Smaller cities addressing housing challenges compounded by COVID-19

September 2020
Where we live matters
The Invest Health Journey

• Since 2016, working to improve the SDOH & advance health equity
• 50 small to mid-sized cities
• Cross-sector teams
• Created national learning community, with technical & coaching assistance
• Built environment & community investment system changes
Field Building Cities, since 2018

- Spokane, WA
- Missoula, MT
- Roseville, CA
- Grand Rapids, MI
- Lansing, MI
- Hartford, CT
- Napa, CA
- Akron, OH
- Riverside, CA
- Greensboro, NC
BHEC: Improving the SDOH in New Jersey

- Address SDOH through built environment and community investment system over 3 years
- Cross-sector collaboratives in 4 NJ cities for equitable recovery and project advancement
- Development related support, predevelopment funds and flexible financing
- Data analytics & technical assistance
BHEC: Leveraging a single-state policy environment

Objectives of BHEC

▪ Identify shared priorities
▪ Deepen understanding
▪ Strengthen partnerships
▪ Improve systems
▪ Facilitate resource alignment
▪ Build capacity
COVID-Related Challenges

- Housing stability, eviction, affordability
- Homelessness services, housing, supports
- Food access, distribution, school meals
- Job access, financial stability
- Testing, services, COVID tracking
- Mental health, family services (youth and adult)
Napa, CA

- Rental rates softened with job loss & businesses closed.

- Policies – Anti-eviction ordinances/regulations adopted. City has established local rental assistance programs.

- Home prices are up & inventory down.

- Policy – 1st time homeowner programs to assist low-income buyers.
Riverside, CA

- City created a rental assistance grant and enacted a temporary moratorium on rental evictions.
- Homeowners are receiving Foreclosure Intervention Counseling by Invest Health.
- The Small Business Emergency Microgrant Stabilization Program was unanimously approved in concept by City Council and will utilize $1.87 million in new federal CDBG funds, impacting nearly 250 businesses with 5 or less employees (owned and operated by low-moderate income individuals).
Smaller City Solutions

Grand Rapids, MI

- 30% delinquency in rent in April
- Rental assistance program with $50,000 from LINC UP
- Anti-eviction ordinances adopted

INVEST HEALTH
Strategies for Healthier Cities
Smaller City Solutions

Missoula, MT

- City purchasing hotel for temporary safe shelter (COVID quarantining, etc.)
- Eventually turning it into affordable housing with social work services.
Smaller City Solutions

Spokane, WA

- Non-payment of rent continues to be an issue (eviction moratorium)
- There are some funds to help with eviction prevention (magnitude of need eclipses assistance 20-fold)
- Availability of units continues to be an issue (vacancy rate is less than 2%)
- Issue exacerbated when small landlords (making up large share of market) forced to sell because they can’t make their mortgage payments (because people are not paying rent)
- Funding needed to address it
What’s Next?

- Continuing to connect Invest Health cities with other each other to share short- and long-term recovery solutions
- Explore how state and federal resources can best align through recovery and beyond for BHEC
Thank you!

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