



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local Nonprofit Expands Utility, Housing Assistance to Help More Families during Pandemic *Grants from Santander Bank and Citizens Bank Support Housing Stability Program Expansion*

NASHUA, NH, (August 19, 2020) – With negotiations for a second COVID-19 relief package on hold and federal unemployment reduced, many individuals and families who were able to make ends meet over the past few months of the pandemic will be unable to pay their rent, mortgage, or utility bills this month. The Front Door Agency, which offers assistance with housing-related costs year-round through its Housing Stability program, is expanding to meet the expected increase in demand as a result of the pandemic.

As businesses across New Hampshire re-open after months of uncertainty, about eight percent of the state's residents remain unemployed. According to the New Hampshire Employment Security, unemployment rates averaged between three to four percent over the past two years, but took a sharp turn upward in February because of the pandemic.

“Many of the individuals and families we serve are unable to work due to no fault of their own,” says Doug Howard, the Front Door Agency's Housing Stability Program Manager. “With no employment opportunities and bills piling up, some could face eviction, utility disconnection or even homelessness over the next few months. Even those who are working have seen their utility bills and food costs skyrocket because of the quarantine. Our goal is to help families remain financially stable before they find themselves in crisis.”

To achieve this goal, the Front Door Agency has made the following changes to expand its Housing Stability program:

- The Housing Stability Program Manager is now a full-time position. Doug Howard stepped into this role earlier this month with 10 years' experience working with vulnerable populations, most recently providing support services to students experiencing homelessness in the Nashua School District.
- The agency added a part-time Housing Advocate to the team. Julie Smiley is primarily responsible for administering the agency's security deposit loan program.
- All Housing Stability program applications are now available online. This will increase access to assistance for many households and will help the agency maintain appropriate social distancing guidelines. Paper applications remain available in our office vestibule for those who cannot access them online.

These changes are made possible by recent grants, including \$15,000 from Santander Bank, N.A. for housing services and \$10,000 from Citizens Bank, specifically for households that have been economically affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

“We are grateful to organizations like Santander and Citizens Bank that invest in local communities, especially during the current economic climate,” says Howard. “These funds will play a critical role in stabilizing households and preventing homelessness throughout Greater Nashua, thus strengthening our community as a whole.”

Additional funding for prevention services in last year's state budget and support from the CARES Act, the New Hampshire Bureau of Homeless & Housing Services, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the United Way of Greater Nashua, Eastern Bank, the New Hampshire Bishop's Charitable Assistance Fund, and the Rotary Club of Nashua also contributed to the expansion. For more information on the Front Door Agency's Housing Stability Program, or to apply for assistance, please visit www.frontdooragency.org.

About the Front Door Agency

Last year, the Front Door Agency assisted more than 1,200 people in Greater Nashua through its core programs, which in addition to Transformational Housing for single mothers include financial literacy, a Holiday Santa program, and a



Housing Stability program offering assistance with rent, utilities, security deposit loans and permanent affordable housing. To learn more, visit www.frontdooragency.org.

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