



COVID-19 RESPONSE: COMMUNITY ACTION

Agency Name: COMMUNITY TEAMWORK, INC (CTI)

Executive Director: Karen N. Frederick, Chief Executive Officer

Executive Direct Contact Info:

Kfrederick@commteam.org

Agency Telephone: (978) 459-0441

Charlene Urbanek, Executive Assistant: curbanek@commteam.org, (978) 654-5766

Congressional Staff and Caseworkers should also utilize the following Contacts:

Communications and Marketing: Kathleen Plath, Development Director:

kplath@commteam.org Office: (978) 654-5640 Cell: (508) 561-9220

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

Areas Served: Greater Lowell, Merrimack Valley, North Shore

Contact Information for the Public: CovidResponseCTI@commteam.org

Or Call: (978) 654-5607

*Although Community Teamwork, Inc. is not doing in-person meetings right now, we are still providing services. We have staff responding to emails and telephone calls as quickly as possible.

Assistance Available:

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

During this health crisis, Community Teamwork has put in place emergency programming to ensure that we can continue to provide critical service to our clients while maintaining social distancing protocols for the health and safety of our community, our clients and our staff. While our buildings are closed to walk-in traffic, our staff is available by phone, email and, in extreme circumstances, to meet with clients on an appointment-only basis. Please call one of the numbers below and our staff will work with you to find the right solutions for you and your family during this challenging time.

The Majority of our emergency services are accessible via phone or email. The emergency COVID hotline and general mailbox listed above are continuously monitored from 8:30am to 5pm every weekday.

How to Help: Donations and financial support are always welcome. Please link to

<https://www.commteam.org/you-can-help/donate/>

Or, if you prefer to mail your donation, please send your check (payable to Community Teamwork, Inc.) to 155 Merrimack Street, Lowell MA 01852 Attn: Development Department.

IMPORTANT COMMUNITY TEAMWORK (CTI) UPDATES

Community Teamwork provides services to over 54,000 individuals annually. Our primary service area is Lowell and the seven towns surrounding Lowell, but our Housing, Childcare, and other services are offered in over 63 communities throughout Massachusetts. In the past three years, the preponderance of our service is in the Greater Lowell area.

During the COVID -19 Emergency, in addition to quickly moving to remote and online service provision, CTI has seen the need to rapidly pivot to address issues of food insecurity, income insecurity, and to support to families sheltering at home with children.

The most important aspect of our work has been to keep staff actively connecting with our constituents, to think creatively about how to provide services, and to continue to provide empathy, value, and support to our community. We would like to highlight the incredible work of our staff, especially considering the exponential increase in community members in need of help.

For our **Housing Consumer Education Center (HCEC)**, we've seen an increase in **Rental Assistance for Families Transitioning (RAFT)** applications, which help pay arrears, rent, mortgage, from about 100 a month (pre-COVID) to nearly 150 applications a week. Through the COVID Emergency RAFT Funding CTI received from the State. At this point, we have expended **99%** of the funds, assisting over 400 households to retain their housing.

As we end our 8th week of COVID, CTI has provided thousands of dollars in emergency Food Gift Cards, to **388** households. These families are reaching out to us through our COVID-19 hotline and email, and are asking for food help. Our Resource Center is fielding an average of **360 calls and 350 emails** weekly, for assistance and also, general information about COVID-19.

Our staff ensure families needing food assistance are also connected with **SNAP** (Food Stamps), **WIC** (Formula and nutritional help for Mothers), and information about other food resources, as well as assessing to determine that other needs of the family are being met.

We've experienced a **150%** increase in calls to our WIC Program, and a **200%** increase in applications in the past four weeks from the prior four week period.

Homelessness

Through this COVID-19 emergency, **Community Teamwork** has kept the Mill You, our at-risk youth and homeless youth site, open and staffed. The **Mill You** is open Monday, Wednesdays, and Fridays, from 9 to noon, and youth can come to utilize the shower and laundry facilities on-site. The Mill You also houses a small food pantry, in partnership with the Merrimack Valley Food Bank, and youth can pick up food supplies here. Additionally, our **Youth Services** staff are connecting with our youth, and continuing the work of re-housing, offering food support, and providing case management services to our youth. This team is assisting over **150** youth at this time.

Community Teamwork continues to work with our Shelter families, providing dinner daily to the 102 Shelter Families we support. In addition to these daily meals to our families, we are working with the Lowell Public Schools and Aramark to provide meals to families in our childcare programs. We have worked with these partners, and utilized our school busses and transportation staff, to deliver meals, as well as diapers and wipes. Additionally emergency food cards have been provided to those families in other sites.

Our work with **Lowell General Hospital** continues, providing housing and case management support to the most vulnerable. As homeless individuals are discharged, and cannot return to the Shelter in Lowell, Community Teamwork has housed them in a local hotel, and provides food for these individuals as they recover. We have also used the hotel rooms we have booked (now ten in total), to host individual family members from our Shelter sites, if they are high risk for COVID or if they themselves need to quarantine.

Other Services:

Entrepreneurship Center @Community Teamwork and our **Financial Education Center** are assisting small businesses and individuals with Unemployment Insurance in partnership with the MassHire Lowell Career Center; our **Financial Education Center** staff are also continuing work through our **VITA Tax Return Program**, providing over **300** individuals with tax prep and guidance – critical to receiving the CARES Act supplemental tax funding.

Our **Entrepreneurship Center** has also provided consultation and SBA Guidance to more than 25 businesses; additionally this team is helping Lowell businesses access the new funds recently released by the City of Lowell. They are averaging **20+ calls and over 100** emails weekly from small businesses asking about loans and general support.

Our **WIC Program** continues to provide nutritional & baby check-ins and has completed over 750 hours of remote appointments. Despite the brief closure, need to move this HIPAA Compliant system online, and concerns over COVID-19, we have maintained our caseload of just under 5,000 households.

Our **Volunteer and Mentoring Center** is continuing to connect with our most vulnerable seniors, over 80 individuals living in the Housing Authority and apartments. We have our youth mentors (through **Mill City Mentors**) now calling and checking in our seniors, to assist with combatting social isolation. We are also providing our seniors with some food gift card support. We will also be delivering prepared dinners to each of them five nights a week, starting in the coming weeks.

Our **Child and Family Services Division** has moved to remote learning and support to our Head Start and Before/After School Education program families, offering virtual education, online to support enrichment while sheltering at home. Our team created and delivered activity bags to more than **200** Early Learning children and the children in our emergency shelter sites. In partnership with the **CTI Mill City Mentors**, our staff offers cooking classes for creative, healthy, and affordable meals via Facebook Live. We also offer a Homework Hotline.