CSO Community Action Agency 2021

CSO Connections Newsletter
LET US PAY YOUR RENT & UTILITIES
Emergency Rental Assistance Program

If you or anyone in your household has:

- Qualified for unemployment benefits
- Lost income, or experienced other financial hardship due directly or indirectly to COVID-19
- Been at risk of homelessness or have a past due utility payment

CSO CARES - CALL US
570-644-6575 x 171
csocares.org csoinc@censop.com

CSO is now accepting applications for the **Emergency Rental Assistance Program** for residents of Northumberland County.

Please visit our website where you will find all the information and can get started on the application process. **Click now.**
Community Needs Assessment

The more we know about our local community the better help we can provide.

This Community Needs Assessment is an important tool used in identifying deficiencies in services to families & individuals.

We use the answers gathered from this survey are used to plan strategies to work to close service gaps. The goal is to improve self-sufficiency through effective & meaningful programs.

There are two different assessment surveys. One for individuals & families to complete & the other for agencies' needs.

- Assessment link for individuals & families
- Assessment link for service providers

Housing Services

Safe and affordable housing is one of the top needs in the communities that CSO serves. We help individuals with their security deposits and rent. This past year we were awarded grant money specifically for households suffering from financial setbacks caused by COVID-19.

The CARES Rent Relief PHFA Program was established as an emergency response to the COVID-19 health pandemic providing funds to support eligible households. Read below about how these funds helped a local family meet their housing needs.

Kim- A Housing Success Story
Kim is a single mother employed at a local preschool center. At the beginning of March 2020, she was on medical leave undergoing cancer treatment. Right before Kim’s scheduled return, the center closed to meet COVID-19 guidelines. Kim applied for unemployment compensation, but it took an unusually long time for her to receive any benefits.

Although the preschool center reopened, Kim faced another challenge. She worked fewer hours because the center experienced a drop in enrollment. With a reduced income, Kim found herself trying to decide which bills to pay. She fell behind on her rent while trying to keep up with utility bills. Kim struggled to make ends meet; at one point she found herself choosing between buying her son’s school pictures and paying a bill.

Kim contacted CSO for help paying the back rent she owed. Working with her case manager, Kim applied for the CARES Rent Relief PHFA Program. She qualified for six months of rental assistance. This allowed her to get off to a fresh start with her landlord, and she could stay up to date with her other bills.

Kim says that she is “astounded and so grateful for this, having a clean slate with my landlord means the world to me.” Today, she is back to working full-time.

Another vital housing service CSO provides is the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG.) ESG funds are available in Columbia, Montour, & Northumberland Counites to help individuals & families quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness.

ESG services are commonly used for these instances:

- **Rapid Rehousing**, for those that do not need intensive or ongoing support to exit homelessness & return to permanent housing, works to identify individuals’ strengths. The next step is to assist individuals to build on those strengths to keep their housing.
- **Homelessness Prevention**, housing relocation & stabilization services, short-term rental assistance to avoid placement in emergency shelters.
- **Street Outreach** is connecting unsheltered homeless individuals & families with emergency shelter, providing homeless individuals or
families with critical health & mental health services, & arranging urgent, non-facility-based care.

Meghan - A Housing Success Story

Meghan was released from the Northumberland County Prison with nowhere to live. To find safe and affordable housing she enrolled in the ESG Rapid Rehousing Program with CSO.

With assistance from her CSO case manager, Meghan was able to move directly into an apartment. Since living in the apartment, Meghan has been able to obtain employment to begin saving to put towards her rental payments. Meghan and her case manager have been setting goals. With hard work, she has been successfully achieving these goals.

Meghan has thanked her housing case manager and CSO for all the help she continues to receive. She stated, “She doesn’t know where she would be without CSO.”

Staff Spotlight
Kathy Williams  
**ESG/RRH Case Manager**

She has worked for CSO for just over two years.

*Kathy works with domestic abuse survivors & helps people locate housing. She finds it satisfying to work with amazing, strong women.*

Kathy's grandchildren inspire her to always do the best she can do- in all that she does.

She wants to give them an example of how to treat people in the world!

Did you know?
- Kathy has written short stories
- If she had a superpower, it would be to create world peace
- If Kathy could be a fictional character, it would be a vampire- "so she would never age!"
Laura Pulaski
CAA Housing Case Manager

Her favorite thing about being a case manager?
Helping people in the surrounding communities!

Laura loves hockey!
The family is huge Pittsburgh Penguin fans.
She had a hockey-themed wedding!

She loves spending time with her family going to sporting events or doing crafts.

Laura's superpower would be predicting the future!

Then she could help people BEFORE they even knew they needed it!

In a movie about her life, Laura would be played by Kirsten Dunst!
Congratulations to Sue Snyder!

The Greater Susquehanna Valley United Way selected Sue as the Week 3 winner in their February Kindness Campaign. Sue is part of the Adult/Dislocated Worker Program and works at the PA CareerLink® of Northumberland, Snyder, & Union Counties.

Read Sue's story here.
In Conclusion...

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE GOLF TOURNAMENT!

July 12, 2021
CSO 16th Annual Golf Tournament
Frosty Valley Country Club
Danville, PA

Thriving Individuals, Thriving Families, Thriving Communities
Provide Opportunities. Empower People. Strengthen Communities.

Visit our Website

| CSO/Central Susquehanna Opportunities, Inc. |
| 2 E. Arch Street, Shamokin, PA 17872 |
| 570-644-6575 X171 | www.csocares.org |

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