



Catholic  
**Social Services**

---

**Services for our Community**

The Needs We See in Response to Covid 19

# CSS Shelter Services

- Catholic Social Services has operated emergency shelter in Anchorage for almost 40 years. Over that time we have become the local expert on providing this emergency service.
  - Brother Frances Shelter – emergency shelter for adults, low barrier, trauma-informed, highly trained staff, client-centered approach.  
LONG TIME CAPACITY 240
  - Clare House – emergency shelter for women with children and expectant mothers, low barrier, trauma-informed, highly trained staff, client-centered approach.  
LONG TIME CAPACITY 60-70

# CSS Shelter Learnings From Covid Response

- BFS Capacity change to 114: Confirmed our belief that having more space between people allows for a healthier and less stressful environment.
  - Clients seem healthier in terms of normal viral illness – less coughing and respiratory symptoms.
  - Clients have more space and so are able to seek more quiet space in tense or challenging times – a reduction in our list of people trespassed (not allowed to use services) to zero for the past 2 months
- Having the same clients allowed and encouraged to stay in the day and night
  - No need for guest to spend all day looking for safe day shelter, so more time to connect with supportive sources – incredible success in moving people in shelter to housing.
  - Increase in people reducing or stopping substance misuse because they have a safe place to stay inside and are encouraged to stay with us.
- Closed shelter campus outside because now a single operator operates one service on the small campus
  - Reduced harmful activities around campus – reduced drug sales and other risky behaviors
  - Dramatically reduced camping on Karluk
  - Safe space for BFS clients to be outside safely

# CSS Housing Case Management Services

- Catholic Social Services Homeless Family Services is the largest provider of housing case management services in Anchorage
- We serve many populations including single adults, families, and Veterans
- We moved over 300 households to permanent housing in FY2019
- In November 2019 CSS received a grant from the Day 1 Foundation to house 60 families a year for 5 years.

# CSS Housing Case Management Learnings From Covid Response

- CSS has leveraged and redirected resources to focus to an even greater extent on moving people from congregant settings (shelters) to safe housing
- In 10 weeks we have moved 188 people to safe housing and kept 280 people safely in their existing housing (prevented homelessness)
- There are people who are very motivated to move to housing now because of risk of Covid 19
- Our evidence-based model, critical time intervention, allows our staff to utilize shorter or longer intervention times based on the needs and vulnerability of the clients
- These services extend to prevention services which we have increased in the past 2 months with support from AHFC
- We have strong support from the community and funders to continue to extend and expand our housing services and capacity internally.
- National data indicates that there will be a sizable increase in need for prevention case management (40% increase in the coming year)

# CSS Emergency Food Services

- St. Francis House Food Pantry is the largest food pantry in Alaska.
- We serve on average 80 to 100 households every day we are open.
- At Brother Francis Shelter we now serve breakfast, lunch and dinner every day
- At Clare House dinner is provided every day by volunteers (a donation of over \$250,000 annually) and food is provided for families to use to cook for themselves during the day.

# CSS Emergency Food Service Learnings From Covid Response

- The number of clients at St. Francis House increased dramatically in the first six weeks, an increase of 50% in clients, and 30% of them were new to St. Francis House
- The services have leveled off more recently closer to normal levels which may speak to availability of food from other entities, including the school district.
- We are expecting a tough summer in terms of food needs in our community. Data we collect shows that people at St. Francis House use money saved to pay for rent, a utility bill or medical bill.
- We expect with the economic downturn to see an increasing need for emergency food.

# CSS Employment Services

- CSS provides employment support generally as a part of our case management service.
- CSS provides the high quality employment case management as a part of the wrap around services provided in our Refugee Assistance and Immigration Services program.
- Within 3 months of arrival in the US, more than 90% of our clients are employed.
- Within 2 years of being in the US, 100% are off all Public Assistance.

# CSS Employment Services Learnings From Covid Response

- More than 50% of our RAIS clients have lost their job or been furloughed in the past 2 months.
- We have increased our efforts to make sure our clients are signed up for available federal resources in all of our programs and referred them to available prevention services.
- We anticipate this trend to continue and are working to find new employment opportunities.

# Recommendations

- **Make a plan for shelter and work with all of us in the shelter-providing community**
  - More smaller shelters
  - All low barrier
  - Support them all to be day and night (no need for a separate stand alone day shelter)
  - Do not create a shelter for those with the highest behavioral health needs – they need the behavioral health intervention of permanent supportive housing
- **Keep focused on housing - that is the solution**
  - Fund housing case managers
  - Fund resource and referral case managers
- **Increase efforts around prevention – keeping people in housing through the next year is going to be critical**
- **Reduce barriers to resources for rental and food subsidy**
- **Assure adequate food resources through out the summer, when ASD will not be in session**
- **Consider work programs in the coming year**

**Thank you**

Lisa DH Aquino, MHS  
Chief Executive Officer  
Catholic Social Services  
[ldhaquino@cssalaska.org](mailto:ldhaquino@cssalaska.org)  
907-222-7300