benefits acquisition - several states have open enrollment on health exchange now and unemployment is an automatic qualifying event that might make them eligible for Medicaid, 3) helping people get stimulus check and in some cases that means helping people file a tax return for last year. All of this assistance is done over the phone. Mercy has a script with specific questions that trigger support. An issue is if residents don't have bank account it is hard to get the stimulus funds.

Tools members have found work well:

- Zoom (tutoring, virtual coffee chats, virtual book club, health and wellness exercises, college career readiness, homework help, can have individual rooms within zoom and staff person can drop in)
- Facebook/Facebook live (support groups, health and wellness exercises, cooking lessons)
- Ring Central (allows coaches to provide a cell number that's separate from their personal phone number, can put on do not disturb to establish some boundaries).
- Google voice, google hangouts
- box.com - POAH pays and free to partners - integrates well with excel and word, good data security
- DocuSign – facilitates re-certification. HUD hasn't expressed issue with using with POAH's FSS program.
- YouTube (lesson planning, messages of support and encouragement)
- Wufuu for signed consent from parents to engage with students in programming

Residents unwilling to isolate:

- CommonBond recently experienced their first case of a resident who did not self-isolate and was in the hall announcing that had COVID. As a result, CB put together a procedure for staff if this happens again. Step 1 – have both the PM and RSC remind the resident they need to isolate and have a proactive conversation to figure out what is causing them not to isolate (not understanding the risk/harm, need for mail, need for food). 2 - provide support for those needs and get them met. 3 - If continues to happen, CB will issue a lease violation (which their lawyers said was acceptable) and try to get in touch with an emergency contact listed for support. 4 - If that doesn't work and the resident is considered a vulnerable adult, CB can make a vulnerable adult protection call. If all else fails staff calls the department of health and police.
- Eden Housing issued a notice to residents saying shelter in place orders were required by law - state mandate - so they could potentially receive a lease violation if did not they did not comply - some residents gathered in large groups and staff was concerned. Eden hasn't actually issued any violations, but is hoping the notices will encourage people to comply.
- CHT – it's hard for people coming out of shelters, where there is always things to do and people around, to understand isolation. CHT reminds people about the importance of isolation and is working with local pharmacies with HIPAA waivers in place to set up delivery.

Communicating confirmed cases:

- Eden has a notice that they post saying someone at property may have tested positive or been advised to self-quarantine by doctor - doesn't say who or whether a staff person/resident
- Others doing the same - CB has resident letter template - reminds resident what they are doing about keeping them safe, reminding them what they can do to keep communities safe, have sign put up as well, de-stigmatize.
- CHT has a notice they post - outlining in that letter that they are working to clean and disinfect.
- Avesta Housing sends out a notice notifying the community of a positive COVID-19 test and posted signs in the community areas. We have also followed up by phone to each resident within the community providing opportunities to ask questions. AHC and Bellwether are following similar protocols.

Personal Protective Equipment:

- CA recommending everyone wear masks, so Mercy decided to try and buy masks for staff. They had trouble buying medical grade masks, but found a small supply to give to desk clerks, maintenance, and staff of properties with a known case. Allowing people to bring in their own mask (cloth, surgical, etc.) if can. Mercy was thinking of buying cloth masks for staff but decided no because can't verify quality (e.g. someone bought masks from someone with cat and the staff person had a bad allergy) so Mercy will not buy more medical masks.
- POAH is requiring masks and found a couple vendors and can get small orders and then mail them out to all sites - in Boston second wave where public health department is a little better equipped to respond - have obtained thousands of masks for seniors - as the pandemic matures more may be made available as cities obtain more PPE.
- CommonBond got 2000 N95 masks

- Anne Moriarty - put email of someone able to get masks from China - old friend of hers - The Calen Group and Mass Housing just ordered some.

Use of volunteers:

- Mercy stopped using most volunteers for programming like Out of School Time (OST), but their food distribution is very labor intensive so kept using volunteers when they could - legal counsel always involved because precautions vary by jurisdiction. Mercy does screening before volunteers come on site, debated temperature checks, volunteers can't interact in person with residents, they do phone calls or organize and package food on the backend and Mercy staff then does distribution. For food distribution, Mercy decided residents could still volunteer using same principles (help on back end not interact face to face).

COVID-19 challenges within congregate living settings:

- Champlain Housing Trust owns a hotel in Burlington that was converted to an isolation site for folks who don't have anywhere to isolate or can't isolate at home because they have family members with underlying conditions. A big obstacle is getting folks there tested - drive through testing hard if they don't have transportation. CHT partnered with a local FQHC to purchase a van for testing. The VT State COVID recovery center has recently opened and if a CHT resident does test positive they get residents there where they will have more medical oversight. CHT's SRO buildings are smaller (8-10 rooms). CHT is working on a process if anyone does test positive they move to COVID recovery center and get rest of building tested.
- Abode is looking into how to create self-quarantine site within a 200-unit SRO building in Pasadena where they have a big auditorium area. They have to consider social distancing, security, bathrooms, kitchen, and separation from people who are not infected. Through the city, Abode got cots and dividers donated to set up individual spaces (will fit 21 people). Can't force anyone to stay there but wanted to get it set up - health department and fire department had to inspect the space and make sure it was up to code - got bids for 24/7 security surveillance which can be quite costly. Aggressive bathroom cleaning schedule. Hiring additional staff and paying overtime and considering disaster pay for staff. They looked into obtaining FEMA trailers in LA and renting RVs (but RV rentals were 100% cost prohibitive). Abode's 156 unit SRO building in the city of Los Angeles does not have any access to donated cots or anything.