Statewide Navigation Call Notes

May 7th, 2020

10am-11:30am

Agenda:

* DHHS Prevention Updates – Emily Kluver
  + B2I coordinators have reached out to 250 youth that have aged out of B2I or foster care to check in on them and to connect them to resources. Preparing to start on next outreach project, to reach out to families with children under the age of 5 who have applied for SNAP in the past 6 weeks and were denied due to income and follow up on their needs and connect them to resources, including central navigation. 750 families on the list, DHHS will be reaching out via email if listed and phone calls. Emergency SNAP emergency supplement was issued for April and May, will follow up on June.

* WIC – Nicole Christensen
  + Progress on noted barriers: Having to be present to purchase foods in the grocery stores continues to be an issue for families. Walmart’s and Kroger are allowing WIC cards to be used at self-checkouts. Families do still have to go in person to sign for their purchases and cannot shop online.
  + Follow up on proxy discussion – if a proxy is identified, what could be solutions for transportation? If a family cannot go in person, they can have a proxy listed to use the card instead. They will need the card PIN number to use the card in the store. Need to physically have the card while at the store to pay.
    - Suggestions to meet need:
      * Volunteers to be able to go to the store and shop for the family. Would need to be designated as a proxy. Would need to be a trusted person by family.
      * Look at stores that would offer taking orders via phone and pay upon pickup.
  + WIC App is available, used as an educational tool. Anyone can download and use. App displays list of all the foods WIC approved and can also scan items to check WIC approval. Offered in different languages. Recommendation was made to be able to use app to pay for foods as well.
  + Language: All materials are in English and Spanish. Language lines are also utilized to cover other languages.
  + Sharing Information: Trying to get the word out about their services especially during this time of food insecurity. Eligible families receive cards for purchasing food. Applicants can apply via phone rather than in person in the meantime.
  + Eligibility Information:
    - English: http://dhhs.ne.gov/WIC%20Documents/WIC%20Outreach%20Brochure.pdf
    - Spanish: http://dhhs.ne.gov/WIC%20Documents/WIC%20Outreach%20Brochure%20-%20Spanish.pdf
    - All foster children under 5 are automatically eligible for program. Fathers can apply as well.

* USDA Summer Food Program -- Kayte Partchm (Was unable to connect on this call)
  + Follow ups from last week
  + Have you had any additional thoughts or conversations on local solutions or locations to apply (i.e. restaurants)?

* LIHEAP – Matt Thomsen
  + Are you seeing more requests for utility assistance?
  + Energy assistance from funds through OCF. Receive funds on an annual basis Oct 1-Sept 30. Offer a variety of services throughout year. Oct 1 through end of March is heating season, June 1st-Aug 31 is cooling services. Crisis services offered all year round.
  + Eligibility: Households considered economically vulnerable, responsible for paying for utility bills, meet income guidelines at least 130% of federal income level which matches SNAP, reside in Nebraska. Have agreements with 240 utility providers across the state. If household is in an area that does not have an agreement in place with the energy provider, they will pay the household directly or if they pay the utility bill to the landlord, they will also pay household directly.
  + Emergency assistance requires being in a crisis situation such as utility shutoff/disconnection. Have to meet several other criteria such as inability to pay energy costs due to factors such as unanticipated medical needs, departure of primary wage earner, inability for primary wage earner to work due to medical needs, or loss of primary wage earner. Due to COVID-19 households have been able to apply due to loss of wages. Have a $500 cap per household, there is discretion with going over this amount depending on family’s situation.
  + Department also offers assistance for repairing/replacing furnaces, and window air conditioners.
  + Households can apply via ACCESS NEBRASKA website or via toll free line (800) 383-4278
  + Additional Information: <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Energy-Assistance.aspx>
  + Encourage households to make payments, if they can, to prevent the bill from getting out of control.
  + Those families that are denied energy assistance can reach out to Community Response
    - Discussion on how to make this a smooth referral for individual, either through 211 or Community Response. Especially for individuals that may feel overwhelmed by application process.
* CSBG – Jill Giles
  + For those communities working closely between CR and Community Action, what are your ideas on how best to work together to meet needs with these additional funds?
  + Will be receiving extra funding through CARES Act. Not entirely sure on how much the funding will be, awaiting funds to arrive at the end of the week.
  + Agencies working on needs assessments and applications to receive funding for their area. Funds go directly to Community Action Agencies, encouraging collaborative communities to reach out to their local community action agency.
  + Assistance is normally offered to those that are up to 125% of the poverty guidelines but eligibility has increased to include up to 200% of federal income guidelines.
  + Encouraging communities to connect with their community action agency in order to look at opportunities for furthering supports and resources. Some communities already have established partnerships around coaching, financial assistance, food, etc. Some refer to one another depending on eligibility gaps, and also to work together to cover costs such as utilities.
* CR/CYI Forms and QuickBase Revision Survey – Catherine Brown
  + Distributed to Central Navigators and Coordinators week of 5/11
  + Applies to communities *currently* participating in the statewide CWB evaluation
  + Brief survey coming out next week around new and upcoming forms. Any suggestions would be appreciated and can be shared with Catherine or Claire.
* Policy Changes and Opportunities - Rachel Meier and Jenny Skala
  + Technology survey will be going out. Survey to be completed by communities to provide input on technology needs.
  + Wanting to be equitable with these funds and needs. Looking at all possibilities to connect more than school age children but also keeping families socially connected and able to access resources and supports.
  + Medicaid copays for services and pharmacies will be paid related to COVID-19 going back to March.
  + Senators are looking to gather by areas of the state to be able to share needs. Hoping to offer 3-4 times a year. Looking for community input and participation on calls.
  + First Lady Susanne Shore: TEST Nebraska videos and information available, please share and use.
    - The Test Nebraska videos have been uploaded to YouTube and can be found on the Governor's Channel:  https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcDw3\_CGhTVcVtxoGKRkjlQ
    - Additionally, if anyone needs to download them, they can be accessed from this Google Drive folder:  https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1WWjUMyMQrzHH877CJt39zjtQ1z2L\_2lS?usp=sharing
    - For the two COVID Informational Videos in seven languages, here is a link to our Google Drive:  https://drive.google.com/open?id=1i6u3pObk0TAFhLK7uYz0jwnxZHHLJUdm
    - Additionally, all the videos we have so far are available on the Governor's YouTube at:   https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcDw3\_CGhTVcVtxoGKRkjlQ.
* Community Conversation:
  + Please have one person from your area respond (others can share in the chat box with one another):
    - What is something you’ve learned through this crisis that you want to share with others? Where are the opportunities to support one another regionally or statewide?
  + Concerns around coverage plans for coordinators, central navigators, and coaches. How to work together on both a local and regional level.
  + Encouraging everyone to bring ideas, questions, and concerns to calls to support one another in this new way of working and supporting communities.
  + Questions around how to assist those in nursing home facilities that wish to connect their residents to their families during this time. Technology can be difficult to navigate. This also seems to be a struggle for service clubs that have a high membership of older individuals.
    - Zoom has an app that seems easier to guide individuals through calls.
    - Care Centers have designated times and staff to offer one on one assistance in connecting patients as well.
    - Some of local community colleges also offer classes to older demographics around technology.
    - There is a guide developed for youth that don’t have experience with this technology that can be shared.
    - Episcopal Church of Our Savior in North Platte has developed a guide as well that can be shared.

Next Call: Thursday, May 14, 2020  10am CST