



Housing in Jackson County:

Housing is healthcare

By Hunter Potts Jackson County Housing Coordinator | Mar 29, 2020

The phrase “housing is healthcare” is commonly used in the housing industry to try and explain just how important having safe, decent, and affordable housing is to an individual or family. In a recent interview discussing the impacts of housing, Charles King of Housing Works was quoted. “It’s impossible, under normal circumstances to follow any kind of medication regimen, or healthy diet, or to get proper sleep if you don’t have a home,” King said.

This message is especially relevant in these uncertain times as the whole world is dealing with the very real threats and impacts of the Coronavirus Pandemic. As more and more people are being confined to their homes the idea of home ownership and having a safe place to sleep is becoming more vital.

For those individuals and families that have a home the notion of being confined in their homes is a doable option. For some, they may wish to take the advice of the various health and nutrition advocates who encourage people to take this time that we are isolated from others, under social distancing guidelines, to reevaluate their lives.

For example Rich Roll, a man on the forefront of the health and wellness field, has said he feels that people should take this time to look inward and “emerge from this planetary wake up call, not as victims, but empowered- armed with a greater clarity to re-imagine and actualize a better,

JACKSON COUNTY FLORIDAN

more sustainable, purposeful, intentional and fulfilling life experience for ourselves, our loved ones, future generations, and frankly the world at large.”

This is sound advice; however, what about those individuals who have lost their jobs, or whose homes are still in disarray following the impacts of the hurricane that ravaged our area less than two years ago, not to mention those who do not even have a home? What can be done to mitigate the effects of the various social distancing restrictions that are in place or those who are in danger of losing their home?

In the long run, the hope is that these social distancing measures will “flatten the curve” or limit the amount of people who have the virus at one time to a smaller number of people so that the virus can be somewhat contained. This would allow hospitals and patient care facilities the opportunity to be able to adequately care for the patients; otherwise these facilities will be overwhelmed by the number of COVID-19 victims and there would not be enough supplies or beds available to care for them.

As far as the economy goes the only relief in sight seems to U.S. federal government’s stimulus bill which can help to offset the economic impact from the government-mandated business restrictions. The stimulus bill can effectively put money into the hands of businesses and everyday Americans.

The way the bill reads now, according to NBC news, individuals and families who filed a tax return in either 2018 or 2019 will automatically be eligible for financial assistance based off of their annual income. Oftentimes, housing costs are the most expensive payment an individual or family has each month and these dollars could go a long way to allow current and potential homeowners who are struggling due to the effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic. Although this bill may be passed soon there is no guarantee how long it will take for this aid to reach U.S. citizens at large.

JACKSON COUNTY FLORIDA

From a county perspective we will continue to offer our services to the public for as long as we are able. The Community Development Department (comprised of Building Services, Planning, Code Enforcement, GIS Mapping, and Housing) is still operational. We currently do not allow any visitors into our offices but are able to assist customers either online, over the phone, or through the mail.

For more information about our department or for updates you can visit jacksoncountyfl.net and click on the Community Development tab to see the contact information for each department or you can click on Permit and Code Complaints tab for your Building Services or Code Enforcement needs. Additionally, if you would like to speak to a representative you can call our office line at 850-482-9637.

Article last accessed [here](#) on January 15, 2020.