

Coronavirus Response Update Call

We have decided that Wednesday, March 17, 2021, our next call, and one year to the day from our first call, will be our last Coronavirus Response Update Call.

It is not a decision we take lightly, nor one that was clear cut, but we felt it was time. Our next call will include a retrospective and ample opportunity, as always, to share with each other.

Although this call is ending, the work of the Coronavirus Response Fund goes on and there will be many future opportunities for collaboration among community stakeholder groups facilitated by the Community Foundation and United Way.

National and/or State News Update-Ben Moser

Ben gave the following updates concerning the coronavirus that causes COVID-19:

New York Times:

- At least 1,306 new coronavirus deaths and 57,789 new cases were reported in the United States on March 2, 2021.
- Over the past week, there has been an average of 65,468 cases per day, a decrease of 19 percent from the average two weeks earlier.
- As of Wednesday morning, more than 28,737,400 people in the United States have been infected with the coronavirus according to a New York Times database.
- In 14 states, including Georgia new cases are higher and staying high.
- In 20 states, including Alabama, new cases are higher but going down.
- In 1 state cases are lower but going up.
- In 20 states, and all territories, cases are lower and staying low.
- The country is averaging about 68,000 cases a day, a figure that has held mostly steady for about a week.
- Fewer than 50,000 coronavirus patients are hospitalized nationwide, according to the COVID-19 Tracking Project, down from a peak of more than 130,000 in January.
- Though deaths have also declined, about 2,000 deaths continue to be reported across the country each day. In some places, health departments have said many of the newly reported deaths occurred weeks ago.
- New York and New Jersey have added cases at the highest rates in the country over the last week. Cases are persistently high around New York City.
- Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri are among several Midwestern states that have seen case numbers plunge to their lowest levels since summer 2020.

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- The vaccination campaign continues to pick up speed, with about 1.74 million doses being administered each day. The rollout of a third vaccine, developed by Johnson & Johnson, could further hasten that pace.

Elevated Issue of Local Concern or Awareness-Ben Moser

- For the elevated issue today – A brief blurb from the Washington Post - Governors across the country have begun to rescind policies meant to stem the coronavirus's spread, even as the rapid drop in new infections begins to stall.
- In Texas, the nation's second most populous state, Governor Greg Abbott announced that he would lift the state's mask requirement and restrictions on businesses. Mississippi officials unveiled a similar plan.
- Health officials reacted with concern, warning that lifting restrictions too early risked another surge of the virus.
- I would add that we need to remain vigilant, continue to mask and be aware of overcrowding enclosed spaces. The vaccine is coming, and the experts seem to be in consensus that we could be coming out of this by mid to late summer if we can keep infections rates low and vaccine rates increasing.

Economic Sector and Impact Area Updates

Public:

Columbus Consolidated Government Update-Mayor Skip Henderson

Mayor Henderson gave the following updates:

- Thanked everyone that has participated in this call over the past year. It has been an invaluable resource for sharing information. Thanked Ben and Betsy for their leadership and service to the community.
- The numbers are looking better but still higher than they were in October and November of 2020.
- The hospitalization rate is steady at 75-80. Local hospitals have done a great job of effectively and efficiently treating COVID-19 patients.
- To date, there has been a total of 327 deaths in Columbus because of the virus.
- Before a recent Columbus City Council meeting, the City Manager's Millennial Roundtable, partnered with the Mayor and city council for a COVID-19 memorial honoring the lives lost in Columbus due to COVID-19.
- Last Friday, about 1,600 people received COVID-19 vaccines at a drive-thru clinic in the Columbus Civic Center parking. The Mayor thanked everyone involved. Everyone did a great job, and everything ran smoothly.
- So far to date, 31,000-32,000 doses have been received and 25,000-26,000 shots have been administered. The difference in the number is that some of the doses have been identified as second dose vaccines.

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- Hoping to get some good news about vaccine availability in our community later today.
- Urging everyone to remain vigilant and not throw away all the hard work that we have done as a community. Because of everyone's hard work, Columbus has done much better controlling the spread of the virus than other communities this size.
- Continue to wear a mask, be aware of your surroundings, try not to attend large gatherings and continue to practice social distancing.
- Thankful for the resilience of the people of this community.

Muscogee County School Update-Dr. David Lewis

Dr. Lewis gave the following updates:

- Thanked everyone for all their support of the school system this past year.
- The school district is planning to move forward with safe in-person graduations this year at the Columbus Civic Center.
- The school district has a team ready to help vaccinate school district employees and take some of the pressure off the Department of Public Health once the vaccine becomes available to them. This plan has been approved by the Department of Public Health.
- The school district is working on a reimagine summer program to help fill learning loss voids. The program will focus on literacy and math specifically but will also provide enrichment opportunities.

Non-Profit:

Food

Feeding the Valley Update-Frank Sheppard

Frank gave the following updates:

- Food distribution in Clay County, Georgia today.
- Food distribution in Quitman County, Georgia tomorrow.
- Food distribution in Webster County, Georgia and Chattahoochee County Georgia next week.
- If you know of anyone who is facing food insecurity, they can go the Feeding the Valley website or Facebook Page or call to find food distribution locations.
feedingthevalley.org; www.facebook.com/feedingthevalleyfoodbank; 706-561-4755
- Feeding the Valley delivers to 48 sites each month and delivers approximately 1.3 million pounds of food each month.

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Health

St. Francis-Emory Healthcare Update-Melody Trimble

Melody gave the following updates:

- Thanked Ben, Betsy, the Mayor and the local team of healthcare workers, EMS and police. Heart of gratitude to everyone in the community.
- The number of hospitalizations is trending down.
- Stressed the importance of getting the vaccine, continuing to wear a mask, washing hands and remaining vigilant.
- Although many lives have been lost, many lives have been saved through innovations, the vaccine and treatment modalities.
- Thankful to the government for getting vaccines to them.
- They continue to partner with the Department of Public Health, the Mayor's office and Piedmont Columbus Regional on vaccine distribution.
- Reminder to everyone not to delay healthcare.
- Appreciates the privilege to serve.

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Housing

Home for Good Update-Pat Frey

Pat gave the following update:

- Thankful for the honor of being able to address this group over the past year.
- The federally mandated, annual Point in Time count took place a few weeks ago in our community.
- Preliminary numbers show that there was an increase of five individuals experiencing homelessness in our community from the 2020 report. They are excited that there is only a small increase considering the impact that COVID-19 has had on the economy.
- Home for Good is working on getting unsheltered individuals identified during the count connected with referrals that will lead to permanent housing.
- This year there was a decrease in the number of children experiencing homelessness. This number has gone down over the past few years.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2020 vs 2021	since 2016
MALE	188	166	160	137	117	139	19%	-26%
FEMALE	115	116	107	112	130	114	-12%	-1%
UNKNOWN	0	0	11	0	0	1	0%	400%
TRANSGENDER	0	0	1	1	2	0	#DIV/0!	200%
	303	282	278	249	249	254	2.0%	-16%
Children	17	28	35	50	33	31	-6%	82%

Grants/Projects Update-Betsy Covington

Betsy gave the following updates:

- Thankful for everyone working together and the way that everyone has responded to this call.
- Grants this week total \$24,183. Total grants to date, \$1,316,910.
- Agencies receiving grants this week are Chattahoochee Valley Episcopal Ministry, Hope Harbour and the Columbus Convention and Trade Center.
- Grateful that people have continued to be generous to the fund.
- For details on grant awards, to donate or if you are a non-profit in need of assistance go to cfcv.com/coronavirus

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Making Connections (Open Forum)

Chattahoochee Valley Episcopal Ministries Update-Martha Robert

Martha gave the following updates:

- Thankful to the Coronavirus Response Fund and the whole community for their support.
- Thankful for all support totaling \$80,000 that has been used to help pay rent, mortgages, utilities and essential transportation.
- Speaking on behalf of the families who appreciate the assistance and the anxiety that this assistance has relieved.
- Average of \$425.00 per family helped so far.