



Final Transcript

HUD - US DEPT OF HOUSE AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT: Measuring Impact of Rental Counseling on Evictions - External

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SPEAKERS

Virginia Holman
Jerry Mayer
Rachael Laurilliard
Dan Hegner

PRESENTATION

Moderator Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for standing by. And welcome to the Measuring Impact of Rental Counseling on Evictions Webinar. [Operator instructions]. As a reminder, today's call is being recorded.

I'll turn the call now over to Ms. Virginia Holman. Please go ahead.

Virginia Thank you very much, John. And welcome today to the fifth webinar in our rental counseling series. I hope you've found them all very useful.

But before we get started with the actual webinar, I do want to go over some logistics.

As John said, the audio is being recorded. We will be providing a playback number along with the PowerPoint and a transcript in about a week. And that will be available on HUD Exchange and the archive of the webinars.

I did after [ph] this morning send out a copy of the slides for you to take your notes. It's also available in the control panel on the right-hand side of your screen. You just need to click on the document name and start its download.

Your questions are really very important to us. Because of the large number of people that we have, we will not be taking live questions. But we have other ways for you to ask the questions.

There is a question box, again on the panel on the right-hand side of your screen. If you will just type in your question, we have staff that are watching those questions. And we will try to respond to as many of them

as we can. If we're unable to, we will get the answers to you as soon as we can.

You can also, after the webinar is over, or at any time in the future, send questions and comments to housing.com@hud.gov [ph]. And just put the webinar topic in the subject line so that we get it to the right person.

If you have logged in to the webinar today, you're going to receive a certificate of training. It will come from GoToWebinar. And you'll that within about 48 hours. You need to print it out and save it for your records.

As I mentioned, the webinar materials are posted on HUD Exchange in the webinar archives. And you can search by date or by topic. There's also a way for you to get credit in the future. If you watch the webinars, there's a button that says Get Credit. You just hit that and your attendance to that webinar will go into your HUD Exchange transcript. Now this is only after the webinar is over, not for today.

The Training Digest, again another important item on HUD Exchange.

It's updated weekly. And you can see all the trainings that we're giving and that our training partners are giving.

And now, I'd like to turn it over to Jerry Mayer, the Director of the Office of Housing Counseling, Office of Outreach and Capacity Building. Jerry?

Jerry

Well thank you, Ginger [ph]. And hello and welcome to everybody to today's webinar. As Ginger said, this is the final webinar in our training series for housing counseling agencies that are responding to an increased need for rental housing counseling in their communities.

Housing counseling agencies lay a critical role in helping renters understand their rights and responsibilities, find housing that fits within their budget, support long-term financial goals, and hopefully avoid eviction along with all of its negative consequences. The COVID-19 pandemic has made rental housing counseling even more important and underscored the need for renters to have the same type of preparation and education as homeowners.

In prior webinars in this series, we covered how to ramp up rental housing counseling programs and how to partner with community entities to leverage resources and funding. Today's session will explore how to track the impact of rental counseling in your communities.

Rental counselors are doing great work to help renters understand their rights and responsibilities, and remain in their homes. HUD form 9902 reporting and other tracking data can help agencies understand the impact of their counseling in their community, especially as COVID-19 eviction moratorium may expire in the future, and the need for rental counseling increase.

Next slide. Today we have a number of presenters. And some quick bios. You're supported in this webinar by our production crew. And that is Ginger Holman, Sammy Dunn [ph], Rob Weber, plus some others. So all from the Office of Housing Counseling.

With us today we also have Dan Hegner and Rachael Laurilliard who have been working with ICF, supporting the Office of Housing Counseling and the HUD Exchange website since 2015. Dan brought his tableau-based digital visualization expertise to create the 9902 program impact data

displays that are on the HUD Exchange. And Rachael co-authored the 9902 online toolkit.

Connie Barton has been with HUD's Office of Housing Counseling since 2014. And she recently joined the 9902 team, and will be collaborating with internal and external stakeholders on data collection and reporting. Her career at HUD spans over 20 year. And she has previously worked in HUD's General Counsel's Office, Fair Housing, and Public Housing.

Wanda Collins joined Housing Action Illinois as a capacity building specialist in October of 2017. And she has over 20 years' experience in the mortgage and housing industry, having started her career in loan origination and mortgage underwriting. While at Housing Action Illinois, Wanda has created and facilitated a study group for housing counselors preparing to take the HUD Housing Counselor Certification Exam.

And finally, last but not least, is Wanda Lopez, who's joined Access Living as a Housing Counselor in 2017. She has been in the housing counseling industry for over 25 years in the non-profit sector. And in her time at Access Living, she has designed the Rental Housing Counseling program to better suit the needs of the disability community. Access

Living has been an opportunity for Wanda to learn the unique challenges the disability community faces in the rental market.

And so, without any further ado, I'd like to hand the mic over to Rachael to take us through the rest of our presentation.

Rachael

Great. Thanks so much, Jerry. Today I'd like to start off by going over our agenda. I will provide a brief recap for you all of our webinar series to date and some bullets for today's webinar. Then we're going to hear from Dan on the analysis of 9902 data trends and the importance of outcome tracking and 9902 reporting.

Then we'll hear from Connie about the 9902 reporting overview and how to specifically report rental to [ph] counseling clients on the HUD form 9902. And then we're very excited to hear from the two Wandas, as Jerry introduced, who will talk about how housing counseling agencies and intermediaries are measuring rental counseling impacts.

And finally, we'll have a Q&A. So definitely write your questions into the question box throughout the webinar or at the time of the question and

answer session, and we'd love to answer your question. And then finally we'll go over some additional resources.

First I'd like to print out a quick recap of the HUD Rental Webinar Series. As Ginger and Jerry both mentioned, The Revenue in Your Organization for Rental Housing Counseling Webinar is our fifth and final webinar in the housing counseling rental and eviction prevention webinar series. So we've heard some exciting topics in the first four webinars about the practice of rental housing counseling, using eviction data and tools to prevent evictions, engaging with HUD partners including homeless service systems, and how to leverage community partners for eviction prevention in your community.

So we really encourage everyone to go back and review the content on the HUD Exchange. There is audio replay information, slide decks, and transcripts for all of those webinars. If you'd like to access those links, you can access the slide deck. That is available in GoToWebinar.

But please also stay tuned for future webinars and resources related to housing counseling and eviction prevention. This is our final webinar for now, but we may have additional webinars and resources in the future.

And now, I just want to give a brief overview of Mentimeter before I switch to Mentimeter. A few of you folks have been present on prior housing counseling webinars. You're probably very familiar.

You can participate in the polling questions by going to www.menti.com using your computer or your smartphone. And there will be a code on the screen for you to enter your responses. So that code is 28182044, and it's at the top of the screen. Whenever it's time to ask us Mentimeter, you can always find the code at the top of the screen that I'm presenting. So if you lose that code, definitely check the top of the screen. But again, it's 28182044.

And the first question we'd like to ask you folks today is, "Are you currently delivering rental housing counseling?" So we asked this question at the start of our webinar series. So we kind of want to figure out how this is changing amongst all of the housing counseling agencies participating in HUD's program.

And you can see there's a few different options here. So it looks like most of you are providing rental housing counseling. Some of you are not

providing it right now, but you're thinking of adding the service this coming year. That's great. And then some of you are not providing it and have no plans at the moment to add this service.

It looks like about 47 people have responded. Again, the code to menti.com is 28182044. This polling question will remain open as the webinar continues. So if you weren't able to log in just yet, you can certainly log in and answer this question as we continue on with the presentation.

And now, I'm going to hand it over to Dan Hegner who will provide us with an overview of 9902 data trends. Dan?

Dan

Thanks, Rachael. Before I jump into talking about the data trends themselves, I did want to talk a little bit about the 9902 data displays that we have up on the HUD Exchange. So there are a number of interactive data displays that show different data points from the 9902 report. And you can filter these data displays by state and by fiscal years, that you can narrow down the information and look exactly at what you want to see. So we wanted to make sure that you all know that those are tools that are available to you.

Next slide. Thanks, Rachael. So here's a quick overview of some trends that we've noticed in the last fiscal year. So one-on-one counseling on rental topics has increased by 27%. And we've also noticed an increase in a number of different outcomes. So there's been an 11% increase in households that have gained access to resources to help them improve their housing situation.

We've seen a 13% increase in homeless or potentially homeless households that obtained temporary or permanent housing. We've seen a 65% increase in households that received rental counseling and also avoided eviction. And we've seen a 28% increase in households that received rental counseling and improved their living conditions.

Next Slide.

Rachael

Thanks, Dan. And as we transition to the next slide, I also did not underscore as well that that data is Q1 of the current fiscal year. And all of the 9902 data is cumulative. So we're really excited to see, as additional quarters become available, how that compares and changes over

time. I think we're expecting to see that trend sort of increase, or stay increasing throughout the fiscal year.

Dan

Thanks, Rachael. Yes. As Rachael said, we've seen one-on-one counseling as a much larger portion of total one-on-one counseling. I'm sorry. We've seen rental counseling as a much larger proportion of the one-on-one counseling services than in previous years. And HUD expects this percentage to continue to increase throughout FY2021.

We've also seen a few other trends. So group education has decreased. While we know that some housing counseling agencies have pivoted to virtual classrooms, COVID-19 has made it much harder for group education to occur. So we've seen that decrease.

We've also seen housing counseling agencies pivot to use their resources for other things. Some of this includes other emergency services like food, shelter, clothing, getting clients into COVID testing centers, that sort of thing. That can also explain why we've seen a decrease in some of the group education.

We also wanted to make sure that we underscored the importance of outcome tracking here. So these outcomes numbers are used for allocating resources and understanding data trends. So it's really important that these numbers are accurate. So really every agency can play a part in helping the Housing Counseling program by accurately reporting these numbers.

We also wanted to remind everyone to make sure that you update your work plan and obtain HUD approval if your agency has added rental counseling to your service area. You can see in that grey box we have a few different resources to help you if you do need to update your work plan.

We also wanted to remind agencies that you should be reporting on the 9902 form all activities related to outcome whether that's from HUD funds or non-HUD funds and we're going to talk a little bit more about the specifics of 9902 reporting in the next section. So that wraps up my section.

Rachel Thanks, Dan. Now we're going to go to Connie Barton [ph] with OPGA on 9902 reporting, a general overview and then also how to report those specific rental data on the form. Connie?

Connie Thanks, Dan and Rachel. Hi, everyone. Thanks for joining us today. The HUD 9902 known as the Housing Counseling Activity Report is a tool that HUD uses to track the Housing Counseling program. Reports are cumulative fiscal year-to-date for each quarterly reporting period. The data that we collect helps demonstrate the Housing Counseling program's impact to Congress and other industry stakeholders.

The 9902 captures all of an agency's education and counseling activities, client demographics, income level, counseling types and outcomes.

LHC's are required to submit their 9902 data on a quarterly basis through their HUD approved CMS and then after submitting their data in the CMS, staff should log into HCF to verify that the data is properly reported.

If you have questions about 9902 reporting please take a look at the online toolkit that Rachel mentioned earlier. It's on HUD Exchange and the link is accessible and you can click on the link that's on the slide here. I have this bookmarked in my computer so I can get to it whenever I need to and

I think it's a really great resource. So please refer to it whenever you have any 9902 questions.

Before we move ahead to specific sections of the form, I just want to mention that HUD is planning to release a new version of the 9902 in October at the beginning of Fiscal Year '22. We won't be focusing on the new version of the 9902 today, but we just wanted to let you know that changes are on the way so please hold any questions that you might have on the new form. We will provide information and training on the revisions as soon as they're available so please stay tuned. Next slide please. Okay.

So moving along on the 9902, Section 8 is where you would report households that received group education. So if you have clients that complete rental workshops, make sure you record them in Section 8. Then Section 9 is where you'd enter the number of households that received one-on-one rental counseling. So if you've provided counseling on topics such as rent, rent subsidy programs, housing searches, landlord tenant laws, leases, etc., you should record these clients in Section 9. Next slide please. Okay.

Before we jump ahead, we just want to stress the importance of following up with clients. Client follow-up is mandatory and on some outcomes like creating a sustainable budget is known after a counseling session is completed, but most other outcomes will require you to follow-up to confirm that they actually received the assistance or service they needed.

So follow up should be done in person or virtually within 60 days from the date of the last client contact. Then after follow-up make sure you document the outcome in the client's files. Next slide please. Okay.

On to Section 10E. 10E is where you can select the impact that applies to each of the households that receives one-on-one counseling. 10E is specific to households that gained access to resources to help them improve their housing situation after they've received housing counseling services such as down payment assistance, rental or utility assistance, lease purchase programs, emergency shelter and traditional or permanent housing.

You need to make sure that you check the number of households that gain access to housing resources reported in Section 10E. If the number is zero or is seen very low in comparison with the total number of clients reported

in Section 9, make sure you verify that the reporting for Section 10E is correct and that counselors understand what HUD is looking for when reporting this impact. Next slide please. Okay.

On to gaining access. So what does gaining access mean? To record a household in 10E the counselor must at a minimum provide a referral to a resource or assist a client with applying for a resource. If you have a client that needs help paying their electric bill for instance, just providing them a flyer with a phone number and program information is not enough to record the client in the section.

The counselor will need to determine this impact by following up with the client and making sure that they actually applied for the resource. But you don't need to obtain proof that they've received the resource. Next slide please. Okay.

Section 10G is where you would report on homeless or potentially homeless households that obtained temporary or permanent housing after receiving Housing Counseling services. So some examples of clients that should be recorded in this category include but are not limited to those

who occupy emergency shelter, occupy transitional housing or permanent housing with or without rental assistance.

Again, you'll need to follow up with the clients to determine outcomes.

This impact can only apply to homeless assistance counseling clients that were reported in Section 9. So the number reported in 10G should be less than or equal to the total in 9A. Then if you have households that attended only group education but did not receive one-on-one counseling, they should not be reported in this category. Next slide please. Okay.

Section 10H is where you would report households that receive rental counseling and avoided eviction after receiving Housing Counseling services. So if you have clients that obtained temporary rental relief or were referred to legal aid for assistance with eviction and then successfully avoided eviction, you should record those clients in Section H. This impact can only apply to rental housing clients that were reported in Section 9B. So the number reported here should be less than or equal to the 9B total. Again, regarding follow-up you'll need to determine outcomes by following up with the client. Next slide please. Okay.

10I is where you'll record households that receive rental counseling and then improved their living conditions. Examples of rental counseling clients who should be recorded here include but aren't limited to those who obtained HUD or other rental subsidy, find alternative rental housing, bring their utilities current, resolving a security deposit dispute or they have issues in their current tenancy or if they have a disability and need to obtain housing with accessible features. I'll mention again, please remember to follow-up with the client to determine the outcome. Also, this impact can only apply to rental counseling clients reported in Section 9B.

So this concludes my part of the presentation. Thanks for joining us today. I will turn it back over to Rachel.

Rachel

Thanks so much, Connie. It was very helpful to hear you clarify all that reporting guidance. So I'm going to bring up the Mentimeter questions before we move on to the next section. So again, the code for Mentimeter is 28182044 and all you have to do is go to [menti.com](https://www.menti.com) on your computer or on your smartphone.

So our next question is, “does your agency understand how to report rental counseling clients through the 9902?” So there’s a few options here. Yes, we understand, we didn’t understand before but this presentation clarified our question, or, we still have questions. That’s totally fine if you still have questions. If you still do have questions please go ahead and write those in the chat and we can cover them in this presentation.

If we move to update our 9902 toolkit to address any of your questions, we can certainly do that as well. So Connie’s presentation reflected the information in 9902 online toolkit, but we’re always looking to improve that guidance. So please definitely write in your questions to the questions chat in GoToWebinar if you still have questions, but it seems like most folks understand or got more clarity during this presentation so that is great to hear. I’m going to move up along to the next Mentimeter question, but again, feel free to write those questions in the chat.

So before we transition to the next two presentations we just want to get some information about how your agency’s rental counseling services have changed during COVID-19. You can select all of the responses that apply to you here. The different options are that your rental counseling services increased, your rental counseling services haven’t changed but

more people need financial assistance, or you're expecting to see an increase in counseling when eviction moratoria expire.

So it looks like of evenly spread amongst the categories now but most people are saying that rental counseling has increased or that they're expecting to see an increase in counseling once the eviction moratoria expire. But we still have a strong group of people responding in the middle that people are in need of finance assistance. So please continue to enter your responses to that question.

I'm going to go ahead and pass it to Wanda Conlon [ph] for her Housing Action Illinois presentation. Wanda?

Wanda C. Hi everybody. Thanks, Rachel and thank you to the Office of Housing Counseling for inviting us to participate in this series. For those of you who are on the line who may not have heard of Housing Action Illinois, we've been leading the movement to protect and expand the availability of quality affordable housing in Illinois for more than 30 years.

About seven years ago we became a HUD intermediary to 12 Housing Counseling agencies and have since growth to 33 sub-grantees across four states. That includes Illinois, Indiana, Michigan as well as Missouri. So

as you can imagine, our affiliates are just as diverse as the communities they serve providing services for free purchase to homelessness prevention. Our affiliates can range from one to two-person staff teams to multi-office agencies.

So the graphic to the right is actually a snapshot of Fiscal Year '20's data within our intermediary. I would venture to say that the total number of households that avoided eviction is probably a lot higher than the 340 that's reported there, especially given the COVID response rental programs that were put in place during that time such as the emergency rental assistance program through the Illinois Housing Development Authority as well as the Cook County recovery response plan.

Just as Connie had mentioned earlier about the importance of 9902 reporting and Dan, Housing Action has also continued to stress to our affiliates the importance of accurate reporting to the 9902, because we know that this provides a snapshot into the great work that organizations do a daily basis. This summary also is an indication of how agencies really had to quickly pivot. I think everybody remembered that 2020 pivot was the word that a lot of our agencies had to do whether it was literally

trying to figure out logistically how they would continue to provide services, but more importantly how to shift to a virtual environment.

So as you can see which we'll talk about a little bit on the next slide, there was definitely an uptick in the activities. But before I get to that, so in 2018 we realized as an intermediary that as the foreclosure crisis—I'm sorry, next slide [indiscernible]. Thank you. So as a result of the foreclosure crisis slowly waning off a bit, housing Action realized that rental counseling was going to be paramount in the life of our counselors in terms of knowing how to service clients who may need tenancy assistance.

So in 2018 we actually created and launched a training called the Fundamentals of Rental Counseling. Now prior to the pandemic this was a three-day in-person training where we did roleplaying. We learned about the day-to-day functions of rental counseling, but most importantly we had industry professionals like from legal aid agencies who made us aware of the various tenant landlord responsibilities.

So what we saw from the natural increase of the training and I guess the shift in just the demographics, from 2019 to 2020 there was a 15%

increase in rental workshops. As you can see here which is a quick snippet of some our 9902 activity as it relates to workshops and one-on-one counseling, there was a dramatic increase with one-on-one counseling as Dan mentioned earlier in his presentation. So you can see from 2019 to 2020 we were already at 1,268 clients. Then as of the first quarter of fiscal year '21 we're already at 44% of the 2020 totals.

So that's a clear indication that guess what? Rental counseling as a result of the pandemic was greatly affected in people seeking reputable assistance as it relates to needing help and applying for rental help. Next section please. Okay.

So as a result of the pivoting which I had mentioned earlier, Housing Action knew that we had to find a way to get in contact with our sub-grantees to determine how exactly has work changed as a result of COVID-19. So we surveyed our affiliates twice in 2020. The first time happened right during our shelter-in-place orders which was roughly March 20th or so here in Illinois and then again in April. So as a result of the survey, we found out that 62% of agencies surveyed or 22 agencies reported increase in calls related to rental and eviction assistance.

We also found out that 49% of agencies surveyed or 17 agencies said that they wanted training on rental topics in order to better serve their clients. Then there was also a small segment of the agencies that were surveyed that said that 17% of them did not currently provide any type of rental housing counseling and were not planning to do it as a service.

So that kind of led us to know what resources were essential in helping agencies to continue to provide the much-needed assistance to clients. So agencies automatically weighed in and said if there is a tool that is comparable to the hardest hit funds especially how it was executed in Illinois which allows counselors to know from the beginning to end the process of where a client was in getting some type of assistance, they thought that they would be better equipped to counsel clients along this process.

Currently a lot of the emergency rental assistance programs as counselors here in Illinois, we do provide initial assistance to help clients apply for the help, but in terms of knowing if that help is ever granted, that's not known until follow-up work is done on the behalf of that counselor. So that's very important.

So as it relates to renters who needed assistance, there was a 206% increase in calls at the pandemic onset. So as you can see there 217 calls were received from March 9th through the 20th. So again, as I stated, that was the early days of the shelter-in-place order.

But then between March 21st and April 6th, 665 calls were received for rental assistance and out of those 665 calls, 461 of those calls were directly related to rental counseling or eviction assistance. So that is a clear indication number one, that rental counseling is going to be a paramount service that our agencies will need to provide for the remainder of 2021 and probably years ahead, but also it keeps Housing Action aware of the trends that are going on within our sub-grantee network and to let us know exactly how we can best adjust our training whether we create it or whether we partner with other agencies so that we can keep our agencies updated in the latest trend.

Next slide, please.

As a result of hearing from our affiliates, we also needed to step up our game in terms of providing updated training curriculums for our subgrantees. In March, we knew we had to roll out a training called The

Rental Foreclosures and Bankruptcy Court in the Time of COVID, which was very well attended because we did have legal aid experts also on the call. In April 2020, because we knew during that time last year that there were moving targets in terms of moratorium and various laws changing, we had to keep everyone updated so we had another training. Then, in May 2020, this was also an opportunity for our subgrantees to get more tips and trends on how to conduct virtual housing counseling.

Having been a former counselor myself, we do know the importance to that face-to-face interaction, but course, we had to also learn to be just as effective in a virtual environment. In May as well as August of 2020, we needed to provide the Fundamentals of Rental Counseling once again to answer any additional questions, and to keep our intermediate network apprised of any developments. All in all, the work we do at Housing Action is built on a great group of housing counseling agencies who are dedicated day in and day out to the work of assisting the community they serve.

With that being said, I'm going to introduce you to one of our subgrantees, Access Living, and my main twin, Wanda Lopez. Wanda, Take it away.

Wanda L.

Hi, everyone. Hi. Thank you, Wanda Collins.

As Wanda mentioned, my name is Wanda Lopez, and I am with Access Living. Access Living is a center for independent living, working with people with disabilities here in Chicago. We are a center for independent living for the State of Illinois.

We receive referrals from the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago, as well as anyone who walks through the door. It's not necessarily just the State of Illinois and just through the City of Chicago. What we do is we assist clients with completing applications for low income housing opportunities, providing support services to the disabled community, with a wrap-around services approach. With low income housing opportunities being so scarce here in the city of Chicago, as housing counselors, we must always find ways to look for other opportunities to provide resources to the consumers that we serve.

Then, what's changed during the pandemic? What's changed during COVID? Well, we've had to spend more time sending, educating, rental clients, and discrimination [indiscernible] working with [indiscernible] of a population, which is the disabled population. We always seem to run

across information that we just have to continue to verify for them if it's legitimate or not. More time providing consumers with mental health reinforcement; that's something that is good for all, but we found that that was something that was much needed early on in the pandemic, and even as time went on.

As a center for independent living for people with disabilities, we felt an even greater sense of responsibility to provide our [indiscernible] support services they need during the pandemic. The pandemic caused a great deal of fear and uncertainty to our most vulnerable, the disabled homeless population. The sad truth about COVID-19 is that more individuals chose to live in the streets rather than going into a shelter because of the high rate of contracting the virus. Many were at higher risk due to their underlying health conditions. COVID hit during cold months, so we had people that preferred to be outside just because they were so scared—because everyone was scared. Next slide, please.

As you can see on this data, the information of supply was between 2019 and 2020. In the numbers of consumers that we served, we noticed that from 2019 to 2020 we had a 230 customers served in 2019; however in 2020 our number decreased to 150 consumers served. That obviously is

not because the need wasn't there; on the contrary, as the numbers right under it, you can see it says the number of inquiries we received almost doubled. This isn't even a full year right, so we're looking at what happened during COVID.

The decrease is attributed to the access issues and the digital device.

Clients were not used to the virtual counseling, nor did they have access to it. Rental need has exceeded rental resources. I'm pretty sure that many who are doing rental counseling are understanding and experiencing that.

Increasing demand can also be attributed to the direct referral from the State of Illinois. We had 80 referrals in 2020 from the State of Illinois, and then we had another 120 referrals from the City of Chicago.

Partnerships with the Chicago Housing Authority have provided the opportunity for over 320 disabled families to receive housing [indiscernible] vouchers between 2019 and 2020. As you can see from the data on the slide, the customer service served decreased in 2020 because along with the disparities of [indiscernible] they were also challenged by digital device; however we provided hand's-on support in other ways.

Online access to resources became the new normal, but many did not have access to digital devices, never even had an email nor access to the internet on their government cell phones. Access Living was able to connect consumers early on in the pandemic to resources that provided them tablets, free internet for 12 months, and assist many in applying for government cell phones that provided them internet access. Many housing opportunities require email, so providing them this support was crucial for our consumers.

We've realized, although no one was prepared for the pandemic, it brought to light that most other vulnerable populations were already a step behind and needed basic support systems set in place even in order to move forward. Due to the demographics that we serve with an income of \$9000 per year to assist families to be housed, outcomes do not come quickly. However, when a consumer comes, we are in a position of affordability, accessibility, and stability in a unit of their choosing.

Partnerships in other community organizations and funding sources such as the Chicago Housing Authority have been critical to our ability to serve our clients during COVID-19. We were thankful to be able to connect our consumers with the City of Chicago's COVID Emergency Rental

Assistance program during that time. We're currently in the process of obtaining opportunities with the Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund as well as the [indiscernible] Fund to assist us in providing low income housing for our disabled consumers.

I can't express enough the importance of making sure that housing counselors are connecting with the resources within their area, within their communities. It's not easy, but it's important because many times, some of the information isn't just out there, you have to research for it. It's been important for Access Living to track our outcomes and the work that we are doing in our communities so that we can tell our agency story through our data. That's a given right, so to make sure that we're tracking our outcomes to know what is it when we're trying to get funding and when we're reaching out to foundations.

With that being said, I am done. Thank you so much.

Rachael

Thank you, Wanda and Wanda. I think those are really both interesting presentations, and they tied us back to the overall theme of tracking your data. I think it was interesting to get Wanda Collins' perspective on how data can be used to inform the independent intermediary networks, and

then Wanda Lopez, really interesting to get your insight on how the data can speak to what's really going on with your clients. I like how you highlighted partnerships in your community, which is another thing that we have talked about in this webinar series. Thank you both for your presentations.

I do want to pivot to a question and answer session really quickly in the time that we have left. I see that the HUD staff have been busy responding to the questions that have come in in the questions box. Is there anything that hasn't been given an answer or anything that you would like one of the presenters to expand upon a bit more?

Tammy

Yes. There are a couple of questions. The first one is for Wanda at Housing Action. It is, is the training called a Primer on Virtual Housing Counseling recorded and available?

Wanda C.

Thanks. It's currently not available. However, we do anticipate offering that course a couple of times this year. I would ask that you check our website, HousingActionIL.org for training updates because we are going to run a series of trainings over the course of this year. Just check back with us, and I'm sure it'll be there. Thanks a lot.

Tammy Okay. We do have another one that someone asked, if we are processing applications and providing funds for the CERAP [ph] the Cares Emergency Rental Assistance Program, should we report the outcomes to the 9902?

Rachael Shay [ph], are you on the phone to have a response to this question? I think Rob might have given a brief answer about the counseling [indiscernible] requirements of rental counseling, but Shay or Kevin, maybe you could speak to providing funds through ERAP through the Cares Act, if those should be reported on the 9902 form.

M Can you repeat that again?

W Yes, absolutely. The question was if applications that are processed for providing funds through Emergency Rental Assistance Program, ERAP through the Cares Act, if those should be reported in the 9902 form as outcomes?

M Yes, and counseling that's done in the housing counseling agency are supposed to be reported on the 9902. If it's reported with grant funds,

then it should appear under the all activity column as well. Yes, they are to report all counseling activity that's done in the counseling agency.

W Okay, perfect. Thank you. Any other questions, Tammy?

Tammy There's one more, but I'm thinking maybe it goes back to Wanda. It says is the counseling set up for Missouri? Where are the other webinars that preceded this one? It may be the R5 that we had.

W Oh, sorry. [Overlapping voices]. Yes all of the links to the webinars in this series are on the HUD exchange. If you go to the housing counseling landing page, and click on the rental tile, you can get to all of the webinars in this series. They're also in this slide deck, which is in go to webinar. Wanda, did you want to take that question about Missouri?

Wanda C. Yes. For now, as we evaluate and work with different housing counseling agencies, we will eventually probably extend our footprint beyond where we are now. In terms of Missouri, we do have one agency in Missouri right now. If there are agencies who are looking to link up with a HUD intermediary, then we can definitely discuss opportunities to possibly join our network.

Feel free to send an email to me, and we can definitely take a look at that at a later time. We are always looking for a quality housing counseling agency to want to join our network. Thanks for asking.

Rachael Thanks. As we take a few final questions, I also pulled up this final Mentimeter on the screen. Now that the webinar series has come to an end, please write in what additional information or resources your agency needs. We can use this to inform future rental counseling tools, products, webinars, any other PA resources that are needed.

Are there any more questions, Tammy?

Tammy There is. How would the landlord get the information that a client has gone through counseling? This information can be very stressful for the tenant.

Rachael Wanda or Wanda, do either of you have any tips for working with landlords? I know that landlord outreach is not a specific housing counseling-funded activity, but I know some agencies do landlord outreach amongst other outreach activities not funded through the housing

counseling program grant. I'm not sure if either of you have any tips for working with landlords.

Wanda L. I'm sorry, so the question was how does a landlord find out if a tenant is working with a housing counselor?

Rachael Yes. This needs to be about demystifying any misinformation, so making sure the landlord and the client and both the same information. Is that your understanding, Tammy?

Tammy Yes. That's what I think that's what they're meaning by the question.

Wanda L. Okay, so it's not a current tenant afraid of a current landlord finding out, correct?

Tammy No. It doesn't seem like that's the situation.

Wanda L. Yes, so I worked with an organization that, another agency, that they had a landlord association. There are some agencies that actually have landlord associations that provide them that necessary support in either linking them or providing them that one-on-one, like we do with the tenants, that

provide them that one-on-one with the property owners or—yes, mainly the property owners that give them that—sometimes they can be intermediary between the property owner and the tenant. There are agencies that do that, I just don't know. You would have to really search for them in your area.

Rachael Thanks, Wanda.

Wanda L. You're welcome.

Rachael Are there any other questions that come in, Tammy? I see them responding to the Mentimeter, so thanks for doing that. Please feel to keep writing in those responses.

Tammy Just a second, we do have some—but it looks like it's just more statements. Someone said that the CHCC funding for training with legal assistance organizations and tenants' rights organizations, and tenant landlord associations provide sample templates and program designs. I think that's just a note for everybody.

More or less to say rental applications should not be considered rental counseling, which I think we all know that. I think that's it, Rachael. That's all I see right now.

Rachael

Okay, great. Well, thank you to everyone who wrote in their questions. If you have additional questions, the Mentimeter is still open. Again, it's 28182044, and we will use your questions and your feedback to develop future resources.

As we wrap up, we can just cover some final information here. We wanted to highlight the community of practice that's kicking off soon, in the month of April. HUD is hosting a community of practice for organizations performing extensive rental counseling to learn and share best practices with the field. A community of practice is a group of practitioners with shared expertise that engage in a process of collective learning around a common set of problems.

If you're interested in participating in something like this, the first cohort has been selected, but you can definitely email Housing.Counseling@hud.gov or there's an OHCTechnicalAssistance@hudexchange.info inbox you may be familiar

with to [indiscernible] technical assistance, email either of those inboxes, and we can keep you in mind for a future cohort.

Then, some additional resources, definitely make sure you check out the links to the rental counseling resource page. That's continuing to be updated as new resources are developed. Again, the 9902 online toolkit, really important information there, and it covers all of the same information that Connie included in her presentation today, in addition to some other guidance about 9902 reporting.

Then, just in general, the office of housing counseling website, the training digest was highlighted at the beginning of the webinar slide deck, and again, that's in the handout that's in GoToWebinar [ph]. Definitely check that out, and I actually went to the Housing Action Illinois, their website, and their upcoming training. If you're interested in learning more about the training being provided at their housing action, you can access it there.

The Bridge newsletter has been highlighting a lot of best practices around rental counseling too, so make sure you stay on the lookout for the upcoming issue of *The Bridge*, which should be published at the end of April.

Again, there is some contact information. You can find housing counseling on the HUD exchange at the website listed on the screen. Again, there's our email for any questions that you have that may come up. It's housing.counseling@hud.gov.

All right, Jerry are you still on? Do you want to very quickly [indiscernible]?

Moderator Mr. Mayer has disconnected.

Rachael Oh, great. No problem [indiscernible] here. Thank you all for attending. We really appreciate it, and again, you will be hearing from the Office of Housing Counseling with future webinars that come up in the series, or other tools and products that are created.

Thanks, everyone, and have a great day.

[All parties sign off.]

HUD - US DEPT OF HOUSE AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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Moderator

Ladies and gentlemen, that does conclude your webinar for today. Thank you for your participation. You may now disconnect.