



Meeting Notes - COVID-19 Regional Response Team (RRT) Call #8

Thursday, May 21st 2020

3:00-4:00 pm

Facilitated by:

Jason Purnell, Washington University in St. Louis

Rebecca Bennett, Emerging Wisdom LLC

WELCOME – JASON PURNELL

We continue to hope that you are caring for yourselves and your families in addition to the families you serve. Thank you to everyone for your work.

CAMPAIGN UPDATES

1. Food Insecurity – Doneisha Bohannon and Katie Kaufmann

The team is working with several RRT members to increase food distribution at schools and libraries, and leveraging those sites to feed entire families. We are also identifying several new sites where food can be provided to communities. Our emphasis is on using an equitable lens based on locations in the county with high free/reduced lunch, high poverty, high number of African-Americans, and high incidents of COVID-19. Center for Youth on the Rise, St. Louis County Library, local school districts and more have all been mapped along with areas that are most aligned with the equitable lens we are using.

2. PPE Campaign–Rebecca Bennett

- We have 100,000 donated masks.
- Thank you to those 380 organizations that have completed the survey.
- Subcommittee working with the plan to prioritize how masks are distributed based on survey results.

Current intent is to understand where there are needs and gaps, and to seek out additional resources. The team is looking at this geographically and noting service areas of focus in an effort to meet the need directly, with a focus on high risk of infection and low access to PPE. Additional considerations include serving medically vulnerable people, staff risks (that includes duration of contact with the public and the quantity of public contact had by staff). What is pipeline, access, supply, and funding? Our data team is turning this into a calculus to determine and use data to inform our decision making in this space. We will share more with you as we finalize our prioritization rubric. Our plan is to distribute supplies of PPE the first week in June to those organizations identified as high-risk, with low access. We care about not just giving away PPE, but that we can support you with utilization

instructions, how to make it last, and support the work that you are doing. Remember that on our website we have “how to” documents and a personal risk assessment in our Resources page under Face Masks / PPE.

A cloth mask campaign is pending and will result in 200,000 cloth masks. Unlike with disposable masks, the cloth masks will take about 50 days to produce, and will be distributed in partnership with PrepareSTL.

Nicole Hawkins: Just a note that both IL and MO now have P-EBT benefits available. These benefits allow funds to be added to SNAP recipients’ cards who have children. More info here! <https://stlfoodbank.org/programs-services/snap/>. If someone needs to apply for SNAP, they can also call us and we can help with that.

3. Homebound– Stacey Easterling and Grace Kyung

This marks week 2 of the launch of our initiative. This team leans heavily on a model designed by The Salvation Army and Catholic Charities, and involves 13 partner organizations. There are four parts to our Homebound outreach.

1. **Outreach:** Reach out to vulnerable populations in St. Clair, Madison, and St. Charles counties, along with St. Louis City and County. Inquiries are made about access to basic needs (food, personal care items, behavioral health, rent assistance, and utility assistance).
2. **Intake and Referral by 2-1-1:** Conduct detailed assessments of needs. Match clients with service providers within the 13-agency network to address needs and provide services.
3. **Services:** Connect service providers and clients within 48 hours of requests for support.
4. **Closed Loop/Service Verification:** United Way 2-1-1 verifies service delivery and that client needs are met.

164 referrals in the last week to access resources they have not had support without our efforts. We expect this outreach to continue and to expand

Grace shared that Stacey has accepted a new position and will be moving to Arizona. The RRT thanks Stacey for all her work and dedication.

Jess Holmes reflected on the Homebound effort. Can you think about a policy approach for clients who are calling Spire and Ameren are sending them to 2-1-1 for payments to their utilities? Is there a policy consideration we need to consider? Integrated Health Network is wrapping our heads around what that means. Charitable efforts blend with some legal considerations as well. Jess understands that organizations can rarely cover electric and gas bills. Instead of being part of the solution, the utilities seem to be sending people to 2-1-1. LaKeysha Fields added that The Salvation Army receives some of those calls. Bringing Ameren and Spire to the table makes sense, and hopefully there can be something added. Perhaps a similar structure to what is used for Homebound, where there is a specific solution. Jennifer Heggemann, with legal services added that public comment is open in Illinois for how utility companies respond when the moratorium on shutoffs may end. This is an opportunity for us to make recommendations. Consider building this into our discussion about what a community response could be beyond going to the public service commission. Partnering with the utilities is the preferred way. Tyrone Fields (Catholic Charities) is seeing that existing past due bills and new bills from COVID are being juggled by underserved populations. The nonprofit sector should not absorb all this. Debra Moore encouraged RRT members to reach out directly to Ameren.

Other Updates

Contact Tracing.

Bert Malone from the Missouri Public Health Association spoke to the RRT.

- Seek to isolate and mitigate exposure to those infected with COVID-19. Cannot overstate how important this is to a community. The media and policy makers are discussing this and debating how many people are needed as contact tracers for each county. Based on an analysis by GWU, funded by the National Association of City and County Health Officials, recommend between 90 – 190 individuals involved in contact tracing for St. Louis City. The study is able to determine needs for contact tracers in every county.
<https://www.gwhwi.org/estimator-613404.html>
- This is a broad term including interviews with someone infected, contacting people that person interacted with, educating them and advising them on how to quarantine. There are key concepts that are important. Confidentiality is critical; we never identify the source case; often contacts will know is involved, but we do not name the source. We reply that it was someone who was concerned about their health. Additional critical area is cultural competence – ability to approach a variety of people without judgement. Ensuring that people can access prevention information, testing, and care as they may need. Organizations can advocate for the importance of contact tracing with the populations they serve, in case they are contacted in the future by the health department. Experience guides us you cannot build a contact tracing program based on volunteers. To actually do the contact tracing, this is best done by employees or contactors to the health department. The Missouri Public Health Association will celebrate 100 years in 2025.

Debra Moore, St. Clair County

- There is a direct correlation between virus testing and contact tracing. We are seeing an underutilization of the Jackie Joyner Kersee Center site's testing abilities. They can handle 500 people per day. East St. Louis has two testing sites and Debra encouraged anyone who wants to be tested to come to JJK, no doctor's authorization is needed. Missouri residents are able to come over and be tested. Results will be delivered by phone. JJK Center address: Argonne Drive, East St. Louis, IL 62204.
- In IL, St. Clair County and Lake County have been identified as a test site assessing the ability to respond to contact tracing needs. We have the St. Clair County Health Department and the East St. Louis Health Department. The East St. Louis Health Department serves the broader minority community. Contact tracing jobs are available in Illinois:
www.dhp.illinois.gov/covid19.
- The state is also providing money to the health departments to fund contact tracing. Expansive ability to respond is available, but we need more tests to be taken. We are in a high-risk area and a high-need area. Pushing out this information and engaging our Missouri neighbors can help.

Tyrone Ford added that a food distribution flyer was added in the chat for this weekend.

Kelly Ferrara – engagement updates on website are launched and ready to go.

- [RRT Ideas Wall](#) – a place to drop pictures, ask questions, engage other RRT members.
- [Discussion Forum](#) – conversations designed to carry us beyond the one-hour, weekly call.

CONCLUSION – JASON PURNELL

Thank you for your work and wishing you all the best as the holiday weekend approaches.

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