**Statewide Central Navigation Call**March 4, 2021

Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/91496192036?pwd=R3NrdWVrT1UxQkVKd0dXQnhNY3hjdz09>

Meeting ID: 914 9619 2036

Passcode: 331676

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**Chat** **Box:**

Introduce yourself

Questions/Answers throughout the call

**Agenda**:

* Community Spotlight
  + Sarah Papa, Community and Family Partnership (Platte, Colfax, Boone, and Nance Counties)
    - Thank you to for the infrastructure support from NCFF and DHHS, amongst other partners. All the work is all possible in following the collective impact model. 22700 individuals were served through 2020. Doubled the prior budgets.
    - Priority Areas:
      * Family and Youth Engagement
      * Mental Health: Offer youth mental health vouchers with school districts. Vouchers help with situations such as high deductibles, lack of insurance, etc. 422 therapy sessions were issued to youth. Expanded this to family therapy as well. Offered a mental health outreach service, that serves 6 total counties. Offer three therapy sessions regardless of age and insurance. Only caveat, if someone has Medicaid, they are asked to utilize that system. Also utilized this as a catalyst to work with individuals that they haven’t been able to reach before. 145 therapy sessions were provided through this opportunity. Meet monthly with mental health providers to address needs and barriers.
      * Early childhood infrastructures and support
      * Basic Needs: through CR they partnered with multiple organizations to offer food and housing financial assistance. 10,000 people were assisted with the braided funding. Partner with organizations that offer basic needs such as food, housing, etc.
      * Food Security: Saw large amount of need for access to food. One of the local pantries reported seeing 30 people a month, at start of pandemic they were serving over 1200 people a month. Were able to receive some food sustainability funds. Work with local grocery stores to provide vouchers “Fresh Bucks” like fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, and baby items. Partner with mobile and county food pantries, farmers markets, and schools.
      * Community Education and Training Opportunities
      * New Opportunities/Future priorities: Thriving Families, Safer Children has highlighted the need for the lived experienced voices to be present. Supporting diversity and culture within the communities. Offered a citizen’s review panel in Schuyler and will be offering one in Columbus. Will be attending and participating in REI trainings. Will be developing mental health PSA’s.
* Healthcare referral stories – Brenda Weyers, NCFF
  + The Nebraska Medical Association has asked NCFF to submit a story for their newsletter about the work that is being done in communities. 3,000 medical workers across the state receive this newsletter and will be a great opportunity to share the work happening across collaboratives. Would specifically like to see how medical providers have been partnering in communities around community response. Article is due next week, and any stories would be greatly appreciated. Please connect with Brenda if you have a story to share: [bweyers@nebraskachildren.org](mailto:bweyers@nebraskachildren.org)
* Food Insecurity
  + Food Insecurity Task Force Updates – Zach Nelson
    - Put together food security tracker to help communities have a tool with contact information and further resources. Will also share funding opportunities that are available as well. CDBG- Coronavirus funding can be used to help food services to help food banks in communities. If you need help seeing if there are any partners in your community you’d like to be aware of in order to connect or partner with you can contact Chris Schroeder: chris.schroeder@nebraska.gov
    - Food Security Program Tracker: <https://collablinks.us/food-security-programs>
    - Funding Opportunity Tracker: <https://collablinks.us/food-security-nofo-tracker>
    - Contact information for Zach Nelson, NCFF Consultant
      * Phone: (402) 513-9115 or Email: zach@republicinsights.com
  + NDE Nutrition Services – Sharon Davis
    - Summer food program expansion grant opened March 1st. School districts can utilize those funds to offer or expand summer food programs or if they schools aren’t offering this program; communities can look at other partners. Waiver goes through June 30th but potentially continued. Looking at obstacles that are in place for SNAP recipients. Food security taskforce meeting with Chris Schroeder held every other week and welcome to attend. March 10th meeting will be canceled but the March 24th meeting will be held.
    - Pandemic Pre-EBT benefits are being advocated for by DHHS and state partners to the USDA. 15% increase will be in effect till June for EBT recipients.
    - SNAP benefits have also temporarily been extended to college students enrolled in at least a part-time capacity: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/students>
* Double Up Food Bucks Program: SNAP incentive program. For the most up to date info sheet <https://food.unl.edu/NEP/DUFB/Retailer-requirements-3-2021.pdf> email Vanessa Wielenga for more information: [vwielenga2@Unl.edu](mailto:vwielenga2@Unl.edu)
  + Farmers market’s can also sign up to be a partner with the Double Up Food Bucks Program. USDA Grant recently received will allow expansion into rural communities for the UNL food education programs.
* Policy and Advocacy
  + Updates on Legislative Bills – Laurie Ponce, Coalition for a Strong Nebraska
    - Coalition is statewide coalition made up of statewide partners to fight poverty with legislative work.
  + Links to reference:
    - LB 298 talking points
    - CSN template & guidelines for writing to a senator
    - <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:fd0c5db1-668e-46eb-9f14-e15451fabff5>
    - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FfV7-HAXwQpf-f6Onk0v6CJc7wQ3f4w7Oyri5JpErC8/edit?usp=sharing>
  + SNAP – Katie Pitts, NE Appleseed; kpitts@neappleseed.org
    - Senator McCollister: LB108- chainging eligibility levels for SNAP, trying to dimmish the “cliff effect”. This would increase the level up to 180% of the poverty level, which aligns with other states. The pandemic has shown the need for the SNAP program. <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=43984> Bill is currently in the Health and Human Services committee. If you have stories on how this bill would impact or how SNAP has assisted others, please send letters of support.
    - Senator Hunt: LB 121- Provides a change into the restrictions for individuals with drug felony convictions to receive SNAP funds. <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=43483> Bill has been on the floor in the past but has unfortunately failed. There has been a trend across the country is retracting this ban and the hope is Nebraska will also follow.
* DACA – Mickey Devitt, Heartland Workers Center micky@heartlandworkerscenter.org
  + - HWC are a civic engagement, policy development, and workers’ rights education non-profit across the state. Offer communities basics training to help with advocating and connecting with their senators.
    - LB 298 (McDonnell): DACA Unemployment Insurance: Closes the unemployment gap for people with work authorization. Primarily covers DACA, refugees, TPS individuals. Not lawfully present although those individuals are legally working, and employer is paying unemployment taxes on their workers. 316 families that were denied unemployment based on this gap throughout the pandemic. <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=43626>
  + Childcare – Aubrey Mancuso, Voices for Children
    - LB 485 (DeBoer) Child care subsidy: <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=43568> Nebraska had previously set eligibility of childcare assistance to 185% of federal poverty level, during Governor Johann’s tenure that amount was dropped back to 120% with a small increase to 130%. Eligibility will increase to 185% and transition eligibility to 200%.
    - Recently the legislature has shown support for childcare infrastructure as they have seen the large increase in affordable childcare for workers, so the hope for this bill to pass is there.
  + Housing – Erin Feichtinger, Together Omaha
    - 13 bills were introduced to the Landlord/Tenant Act. Working on a package that would make some small but impactful changes to this act in particular with evictions. In 2020 there were 3,482 evictions across the state during the pandemic. The state of Nebraska had 6,139 eviction filings in 2020, and 3,482 eviction judgments. Douglas had 3,245 filings and 1,839 evictions. Lancaster had 1,244 filings and 740 evictions. Senators pushing back on the recommendations due to the misinformation that evictions are due to lack of personal responsibilities. There is a need to educate senators on why evictions matter, what an eviction means to people served, what services should be available to help a person before an eviction should be made. Educating senators about the impact of late fees, how evictions affect records to be able to find safe and affordable housing. Housing justice = anti-poverty, not anti-landlord.
* Housing Stimulus Dollars -- John Turner, NIFA; [john.turner@nifa.org](mailto:john.turner@nifa.org)
  + Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP):
  + Lincoln: Agreements are being developed and finalized for Rental Assistance funds for Lancaster. Once those are finalized applications will be sent out. alabenz@unl.edu - also available for housing related questions in Lincoln and BoS.
  + Balance of State Emergency Rental Assistance launched last Monday for everything outside of Lancaster and Douglas County. NIFA is handling the calls for the rental assistance Q&A’s and applications. Handouts have gone out to describe applications for both tenant and landlords. Over $1 million dollars requests have gone out since the beginning. Checks go out directly to landlords, not entirely sure how long it takes to mail out checks. There has been a low number of downloads for the Spanish documents, NIFA requesting help in connecting with Spanish speakers to apply for assistance. Marketing push will be going out asap. Both tenant and landlords have to apply, work together. If landlord refuses or nonresponsive to assistance, the hotline will try to contact the landlord 3 times. If after 3 times there is no contact or the landlord says no, the checks can be issued to the tenant.
  + Omaha/Randy McCoy: City of Omaha and contract approved this week. Working to make sure information is shared and distributed appropriately. Also looked at COVID rates per communities, as well as communities experiencing the most evictions. Macchconnect.org website lists a large number of resources people can be connected to and updated regularly. HPSP- funds are allocated to these partners to offer rent and utility assistance. Connect with MACCH offers an opportunity to apply directly to MACCH. Do have funds available to assist with requests outside of the Emergency Rental Assistance Funds. Looking at first part of April to roll out the ERA funds.
    - [rmccoy@endhomelessnesstoday.org](mailto:rmccoy@endhomelessnesstoday.org)
    - Contact number: 417-848-0470
  + For the application online: <https://coronavirus.nebraska.gov/Home>
  + Call center: 833-500-8810
  + Questions/Concerns:
    - Landlord information required includes need for SSN. Property managers may not feel comfortable sharing their personal information.
    - Tenants can also enter their landlords’ email for a push notification.
* COVID Vaccine: Cultural Considerations for Families- Anne Herman
  + There is an upcoming opportunity we wanted everyone on this call to know about! There is an important conversation happening in partnership with Children's Hospital, NDE, and the Do Right, Right Now campaign about vaccine hesitancy.
  + Mon 15 March 2021; 3pm – 4pm (CDT)
  + <https://childrensomaha.zoom.us/j/96540128744?pwd=ZWNGSUdQVUsxbjlobnNTQTB1YnJlUT09>
  + Meeting ID: 965 4012 8744 Passcode: 258654

**All notes, audio, and chat box recordings are posted at**[**https://www.nebraskachildren.org/frequently-asked-questions-for-communities.html**](https://www.nebraskachildren.org/frequently-asked-questions-for-communities.html)

**Next Call:  March 18, 2021, 10am CST**