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New Partnership Calls for the Use of CARES Act Funding to Serve People Experiencing Homelessness, Historically Marginalized Communities, & Extremely Low-Income Households

“The Framework for an Equitable COVID-19 Homelessness Response” provides guidance on how communities can effectively focus current and future funding & navigate their response to COVID-19 with a racial justice and equity approach.

Washington, DC – A partnership of seven leading national organizations and experts have launched the [Framework for an Equitable COVID-19 Homelessness Response](#) to guide how homelessness systems can leverage the CARES Act to simultaneously conduct emergency protective measures while planning for recovery-oriented uses of these funds.

This is an unprecedented time with extraordinary challenges. The coronavirus pandemic has [disproportionately](#) impacted people with low incomes who were already struggling before COVID-19 with severe rent burdens or homelessness. [Black and Native American](#) communities are bearing the brunt of COVID-19 infections and fatalities, and Latinos bear the brunt of [historic job losses](#). The CARES Act included [\\$4 billion in Emergency Solutions Grants](#) to help prevent an outbreak among sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness and very low-income households (earning less than 50% of Area Median Income) who are at risk of homelessness. More federal investment, beyond the CARES Act, is critically needed to fully recover from the pandemic. CARES Act funding is an important step forward and marks the beginning of the critical work organizations and communities must do to ensure it is allocated quickly and effectively and reaches the people and communities most in need.

We have developed a series of guides to accompany the Framework and help drive implementation and coordination across many partners and all levels of government, including public health, emergency management, homelessness assistance, housing, human services, healthcare, and other. [Making the Case](#) is the first of several materials to be released between now and October 2020; in it, we recommend values to drive smart planning and execution to address the public health and economic effects of the pandemic, so that communities can emerge from the pandemic even stronger. An accompanying [video](#) provides additional information on the values and approaches needed to implement this Framework.

Upcoming products will include:

- A guide on how to implement equity-based decision-making processes at the community and organizational levels, to ensure that people with lived expertise are at the table and participate in decision-making;
- Briefs and videos that identify strategies to serve populations who have been marginalized historically and by COVID-19;

- A geographic targeting tool that will help identify specific neighborhoods where households are heavily impacted by COVID-19 and by its economic effects, so that funds can be directed to families and organizations in those communities; and
- Outreach and implementation tips for impactful strategies like landlord engagement, working with small landlords, and diversion approaches.

This work is funded by the [Melville Charitable Trust](#), [Fundors for Housing and Opportunity](#), and through in-kind work by the partners. Partners in this effort include:

- [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#)
- [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)
- [National Health Care for the Homeless Council](#)
- [National Innovation Service](#)
- [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#)
- [Urban Institute](#)
- Former Executive Directors of the US Interagency Council on Homelessness [Matthew Doherty](#) and [Barbara Poppe](#)

“COVID-19 shone a harsh spotlight on inequities and disparities in our systems, including how we treat people experiencing homelessness. The pandemic illustrates why communities should move away from long-term, congregate shelter and, instead, house people as quickly as possible. This ‘Housing First’ strategy is the cornerstone of an effective and equitable approach,” said Peggy Bailey **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities** vice President for Housing Policy. “Our framework will help communities step back and do the intentional thinking it takes to redesign their homelessness system. This includes deliberate steps to address racism and discrimination, identify the right partnerships, and engage people with lived experience. We must leverage federal, state, and local resources to address the immediate health and economic crisis -- and build the foundation needed to prevent similar devastating outcomes in the future.”

“Although federal stimulus funds will certainly help homelessness systems respond to the combined crises of COVID-19 and homelessness, we must recognize that both of these emergencies have devastatingly disproportionate impacts on people of color,” said Nan Roman **National Alliance to End Homelessness** president and CEO. “The Framework for an Equitable COVID-19 Homelessness Response is designed to help communities focus their efforts during this enormous challenge, leverage new federal resources to advance racial justice in homelessness systems, and eliminate any obstacles that prevent equitable outcomes for people experiencing homelessness, regardless of their race. This is a key moment for the movement to end homelessness, and we must act now.”

“COVID-19 has revealed, yet again, that our systems are fundamentally not designed to provide equitable outcomes for everyone. This pandemic demonstrates exactly why communities across the country need to move away from responses that have proven, time and time again, not to actually solve the problems facing those experiencing homelessness and embrace truly transformative responses,” said Marc Dones **National Innovation Service** executive director. “It is only by completely reimagining our systems and committing ourselves to the hard work of building and implementing solutions that focus on racial justice and equity that we will truly be

able to end homelessness in this country. We believe that these tools, and the partnership that has created them, is a critical first step toward a future where everyone in this country can thrive.”

“The public health and economic crisis created by COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted people experiencing homelessness, communities of color, and people with disabilities,” said Diane Yentel **National Low Income Housing Coalition** (NLIHC) president and CEO. “The appropriation of \$4 billion in Emergency Solutions Grants creates an unprecedented opportunity to transform our country’s homelessness response system into one that centers racial equity and focuses on quickly moving people into affordable homes. On behalf of NLIHC, I look forward to working with our partners throughout the country to support their important and difficult work and to make this vision a reality.”

“It has always required robust, coordinated, and committed partnerships in states and communities to mobilize equitable housing and homelessness solutions. The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted that need even more starkly,” said Matthew Doherty, a consultant and former Executive Director of the **U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness**. “That’s why this national partnership is so critical, so that we can all support effective strategies and efficient use of financial resources all across the country.”

“COVID-19 has laid bare the intersectional impacts of race and gender on health, income, and housing. It is critical that states and local governments use newly available federal funding to advance an equitable response that alleviates the suffering caused by homelessness,” said Barbara Poppe, former Executive Director of the **U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness**. “We believe that by working together across sectors, grounded in what works, and using an equity-based decision process, new funds can be invested wisely to emerge stronger than ever before from this pandemic.”

For more information on *The Framework for an Equitable COVID-19 Homelessness Response* and to view available products, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/y93zhpow>

View an introduction video about The Framework at: <https://tinyurl.com/y84wsc39>

View the *Making the Case for the Framework for an Equitable COVID-19 Homelessness Response* video at: <https://tinyurl.com/y7gj5nga>

View a video on prioritizing Emergency Solutions Grant-CV resources: <https://tinyurl.com/ybhloba2>

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*About **Framework Project**: Partnership of national organizations and leaders dedicated to creating & implementing tools that will help communities navigate their response to COVID-19 with a racial justice and equity approach.*