

Connecticut DESPP/DEMHS Region IV  
**Recovery Steering Committee**

**Economic/Natural & Cultural Resources Working Group**

March 16, 2021 - Meeting Notes

|                    |                   |                   |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Attendance:</b> | Darlene Richards  | Tyra Penn-Gesek   | Jill St. Clair    |
|                    | Diane Nadeau      | Sybil Tetteh      | Mark Hill         |
| John Filchak       | Elsa Nunez        | Sheri Cote        | Mark Oefinger     |
| Sam Alexander      | Francesca Kefalas | Matt Bordeaux     | Megan Brown       |
| Amanda Kennedy     | Paige Bronk       | Carla Iezzi       | Nancy Cowser      |
| Jim Butler         | Mike Caplet       | Reverend Benjamin | Mickey Morabito   |
| Wendy Bury         | Nancy Cowser      | Watts             | John Filchak      |
| Carly Holzschuh    | Mike Lacata       | Darlene Richards  | Justin Lafountain |

The Working Group continued discussion of unmet needs.

- **Housing** was again brought up as a critical issue - not only for tenants - but for landlords.
- Discussion around **workforce availability** and the impact (perhaps negative) resulting from the American Rescue Plan and its extension of unemployment benefits
  - Wages may not be adequate to induce persons to work
  - Training programs appear to be very solid
  - Wages offered and the cost of childcare work to diminish peoples decision to return to work
  - Parents' hesitation to send children back to school due to risk of contracting COVID-19.
  - Inconsistency in work hours, need of childcare make it difficult return to or to seek work
- Other Issues:
  - **Approval process for businesses** are very lengthy and expensive and related delays may be that certain applications require specific permit(s).
  - Resources for municipalities to do **outreach** are slim or limited.
- Possible solutions/Resources:
  - **Shared Work Program** (cut hours by 10% while still offering supplemental income and employee time to employer)
  - Liberty Bank has a **small business academy** program that is structured with 10 educational modules and then offers a small business line of credit \$5000
  - CEDAS will be running its "**Best Practices in Economic Development & Land Use Planning**" program again in 2021, which guides towns through the review and revision of these processes. A couple of dozen municipalities went through that program in 2019.
  - Killingly has initiated a **new software program** that allows our building officials to issue permits and do inspections with IPads on site streamlining the process, enhancing customer experience and expediting the process. Time is money.
  - Thompson is starting up a project to provide **space to retail micro entrepreneurs**. Such a program could be used to help in spreading the word and connecting with appropriate artisans/growers/cooperatives to get involved.