



*"No one should live hungry and homeless."  
Matthew 25:35-40*

# **Comprehensive Family Resource Center**

## ***Strengthening Family Resilience for COVID Recovery***

***A strategy to create a safety net for families and individuals  
recovering from the impact of the pandemic  
in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area***

**May 11, 2021**

# Comprehensive Family Resource Center

## *Strengthening Family Resilience for COVID Recovery*

### COMMUNITY NEED

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every area of our community and economy. Throughout the pandemic, Central Union Mission has been a critical frontline responder providing food and other services to families impacted economically, as well as a safe haven for men who found themselves homeless.

Despite extraordinary efforts by federal and local government, thousands of people are falling between the cracks. Central Union Mission sees this first hand as hundreds of people line up outside the Mission's food pantry every week. The Mission serves as many as we can until the food runs out. Many more at our shelter receive help with overnight accommodations and other assistance such as healthcare, legal aid, counseling, addiction support and assistance in seeking housing.

The prospect of an explosion in homelessness is most troubling. If just 10 percent of those who risk eviction in DC today lose their homes, the homeless population could increase by three times its current rate.

While COVID recovery is often expressed in terms of stock market performance, unemployment rates and GDP, that does not tell the whole story. In fact, it misses a large part of the story for millions of poor and disenfranchised people. People impacted by COVID are not a statistic; they are in crisis – unable to meet their basic needs, under or unemployed, behind in rent and in dire straits.

During the pandemic, thousands of people lost their job. Opportunity Insights, a nonpartisan research and policy institute, claims that more than 43 percent of businesses in Washington, DC, closed permanently or temporarily during the pandemic. The *Washington Post*<sup>1</sup> reports that 50,000 jobs have been lost in the District during the pandemic. The impact is clear; according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, approximately 31,000 people in DC are behind in rent.<sup>2</sup> Thirty percent of all adults in DC are having difficulty covering household expenses.<sup>3</sup> As of February 1, 2021, one in five family households in the United States reported “[our] children

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2021/03/16/dc-covid-one-year-anniversary/>

<sup>2</sup> Calculated by Center on Budget and Policy Priorities from Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey published table "housing1b" for survey weeks 22 and 23, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/data.html>; and 2019 American Community Survey public use file.

<sup>3</sup> Calculated by Center on Budget and Policy Priorities from Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey published table "spending1" for survey weeks 22 and 23, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/data.html>

were not eating enough because we just couldn't afford enough food" in the last seven days.<sup>4</sup> These numbers are as much as two times higher for African American and Hispanic households.<sup>5</sup>

Women have been especially hard-hit by the pandemic. According to a recent McKinsey & Company report, "women accounted for nearly 56 percent of workforce exits since the start of the pandemic, despite making up just 48 percent of the workforce."<sup>6</sup>

The trouble for senior citizens, who have been the most vulnerable population during the pandemic, is not over yet. While vaccinations may protect them from the worst effects of the disease, poverty and homelessness are still a threat.

As we know from previous recessions, recovery tends to be extremely disproportionate across gender and race in particular. Historically, those at the lower end of the earning and educational spectrum are impacted significantly more than their higher income counterparts.

## **COVID RECOVERY FOR THE NEEDIEST**

Thousands of jobs were lost in 2020 and 2021 and many will never be reestablished. Some industries will take years to recover. In addition to meeting the basic necessities of families and individuals, many individuals and families at the lower end of the economic spectrum will likewise need a variety of support to help them retrain for different jobs and rebuild their financial stability. Others will need housing support, legal aid or child care. This will take a concerted effort, including both emergency support and long-term recovery programs.

The Mission has been serving some of the neediest families and sheltering and caring for men experiencing homelessness since it was established in 1884. Today we are multiplying our focus on those now most at risk due to COVID, through enhanced outreach and services to families and individuals – predominantly women with children.

The Mission seeks to expand its Family Ministry Center, which already is serving 5,750 people every month (one-third of whom are seniors), by deepening its support programs, expanding its services and increasing the number of people it is currently helping.

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<sup>4</sup> Calculated by Center on Budget and Policy Priorities from Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey published tables "food2," "food3," and "food5," for survey weeks 22 and 23, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/data.html>

<sup>5</sup> Tracking the COVID-19 Recession's Effects on Food, Housing and Employment Hardships," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, accessed February 15, 2021, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/tracking-the-covid-19-recessions-effects-on-food-housing-and>

<sup>6</sup> [Achieving an inclusive US economic recovery | McKinsey](#)

## THE COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

In order to stabilize their families, return to the workforce and regain self-sufficiency, people impacted by the pandemic face a variety of challenges. The Mission has an established track-record and programs to help people in need improve their situations through social work, counseling, addiction support, education, job training and placement. Over the past three years, the Mission has expanded its social work services and refined its PATHWAYS Workforce Development and Education program, which has successfully helped rehabilitate and place in long-term jobs an average of 106 people experiencing homelessness each year.

The Mission's whole-person approach will introduce a similar and uniquely tailored set of wrap-around services for the women and men who seek the support of the proposed Comprehensive Family Resource Center. This will include:

**Retraining for a New Economy** – expanding its programming and partnerships with United Planning Organization, DC Central Kitchen, Building Futures, technical trade organizations and others, the Mission will offer specialized in-house and external job training and certifications; plus job placement counselors will mentor and guide program participants with their job searches and facilitate job placements;

**Education** – through both in-house specialists and a partnership with Saylor Academy, Catholic University of America, and University of District of Columbia adult family members will be assessed, enrolled in classes and coached to advance their academic and career goals; in-house classes will also be offered in life skills, citizenship, parenting, nutrition, budget management, ESL and more;

**Digital Literacy & Computer Access** – to support participants' educational and professional development, the Mission will provide instruction in computer skills and access to a computer library and resource center;

**Social Work and Benefits Acquisition** – in-house social workers will help individuals access the public benefits and other resources that are available to them; they will also partner with local health and human service agencies to help enroll individuals in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, School Lunch Program for their children, and other benefits; plus they will provide targeted support for veterans to ensure they get the maximum health, housing, and other assistance benefits that they are due. Our social workers additionally will help those who are struggling mentally or emotionally from the impact of the pandemic, along with other debilitating challenges;

**Child Day Care Guidance** – providing referrals for daycare centers so that parents can pursue education and employment opportunities while their children receive loving care;

**Housing** – helping families, senior citizens and the disabled find temporary – and ultimately long-term – housing by expanding our partnerships with DC Government, So Others Might Eat, Samaritan Inns, private housing entities and others. Micro-grants will be made available for security deposits and other purposes;

**Healthcare** – expanding our existing partnerships with Georgetown University Hospital, Unity Healthcare, and others in order to provide accessible in-house medical and mental health services, as well as assistance with acquiring insurance for families;

**Addiction Recovery** – building on our many years of experience providing this service at our shelter, we will assist those who struggle with addictions to overcome that burden;

**Transportation Assistance** – expanding its partnerships with Capital Bikeshare and public transportation providers so that family members have a means to get to work and classes;

**Veterans Benefits** – Expand its partnership with Disabled American Veterans, Pathways to Housing, Friendship Place and other service providers to ensure that veterans get the maximum health, housing, and assistance benefits that they are due;

**Legal Assistance** – expanding services through our in-house partnership with Christian Legal Aid to help family members resolve their personal financial troubles, evictions, debts and other legal problems.

## **PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY**

The Comprehensive Family Resource Center will provide a critically-needed, co-located service center for some of the poorest women, men, families and senior citizens in the DC metro area. Establishing this center will reduce family poverty, mitigate risk of homelessness, restore dignity, and provide an additional foundation for hard-working families to advance on the path to independence. Through this opportunity, financial partners will play a key role in helping countless individuals, reducing poverty and homelessness, and transforming the socio-economic landscape in Washington, DC, and beyond. Providing these services in one location creates ‘one-stop’ accessibility and a continuum of services that offers comprehensive family care and transformation in a safe, caring environment.

## **OUR CAPACITY**

Central Union Mission is a faith-based, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and the oldest private social service agency in Washington, DC. For 137 years, the Mission has been a leader in serving people experiencing homelessness and poverty in Washington, DC, area. Compelled by its Christian faith, the Mission was initially founded with the goal of serving homeless veterans of the Civil War. Over time, its work has grown substantially to serve men, women and children of all faiths and backgrounds in need in the nation’s capital.

Today, the Mission remains 100 percent privately-funded and operates four facilities that provide a world-class platform to achieve long-term, sustainable and systemic change in the lives of the people it serves, while daily meeting the immediate needs of the chronically homeless and those

at-risk of homelessness and poverty. GuideStar has awarded Central Union Mission a Gold Seal for financial transparency. GreatNonProfits has given the organization its Top-Rated award.

The Mission's core programs and expertise include:

- **Men's Shelter:** Feeds and shelters up to 170-200 men per day (approximately 62,000 bed-nights per year) and offers comprehensive in-house services, including: medical, dental and psychiatric care; addiction recovery; veterans support; spiritual direction; vocational training; education; employment placement; legal support and social services. The centerpiece of the support provided by the men's shelter is a holistic, Christ-centered transformation and workforce development program for men that is geared for long-term, sustainable change.
- **Family Ministry Center:** Provides food and clothing to approximately 5,750 people per month (families, including many single mothers, men, grandparent care-givers and isolated senior citizens). We distribute groceries that provide over three million meals each year, legal aid, ESL classes, Bible studies, life skills classes, services for senior citizens, parenting classes, baby showers, holiday gifts, back to school supplies and more.
- **Lambert House:** Provides transitional housing for up to 24 people at a time. Men who are on the road to recovery are offered an opportunity to live in a safe, clean and respectful environment where they can leave behind their former lifestyles and continue to transform their lives to become productive citizens and reconnect to their respective families and communities.
- **Camp Bennett:** Provides a full summer camp experience every year for nearly 400 youth who live in poverty. For many, this is their first time attending sleepaway camp and is an escape from the city and the limited opportunities and negative influences prevalent in their neighborhoods. The camp's gymnasium also supports local boys and girls club activities, community groups and area churches each week.

#### **OUR DIFFERENTIATORS:**

- Focus on men, women, children, families, and senior citizens
- More than 137 years of experience and expertise; the oldest private social service agency in Washington, DC
- Comprehensive programmatic approach to well-being: physical, mental, emotional, vocational, educational, spiritual, financial, familial, legal, et al
- Proven impact: 300,000 bags of groceries and 62,000 bed nights of shelter each year
- Proven success: over 65 percent of the Mission's transformation program graduates are thriving
- Well-established education, job training and job placement programs.
- Not simply a shelter: the Mission provide both a shelter and a food pantry bolstered with a full-spectrum of wraparound services for sustainable impact and change
- Evidence-based programming and innovation geared toward long-term success of individuals

- Adaptive to changing community and individual needs
- Compelled by faith, but the Mission does not compel its faith on others; we serve anybody
- Efficiency: Low administrative rate, leverage of \$8 million in gifts-in-kind, extensive volunteer support and service-provider partnerships allow more funds to flow through to programming
- We have been a trusted partner to tens of thousands of individuals, corporations, foundations and churches for over 100 years.
- Strong and experienced executive leadership
- Focus on outcomes, not just outputs
- 100 percent privately funded
- Highly rated: GuideStar, Charity Navigator, ECFA, Great Nonprofits

### **BUDGET NEED:**

The resources needed to build and sustain these services for the next five years is \$10 million. We are seeking a lead gift of \$5 million or more from a corporate or foundation partner to spearhead this important project. Because of our dedication to the DC metro community and the success of this program, we are committed to raising between \$1 and \$5 million of the total needed through other resources. We intend to leverage a lead gift to generate additional funds from other donors, as well as two fundraising events we have planned over the next 12 months. This program and funding opportunity is completely scalable from three to five years.

### **CONTACT:**

Please contact Joseph Mettimano, President of Central Union Mission, at 202-238-9300 (direct line) or [jmettimano@missiondc.org](mailto:jmettimano@missiondc.org). Thank you for your consideration.