

#1

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 4:21:31 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 5:44:11 PM
Time Spent: 01:22:40
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Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	Kurt Runge
Organization (if any):	Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County
City/Town:	Hillside
State:	IL
ZIP:	60162

Q2

County Finance Committee Meeting 7/29/2020 930a

Tell us which meeting you wish to be recorded as a witness. If you don't know the meeting or date, we can help at 312.603.6398 or cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov. You can also look up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar. Please fill out a separate form for each meeting at which you wish to speak.

Q3

Tell us the File ID number (example 17-0000) of the item on which you are registering your position. If you don't know the number, we can help at 312.603.6398 or cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov. You can also look it up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar

20-3229

Q4

What do you want to do?

DO NOT ATTEND THE MEETING but REGISTER IN FAVOR of a specific item (You may add written comments below)

Q5

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov

The Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County is committed to preventing and ending homelessness in our community, a region that covers more than 570 square miles and 130 municipalities. On any given night, nearly 850 individuals are experiencing homelessness in suburban Cook County. This includes adults and children staying in emergency shelters, as well as people sleeping outside.

To more effectively prevent and end homelessness, our community needs more resources. These resources were needed before the COVID-19 public health crisis and are even more dire in the wake of the pandemic.

We ask that you commit the following Coronavirus Relief Funding to respond to the crisis:

- Invest at least \$5 million to safely provide emergency homeless shelter and services in hotels for approximately 700 people, managed by organizations such as BEDS Plus, Connections for the Homeless, Housing Forward, JOURNEYS, Respond Now, and South Suburban PADS
- Invest \$20 million in a rental assistance program for eviction and homeless prevention and an additional \$20 million for mortgage assistance to prevent homelessness
- Invest \$1.1 million in legal services to provide the needed services to prevent families from losing housing
- Invest \$2.1 million in utility assistance

One of the most pressing needs to respond to homelessness is funding for emergency shelter. Prior to COVID-19, nonprofits in suburban Cook County managed about 400 overnight, congregate shelter beds staffed primarily by volunteers and consisting of pads on the floor in various rotating locations such as church basements and other houses of worship. Many people who are currently homeless in the suburbs have underlying medical conditions, over 250 are over the age of 55, over 300 have disabilities, and over 100 are families. These households are at high risk of complications due to COVID-19. Given the vulnerability of people who are homeless, it became impossible for nonprofits to safely operate congregate, volunteer-staffed shelter following CDC guidelines. As a result, starting in March, nonprofits moved most people in emergency shelter to hotels and motels, transitioning from an overnight, pads on the floor, volunteer-staffed model to a 24/7, nonprofit-staffed, hotel-based model of shelter. As COVID-19 cases in the community rise, at least \$5 million is needed to continue this hotel-based model of shelter and services for approximately 700 people through the end of the year for the organizations listed in this testimony and potentially others. Shelters will utilize these resources to continue to provide safe, crisis housing for people who have nowhere else to go, while working to find permanent housing solutions to end their homelessness. Homelessness in the region has increased by about 55% since the start of pandemic, and once the eviction moratorium ends, without adequate prevention assistance, could increase even more dramatically.

It is essential that the county invest Coronavirus Relief Funding in emergency shelter and other measures to prevent homelessness.

In the near future, capital and operating resources, such as Community Development Block Grant funding, is needed to replace volunteer-staffed, pads on the floor shelter with fixed-site shelter options that are a safer, more effective, and more dignified crisis response system for the many people who are homeless in suburban Cook County.

#2

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 6:24:30 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 6:46:58 PM
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Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name: Amy Laboy
Organization (if any): Greater Chicago Food Depository
City/Town: Chicago
State: IL
ZIP: 60632

Q2

County Finance Committee Meeting 7/29/2020 930a

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20-3229

Q4

What do you want to do?

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Q5

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The Greater Chicago Food Depository is mobilizing to support both the emergency and long-term needs in our community related to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with Cook County to support these efforts

While it is too soon to fully understand the long-term economic impact of COVID-19, the Food Depository has seen an immediate increase in overall need. We are seeing an unprecedented need among individuals coping with poverty before COVID-19 and those newly unemployed, furloughed or displaced as a result of the outbreak. Chronically unemployed, low-wage earners with inadequate healthcare access and communities impacted by racial and economic inequity are the hardest hit.

To ensure communities hardest hit by COVID-19 and residents throughout Cook County have access to nutritious food, we are building the capacity of existing food access partners and building relationships with other trusted community-based organizations to meet geographic or unique population needs. This approach is largely informed by our commitment to applying a racial equity framework to our response. We are expanding our planning and decision-making systems to ensure we advance our goal of reaching racial equity in our support of all Cook County residents.

Generous support from Cook County will support this critical work as we respond to the unique food access needs of our community. A community's strength, growth and well-being all start with food. By nourishing people, we nourish hope.
