

We Care

Tri-annual Report to Board, May 21, 2019

Emergency Financial Assistance Provided: Jan – April 2020

Submitted by: Rex Cole, We Care Intake Coordinator

Within the first four months of 2020 We Care quickly adapted to the new realities of the COVID-19 epidemic and continued to provide emergency financial assistance to Benton County residents.

Population Served.

During January-April 2020, We Care received 181 inquiries and 145 applications for assistance. After initial screening, volunteers presented the We Care board with 125 requests for consideration. **The board approved 103 assistance requests** and denied 12; 10 applications were withdrawn. The households assisted were in Corvallis (92), Philomath (6), N. Albany (2), & Alsea (2), Monroe (1). **Fifty (49%) of the approved requests were for families with children**, and a total of 105 children were in the assisted families. Twenty-six of the households assisted included a member with a disability. A comparison of this data with previous years is provided in Table 1.

<i>TABLE 1. WHO WAS HELPED (January – April)</i>				COVID-19	These numbers are included in the 2020 totals listed to the left.
	2018	2019	2020	Mar-Apr	
Assistance inquiries received		167	181		
Assistance applications received	102	117	145	21	
Applications reviewed by board	77	95	125	21	
Total households assisted	74	88	103	21	
Households denied assistance	3	6	12	0	
Applications withdrawn	0	3	10	1	
Households w/disability assisted	16	20	26	2	
Households w/children assisted	43	33	50	13	
Number of children assisted	64	74	105	20	
Number of adults assisted	85	110	134	30	

From the middle of March until near the end of April, there was a notable lull in the number of applicants, as people awaited their COVID-19 stimulus checks, unemployment benefits, and a clearer picture of what would happen next. The moratoriums on evictions and shut-offs of electricity and water also had an impact. The first COVID-19 affected family came to We Care seeking assistance on March 23, but the wave of financial need did not hit until the last week in April. The column to the right of Table 1 shows the numbers associated with We Care applicants through the end of April who had lost jobs or income to COVID-19. Currently, as of the second week in May, **We Care has assisted thirty-one COVID-19 affected households (49 adults and 32 children) providing a total of \$ 21,246 in assistance.** (For a more detailed analysis see the report, “We Care and the COVID-19 Pandemic”, available on our web site: www.wecarecorvallis.org.)

Assistance Provided

Thanks to generous donations by the Benton Community Foundation, our faith community partners, and concerned others, we were able to increase the amount of assistance provided to families by 34% to \$ 48,931 during the period from January through April, compared to the same period in the previous year. This increase was greatest for rental assistance, the primary request by those with COVID-19 related job or income losses.

	Jan-Apr 2019		Jan-Apr 2020		COVID-19 Mar-Apr	These amounts are included in the totals listed for Jan-Apr 2020 in the Table to the left.
	Families	Total \$	Families	Total \$		
Housing	46	\$ 22,069	76	\$ 39,794	\$ 13,660	
Rent	43	\$ 20,451	69	\$ 36,432		
Rental Deposit	3	\$ 1,618	7	\$ 3,362		
Utilities & Bills	27	\$ 11,180	13	\$ 3,186	\$ 254	
Electricity	21	\$ 9,737	8	\$ 1,815		
Natural Gas	3	\$ 518	0	\$ -		
Heating Oil	0	\$ -	1	\$ 282		
Water	4	\$ 924	2	\$ 627		
Phone	0	\$ -	2	\$ 462		
Storage Space	4	\$ 722	5	\$ 1,599		
Auto	10	\$ 2,302	9	\$ 2,013		
Healthcare	2	\$ 335	3	\$ 1,714		
Other	2	\$ 342	1	\$ 625	\$ 625	
TOTAL	90	\$ 36,948	107	\$ 48,931	\$ 14,539	

Diversity of Population Served

We Care has a strict non-discrimination policy. Board members approving assistance are blind to the racial or ethnic identity of the applicants, and information about racial or ethnic identity is normally not requested during the application process. However, to verify that We Care assistance was reaching a racially/ethnically diverse population, a survey was taken of those receiving assistance. A member of each household approved for assistance was asked what ethnic and/or racial group each member of the household identified as their own. We were able to collect data for 89% (213 of 239) of the individuals and 89% (92 of 103) of the households receiving assistance from January through April.

			Those not claiming to be Hispanic or Latinx identified themselves as:						
	Hispanic or Latino	Not Hispanic or Latino	White or Caucasian	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	Other race/ethnicity	Mixed Race
We Care #	62	151	111	2	3	4	6	11	14
We Care %	29.0%	71.0%	73.5%	1.3%	2.0%	2.6%	4.0%	7.3%	9.3%
Benton County %	7.6%	92.4%	83.9%	1.0%	7.5%	1.1%	0.2%	1.1%	5.0%

This data indicate that We Care assistance is reaching an ethnically and racially diverse population. (Benton County data is from U.S. Census Bureau's estimates, Table DP05)