



Report to the We Care General Meeting, May 13, 2021
 Emergency Financial Assistance Provided: January – April 2021
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The first four months of 2021 saw the continued financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the low-income Benton County households that We Care serves. The severity of that impact was to some extent muted by the influx of government funds in the form of rental assistance and stimulus checks, combined with the ongoing moratorium on evictions for failure to pay rent. Additionally, grants from Pacific Power for electricity bills, and from the City of Corvallis for water bills eased the burden to some low-income families. Overall, the number of households assisted by We Care from January through April 2021 was similar to the number assisted during the same period in 2019, but down from the number served in 2020 during the onset of the pandemic. However, the total amount of assistance provided during this period was significantly higher in 2021, than in either of the two previous years, reflecting larger amounts of accumulated debt for rent and utility bills.

Table 1. Households Served - January Through April

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Assistance inquiries received		167	181	142
Assistance applications received	102	117	145	109
Applications reviewed by board	77	95	125	93
Total households assisted	74	88	103	89
Households denied assistance	3	6	12	2
Applications withdrawn	0	3	10	2
Households with disability assisted	16	20	26	24
Households with children assisted	43	33	50	48
Number of children assisted	64	74	105	93
Number of adults assisted	85	110	134	116

Population Served.

During January-April 2021, We Care received 142 inquiries and 109 applications for assistance (comparison to previous years in Table 1). After initial screening, volunteers presented the We Care board with 93 requests for consideration. **The board approved 89 assistance requests** and denied 2; 2 applications were withdrawn. The households assisted were in Corvallis (82), Philomath (5), and Monroe (1). **Forty-eight (54%) of the approved requests were for families with children**, and a total of 93 children were in the assisted families. Twenty-four of the households assisted included a member with a disability. The financial difficulties of 24 of the assisted households were directly related to COVID-19, affecting 32 adults and 24 children. These COVID-19 impacted families were assisted with a total of \$15,327, for rent, utilities, or auto repairs.

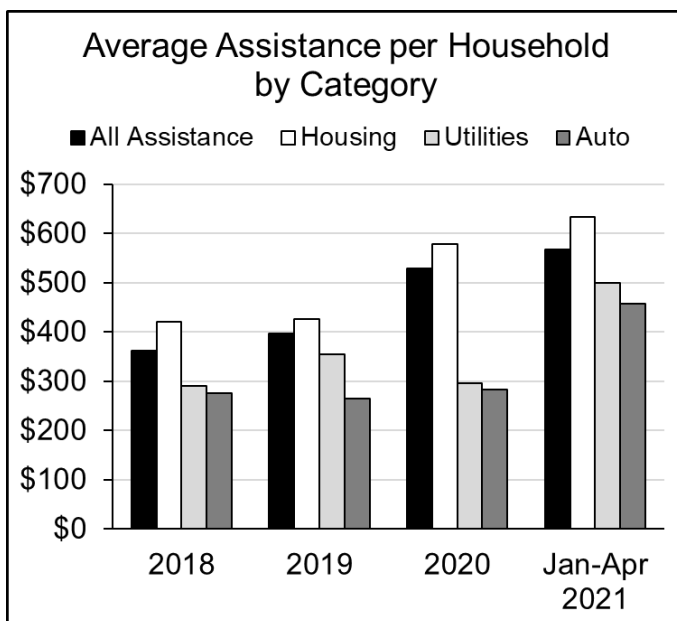
Table 2. Types and Amounts of Assistance Provided

	JAN-APR 2019		JAN-APR 2020		JAN-APR 2021	
	Families	Total \$	Families	Total \$	Families	Total \$
Housing	46	22,069	76	39,794	62	39,327
Rent	43	20,451	69	36,432	57	36,952
Rental Deposit	3	1,618	7	3,362	5	2,375
Utilities & Bills	27	11,180	13	3,186	16	7,993
Electricity	21	9,737	8	1,815	12	6,031
Natural Gas	3	518	0		0	
Heating Oil	0		1	282	1	235
Water	4	924	2	627	3	1,728
Phone	0		2	462	0	
Storage Space	4	722	5	1,599	1	140
Auto	10	2,302	9	2,013	12	5,515
Healthcare	2	335	3	1,714	1	87
Other	2	342	1	625	2	257
TOTAL	90	36,948	107	48,931	94	53,320

Assistance Provided

We Care provided **\$53,320** of assistance during the first four months of 2021. This continues an upward trend since 2019, and is about 1/3 of the total assistance given in 2020 (\$156,232). Approximately the same total amount of **housing assistance** was provided in 2021 as in 2020. On the other hand, there was an increase in the total amount of assistance provided for **utility bill assistance**, and **auto related bills**, partially offset by a decrease in total assistance for **healthcare costs** and **storage rent**.

Significantly, the amount of assistance required to help a family through a financial crisis increased in 2020 during the pandemic, and this trend continues into 2021.



The average assistance awarded in 2018 and 2019 was under \$400, but in the current period (Jan-Apr) is \$566. Housing assistance provided by We Care averaged a little over \$400 per household in 2018 and 2019, but in the current period is \$633. The average assistance provided for utility bills and auto costs has risen significantly as well. The larger average assistance amounts reflect accumulated debt (rent and utility bills) during the pandemic, and families becoming more vulnerable to financial crises.