

## Hudson River Housing Our Response to COVID-19

As a leader in affordable housing in our region and the only provider of emergency overnight shelter operations in Dutchess County, Hudson River Housing is working to increase bed capacity and strengthen services for the significant numbers of homeless and housing insecure people in our community during this time of crisis.

Our staff are on the front lines each day maintaining essential services including emergency housing, food distribution, and care management. ***At a time like this, we are critical community responders.*** We are positioned to respond quickly and to act effectively, helping people through this time of crisis while continuing to remain focused on long term solutions.

### What We're Doing Now

We are providing safe, stable housing for over 1,000 individuals and families every day, and the numbers of those in need are growing. As the weeks pass, we expect to see a significant increase in households unable to meet financial obligations like rent, mortgage and utility payments.

Our emergency food services have expanded to include packaged meals for the individuals and families sheltering in place at our Hudson River Lodging and Hillcrest House locations, in addition to the increased number of homeless staying in our shelter.

Our staff are providing essential care management and mental health services via remote teleconferencing to seniors, veterans, and low-income households. Cutbacks in public transportation, strains on the healthcare system, and limited access to essential supplies are exacerbating challenges already faced by these households. Our team is helping keep people connected to the care they need.

Our outreach and engagement teams are connecting with neighborhood small businesses and households that are not linked to services. As unemployment numbers rise and small businesses are pushed to the brink, we are distributing critically needed information to help the most vulnerable survive.

### Quick Stats

We've more than doubled bed capacity in our overnight emergency shelter from 60 beds to 145.	We have increased our emergency food services, providing over 600 meals to the homeless and food insecure every day.	We're sharing critically needed resources with 700+ low-income tenants and our network of homeowners.	We've connected to 100+ small businesses, including many immigrant-owned establishments, to offer language-specific information.
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## What is Needed Now

These are uncertain times for all of us. As we continue to adjust to the changing environment we are working in, flexible resources are needed to help us remain responsive and quickly navigate changes in community needs. **Help us grow our *Emergency Response Fund* as a source of support for homeless and low-income community members facing hardship due to the pandemic.** Your support will be needed for months to come. Visit [hudsonriverhousing.org/emergencyresponsefund](https://hudsonriverhousing.org/emergencyresponsefund) for more information.

We need to keep our frontline community responders operating at full capacity. We are in continuous need of personal protective equipment, including face masks, hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies. Contact [volunteer@hudsonriverhousing.org](mailto:volunteer@hudsonriverhousing.org) if you can help.

Our emergency food needs have increased dramatically. Support our efforts to feed 400+ homeless and housing insecure with donations:

- Breakfast foods like bagels, muffins, fruit, yogurt or individual containers of milk
- Lunch foods like sandwich fixings, cheese sticks, dessert items, and individual juice or milk

Help feed our 100+ emergency shelter guests.

- Prepare and deliver dinner meals for up to 110 individuals
- Donations of \$250 allow us to purchase a meal from local purveyors to serve our guests

Help keep our pantries stocked.

- Donations of nonperishable and fresh foods help our 600+ low-income tenants continue feeding their families.

If you can help with any of our emergency food needs, contact [volunteer@hudsonriverhousing.org](mailto:volunteer@hudsonriverhousing.org) if you can help.

## Advocate

As the crisis continues, we anticipate many ongoing impacts. Raise your voice to let your friends, neighbors, and government leaders know you care about the needs of our homeless and low-income community, needs like:

- Resources to minimize the number of people living in congregate shelters and funding for short-term rental assistance and housing stabilization services.
- Direct outreach within low-income communities to ensure residents are aware of and able to take advantage of resources available to them through relief packages.
- Rental assistance to help avoid a massive uptick in homelessness and housing instability over the coming months.
- Housing counseling services to help renters and homeowners remain stably housed.
- Support to our small business community navigate the resources available to them now, as well as plan for an uncertain future.

## Do you know someone who needs help with housing?

Reach out to the Dutchess County Coronavirus Hotline at 845-486-3555 or contact Hudson River Housing directly at 845-625-3527.

## Looking Ahead: What the Pandemic Means for the Homeless and Housing Insecure

The COVID-19 crisis is shining a light on how critical safe and stable housing is – and how many people don't have access to it. In our current system, not everyone is guaranteed a place to live. Too many survive in shelters, on couches, or on the street.

In the span of just a few weeks, this crisis has exposed the true scope of homelessness in our community, and the precariousness of so many families who are teetering on the brink - who are just a paycheck away. It has underscored our dependence on our immigrant community - the backbone of our service industry - along with the plight of the many minimum wage earners who are putting the good of the community ahead of their own needs in order to keep critical services operating.

Despite this, the federal stimulus funding will likely not reach our most vulnerable neighbors, and certainly not in time to meet the urgent expenses they have right now, or will incur over the months to come. This includes extremely low-income individuals who haven't filed a tax return in the past two years, people without access to the internet, many immigrants and people whose primary language is not English.

New data is also showing the disparate impact of COVID-19 on black and brown communities. Environmental and societal inequities have led to greater incidence of chronic illness that are risk factors for contracting COVID-19, and hundreds of years of systemic racism have made it more likely that black and brown Americans work in service class jobs, depend more on public transit, have less access to goods and services, and suffer from greater housing and food insecurity. And low-income communities in general are likely to be hit the hardest by the immediate and lingering effects of the pandemic.

## We Need to Change our Systems and Policies

This crisis has highlighted the need to reorient where home falls on our spectrum of what is important. ***Hudson River Housing is an organization that is prepared to repair the issues that are before us, and we have the vision of where we can go together.*** But we can't do it without your help.

In addition to meeting immediate health and safety of our neighbors, we need long term solutions to increase permanent affordable housing in our community, including solutions like:

- Requiring new housing developments to include a percentage of affordable units
- Supporting publicly funded programs that provide resources to create permanent housing for the homeless
- Advocating for zoning that allows for different forms of housing, such as dormitory-style units for those on limited incomes
- Strengthening the ability of local government to streamline the development process and move quickly to turn vacant properties into affordable housing

Now and in the future, we will see many more families struggling to maintain their housing as they deal with unemployment, medical bills, and savings accounts that have been depleted. This will push even more households into housing instability if we don't act to safeguard safe, affordable housing for all.

This is something that we can do together, and it's something we can do now.

**We need continued leadership and coordination from local government that prioritizes housing as critical for maintaining healthy communities. We need community residents to raise their voices in support of affordable homes for all. We have a need to rebuild our local economy to be stronger and more equitable, and this is our opportunity to do so.**

**We have the power, if we act.**