

Orange County Housing & Community Development

Eviction and homelessness prevention

2020 Year End Summary

"I truly hope your organization knows how much of a life saver this help is. Thank you again for everything."

— Orange County Resident assisted by EHA

"Thanks for responding so quickly and you're so thoughtful and kind with your words and helping me feel important still in these times."

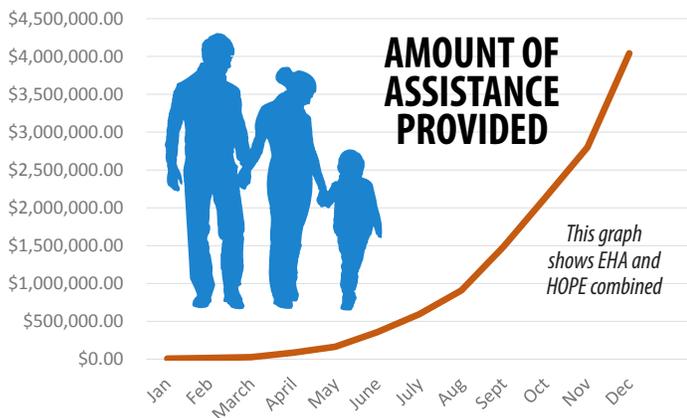
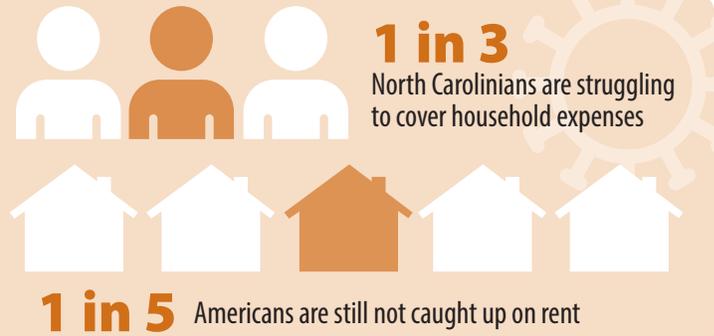
— Orange County Resident assisted by EHA

"I cannot describe how grateful I am for the help and how stunned I am to be in this place and how incredible it has been to work with you guys and experience genuine kindness without judgment regarding my circumstances – that has impacted my mental wellness in a positive way. I hope that when the tide shifts for me I am able to contribute in a meaningful way back to my community here in Orange County."

— Orange County Resident assisted by EHA

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a heavy toll on families in Orange County and across the United States. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, one in five Americans has lost their job and more than half of Americans have suffered a loss of income.¹ In North Carolina, 35% of adults have reported difficulty covering usual household expenses and 21% of adults are not caught up on rent.²

To keep Orange County residents who are experiencing financial hardships due to the pandemic safely in their housing, the Orange County Housing and Community Development Department (OCHCD) disbursed over **\$4 million in 2020** in financial assistance for eviction and homelessness prevention, and connected residents to a variety of other community resources and services through the **Housing Helpline**.



The Board of Commissioners created the **Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA)** fund in 2017. In 2020, the Board of Commissioners significantly supplemented funding for this program and endorsed OCHCD's recommendation to enhance service delivery to:

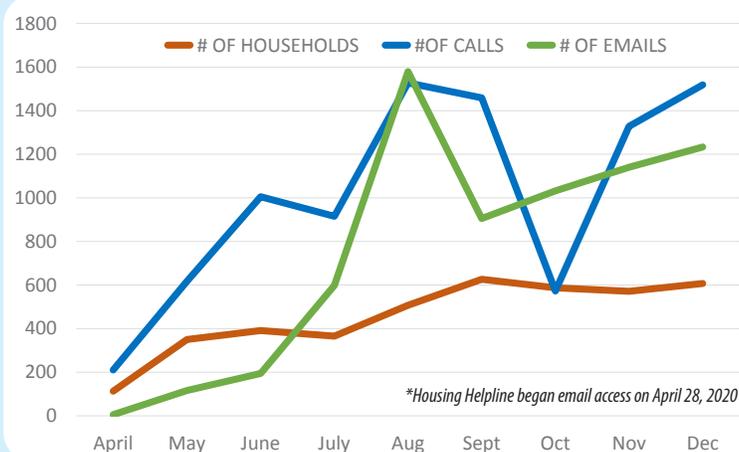
- **PREVENT** eviction and homelessness through financial assistance to 1,245 households, Jan-Dec through the EHA and HOPE program
- **STREAMLINE** referrals and eligibility with funding in the Towns of Carrboro, Chapel Hill, and Hillsborough
- **ADMINISTER** funds for the Towns and County, improving access and efficiency

On October 15, OCHCD began administering the statewide HOPE Program in Orange County, providing rent and utility assistance to households impacted by COVID-19. The HOPE Program provides 6 months of assistance vs. EHA, which is on an as-needed basis. EHA has stayed in operation, at a smaller scale, to provide assistance to those who are not eligible for HOPE.



OCHCD partners with the Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness (OCPEH) to run the **Housing Helpline**. Staff on the Helpline assist callers and emailers to:

- **ACCESS** programs and services
- **REFER** to shelter and housing programs
- **DIVERT** people from homelessness
- **PRIORITIZE** people on housing waiting lists



¹ <https://sponsorcontent.cnn.com/interactive/thegameplan/>

² <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/tracking-the-covid-19-recessions-effects-on-food-housing-and>