

Dear Joint Special Committee on Coronavirus,

We are writing today to share some thoughts and experiences with you about how our services and communities are being impacted by COVID-19 as you explore ways to mitigate impacts. Our work of 31 years focuses on the most vulnerable community members, including those experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. This is some, but likely not all, of the impacts we are seeing and feeling:

- Residents of our women's shelter were evicted into a snow storm last weekend from a Portland motel that we had secured to move them out of a congregate setting to reduce their risk of contagion: <https://www.wweek.com/news/city/2020/03/15/portland-motel-rejects-senior-homeless-women-seeking-lodging-during-covid-19-spread/>. Multnomah County has moved to make this not possible but the state should consider a similar move.
- Affordable housing properties have very tight margins/significant debt service due to the way they are financed, so any rent relief for tenants, which we strongly support, should also include mortgage relief because our properties cannot sustain unpaid rent.
- Our emergency shelters for people experiencing homelessness must stay staffed and we suggest that these services and those workers be considered first responders and that you consider hazard pay and emergency childcare.
- Non profits broadly are cancelling fundraising events that we count on for general operating funds (government contracts rarely include enough administration dollars), and we anticipate a significantly diminished fundraising capacity for at least a year. We all need an infusion of funds, ideally unrestricted.
- We handle energy assistance funds for people at risk of shutoff and eviction; relaxing paperwork requirements of moving that process online would be helpful. We realize that shutoffs are temporarily not allowed, but once that period ends people may owe large sums. How will those be handled? There should be some relief if balloon-type payments end up hurting people.
- Food distribution will be important; schools are stepping up, but donations are down overall with restaurants closing and volunteers staying home. Families with reduced / lost incomes need access to food.

Thank you for listening and convening; we look forward to seeing relief come as soon as you are able.

For additional information or questions, please call our Executive Director, Andy Miller, at 503.548.0240.

Lisa Frack
Director, Development & Communications

Pronouns: She / Her / Hers

12350 SE Powell Boulevard
Portland, OR 97236
503.548.0282 (direct)
lfrack@humansolutions.org
www.humansolutions.org

Human Solutions: Building Pathways Out of Poverty

WE'RE TURNING LEMONS INTO LEMONADE: Due to COVID-19, Human Solutions has postponed our biggest fundraising event of the year, which had been scheduled for May 2. If you are able, please help us recover from that loss and invest in your community by [contributing today](#). THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!

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