

To [RECIPIENT]:

My name is [INTRODUCE SELF AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH US] with BEDS Plus Care, Inc., a Southwest Suburban Cook County homeless services agency. Last year, we reached 1,192 people experiencing homelessness or imminent risk of homelessness, including veterans; domestic violence survivors and their children; and people with chronic illnesses, behavioral health conditions, and disabilities. I'm sure you are overwhelmed with communications about the coronavirus; however, it represents a crisis for people experiencing homelessness and those who serve them.

The pandemic strains BEDS ability to protect its clients and communities. People experiencing homelessness face higher risks of infection and barriers to healthcare. BEDS has fully implemented CDC and HUD recommendations and started regularly visiting housed clients. Unfortunately, its efforts are unsustainable, and it cannot accept new clients, including people who will lose homes due to the pandemic's economic effects. Many of its peers have exhausted funds and/or ceased operations.

You can help limit infection and transmission among people experiencing homelessness. I'd urge you to consider policies and funding that will:

- **Ensure shelter availability:** Shelter closures leave clients with no other place to go. Safe operations during the pandemic require significant investment in supplies, food, and, in the case of BEDS volunteer-driven program, contract staff.
- **Provide temporary housing:** Many people experiencing homelessness already have chronic illnesses and/or are over 60 years old. Shelters, while necessary for some, leave them vulnerable to infection. Temporary housing in a motel allows them to "self-quarantine;" however, most funders currently do not cover motel expenses, which accrue quickly.
- **Divert people from homelessness:** As the pandemic and its economic effects continue, more people will need assistance to remain in homes and stay out of shelters. BEDS has used Homelessness Prevention and Diversion funding to house vulnerable clients. Increased funds and flexibility will help it support the next wave of people experiencing homelessness.

Thank you for your support during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

[NAME]