I hope this newsletter finds you well as we navigate this uncertain time in our lives with the COVID-19 public health and economic crisis.

As nearly all other organizations, BRHP has taken swift action to continue operations while also minimizing risks resulting from the pandemic to our staff and the families we serve.

You will read about some of the actions we've taken in this newsletter, but here are some of the highlights:

- Nearly all BRHP staff are now primarily providing rental assistance and housing counseling services remotely and our office remains closed to the public;
- We established a hotline (607-207-2100) and have dedicated staff answering those calls;

"Creativity is thinking up new things. Innovation is doing new things." - Theodore Levitt

Raising Our Voice During the Pandemic - Shelterforce Article by BRHP Board Director Zelda Tally

Your Essential Worker May Be a Voucher Holder - Shelterforce

The COVID-19 crisis has laid bare the inequalities in our communities as never before. Low-income households, low-wage workers, and those who are housing insecure are bearing the brunt of the
We've temporarily suspended all biennial unit inspections and limited inspections to emergency and initial move only. These inspections are performed following health protocols in advance of our inspectors entering homes;

- We've transitioned our in-person counseling appointments and assessments to phone;

- And, we've launched counseling workshop webinars.

As we continue to monitor conditions related to the pandemic we will adjust our operations accordingly. When we entered 2020, we did not anticipate having to make such drastic and sudden changes to our operations and plans, but we have adopted many new practices that will serve us well as we continue to meet the growing needs of our community. Thank you for your continued partnership and I hope you enjoy learning about how we are working in new ways in this quarterly update.

Adria Crutchfield

Staying Connected:
Transitioning to Online Counseling Workshops

In April, we conducted our first virtual workshops. In total, we conducted 9 workshops with 154 attendees. Of those workshops, we conducted one initial voucher issuance in which 15 participants received their vouchers.

The initial voucher issuance is for families who have successfully completed all counseling requirements and successfully passed all readiness requirements at Final Eligibility. Families are often excited to reach this phase of the program. We also had one mover's voucher issuance where danger. It has also highlighted the role of “essential …

BRHP's Sheila Proano Breaks Down the Housing Choice Voucher Leasing Process in Just 5 Minutes!

Navigating COVID-19: A Resource Guide for Our Community

In March, we launched a resource guide of community and federal resources to support our community in navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. Since it’s launch, we’ve updated this guide weekly and shared it with our program participants and property partners. We’re all in this together and are committed to supporting our community during this difficult time.

If you would like to add a community resource to this list, please contact outreach@brhp.org.

May is National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month and Mental Health Awareness Month.

A Look at Our Work in Health and Housing:
families who are currently on the program receive a voucher to move for reasons such as: a non-renewal notice, family choice, transportation challenges, etc. There were 29 participants that attended the virtual mover's voucher issuance.

**Staying Connected: Monthly Power Hours with Property Partners**

We launched **Property Partner Power Hours**, a monthly conference call series with our program property owners in December 2019. The series was inspired by our Property Partner Orientation we held in October 2019. Every month we use these calls as a way to engage with our property owners to support them in having a successful tenancy in our program by addressing hot topics and questions. Most recently, we held a call on our security deposit assistance process. If you are an interested BRHP Property Partner and have not been receiving invitations for these calls, please email BRHP Communications at outreach@brhp.org.

**BRHP and JHU Partner for Asthma Study**

BRHP has partnered with Johns Hopkins University to conduct an asthma study that will determine the effect of moving from a high-poverty neighborhood to quality housing in a low-poverty neighborhood on asthma-related outcomes for children ages 5 to 17. It will also estimate the causal effects of reducing indoor pest allergens and indoor pollutants by moving to quality housing on asthma outcomes. The study is led by Dr. Craig Pollack and a team of medical and public health researchers from JHU.

Here is an update on our progress:
- The recruitment stage of the study is complete with **140 families** enrolled.
- Both pre-move homes and new homes were tested to determine differences in environmental triggers of asthma.
- Participating families are tracking asthma symptoms closely and sharing data with researchers.
- The research team has proposed an extension of the study to determine the long-term impacts the move will have on symptoms and environmental triggers and recently added COVID-19 testing to willing participants.

**Policy Matters: #RentReliefNow!**

**THE KRESGE FOUNDATION ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY THROUGH HOUSING**

An update on our progress with the Kresge Foundation's Advancing Health Equity Through Housing grant:

We continue to meet with our grantee partners monthly and hosted our third Kresge health equity planning grant meeting with stakeholders on April 27 via...
We join the NLIHC in encouraging you to contact your senators and representatives and urge them to cosponsor the "Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act" and ensure that it is included in the next coronavirus relief package!

You can find the phone numbers of your members of Congress here or send an email from NLIHC's Legislative Action Center. You can also tweet at your senators and representatives using #RentReliefNow!

Victory: Maryland HOME Act becomes law!

The Maryland HOME Act became law this month! This means that effective October 2020, across the State of Maryland, landlords are prohibited from discriminating against a potential tenant based on their source of income, be it a voucher, disability payments, or any other lawful source of income. This effort has been years in the making, with advocates introducing the bill year after year. Cheers to continued progress towards housing equity and justice.

Election Day is June 2! Register to vote by May 27.

You can register to vote online and update your mailing address here. This must be done by May 27.

Please note, the primary election will be conducted mostly by mail. This means that you will be mailed a ballot and are encouraged to return your ballot by placing it in the mail, postmarking it at a post office, or putting it in a designated drop box by 8:00 p.m. on June 2. You may look up drop box locations here.

If you are reading this now, you should have received your ballot in the mail. If you haven't, please visit the Maryland State Board of Election's absentee voting page for options on receiving a ballot.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES
- May 21 – June 2, 2020 – Early voting period when voters may drop off their ballots at designated drop off locations. The only day you can vote in person is on June 2.
- May 27, 2020 – Last day to register for Maryland's Primary Election. If applying by mail, it must be postmarked by this day. If using Maryland's Online Voter Registration System, you have until 9:00 p.m. to submit your
**June 2, 2020** – Election Day – Deadline for postmarking your ballot at a post office or dropping it in the mail or in a drop box. If you are dropping off your ballot, you must do so by 8:00 p.m. Read more at the ACLU of Maryland.

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**BRHP** is growing! We're hiring for a Rental Assistance Supervisor, Housing Counselor, Financial Operations Manager, and Real Estate and Procurement Manager. Join the partnership as we expand opportunities for families through housing choice. Learn more and apply here: [http://brhp.org/about/careers](http://brhp.org/about/careers)

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**Coronavirus: Everyone has a role to play to reduce the spread**

While there is currently no vaccine for the coronavirus, the community can take measures to reduce the spread. Everyone has a role to play in responding to this public health threat. The [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov) has offered interim guidance to help your household plan, prepare, and respond. Read more

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**About the Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership**

The [Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership (BRHP)](http://brhp.org) helps families with low incomes, who have historically been excluded from housing in neighborhoods of their choice, access and transition successfully to safe, healthy, and economically vibrant communities. Since becoming the formal administrator of the Baltimore
Housing Mobility Program, which couples Housing Choice Voucher administration with counseling supports, BRHP has helped over 5,000 families with young children improve their quality of life as they search for new homes.