

Multicultural Advisory Committee of the State of Utah's COVID-19 Response

Meeting Minutes

Friday, December 4, 2020 | 3:00 - 4:00 P.M.

Google Meet | Online

Members: Chair Nubia Peña, Co-Chair Byron Russell, Co-Chair Ze Min Xiao, Aden Batar, Asha Parekh, Dulce Díez, Dustin Jansen, Emma E. Houston, Jake Fitisemanu Jr., Juan Becerra, Mike Haddon, Ming Wang, Rebecca Chavez-Houck

Absent: Jess Anderson, Dr. Marc Babitz, Silvia Castro, Mayra Cedano, Neelam Chand, Celina Milner, Deneiva Knight, Dr. Len Novilla, Mikelle Moore

Guests: Ramy Ahmed, Ciriac Alvarez Valle, Luna Banuri, Alexandria Kiel, Aro Han, Dan Moak, James Yapias, Jenny Hor, Jeremy Taylor, Dr. Joél Arvizo-Zavala, Marti Woolford, Moe Hickey, Nancy Sylvester, Nate McDonald, Pamela Beatse, Rossina Lake, Shawn Newell, Taysha Tiatia

Welcome – Byron Russell, Co-Chair

Byron Russell welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Rental Assistance – Nate McDonald

- Early on in the pandemic, there was a recognition of the need for rental assistance, especially after the \$600 unemployment stimulus expired.
- With August being the first full month, \$20 million was dedicated for rent relief assistance from CARES Act funding.
 - At first, there was a concern the money would not be spent as many people were not utilizing the resource.
- A centralized website for rent relief, rentrelief.utah.gov, was formed. The website contains everything regarding rent relief from resources to eligible uses for funds.
- 5,666 renter applications have been paid.
 - A change in legislation has allowed landlords to apply on behalf of tenants. This streamlined the process.
 - Over 3,620 landlord applications have been filed.
 - Landlords have faced frustration as some tenants have not cooperated in filling out their part of the application.
- \$16.2 million of the \$20 million has been allocated. The rest is still expected to be paid out, including an additional \$2 million.
- December 15th is the last day to apply, as December 31st is the last day to spend CARES Act funds.
- The threat of an eviction wave is looming on January 1st. Because of this a \$7 million dollar request was made to cover the month of January.
- There are some other assistance programs not tied to the CARES Act, which allows them to continue assisting past January 1st.
 - The HEAT Program helps with energy costs.
 - The Emergency Solutions Grant assists with emergency shelter and transitional housing.

No Worker Left Behind – Ze Min Xiao & Moe Hickey

- No Worker Left Behind is a program, still in its initial phase, designed to provide direct financial relief to working families who may have been left behind from other support systems.
 - In April, a report was conducted to see what percentage of workers were paying taxes and insurance, but not eligible for benefits.
 - Utah families put in \$154 million, that they were ineligible to benefit from.
 - After working with a group in Colorado, and using their built infrastructure, the program began screening potential candidates.
 - \$200,000 from CARES Act funding has been allocated for this program to start the process.
 - The first distribution will go to Salt Lake City residents.
 - Partnerships have begun with 5 different community organizations.
 - Each eligible household will receive a \$1,000 check. It will take 6 days from approval to delivery of the check. The money will be directly deposited.
 - There are five criteria to be eligible for the program:
 - Not qualified for unemployment
-

Multicultural Advisory Committee of the State of Utah's COVID-19 Response

- Not qualified for the stimulus check
- Loss of employment or reduction of hours
- Employed 20+ hours per week before job loss or work reduction due to COVID-19
- Have a valid ID

Evictions Support Update – Alexandria Kiel, Aro Han, and Pamela Beatse

- A direct line within the Utah State Courts' Self-Help Center has been created for legal help regarding evictions.
- A town hall is scheduled, including a Spanish interpreter, to answer any questions that the community may have regarding evictions.
- People's Legal Aid represents clients in debt collection and eviction matters, but only in residential disputes.
 - The legal aid has a line that people in need of assistance can reach.
 - Consultation and representation is all that this organization can provide.
- The Utah State Bar also works with clients regarding debt collection or eviction hearings by providing limited representation and volunteer lawyers.
 - There is also a virtual legal clinic, where clients can be referred to attorneys for consultation based on their needs.

Other Business

- At next week's meeting, Rich Lakin from the Health Department will be speaking about the COVID-19 vaccine rollout plan.
- Some CARES Act assistance programs end December 26th, such as the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program, and the Pandemic Extended Benefit Program.
- When the pandemic hit, the Christian Center of Park City allocated nearly \$1 million for rental assistance, supporting over 800 families. Now the focus is on eviction prevention by taking eviction notices and working with local governments or paying landlords.

Next Meeting

Friday, December 11, 2020 from 3:00–4:00 P.M. through Google Meet.