


Housing Action Illinois is surveying housing counseling agencies to learn how COVID-19 is impacting their work & to respond to their needs through our capacity building program. Thirty-five out of 47 agencies responded to the first survey, which was conducted on March 16.

Most respondents were located in the Chicago & Chicago metro area (71%). Fourteen percent were based in southern Illinois, 9% in central Illinois, and 6% out of state.

## Are agencies open?



**28** have closed their offices, but are offering housing counseling services **online & over the phone**. Of those:



**6** are hosting workshops online.  
**3** plan to host online workshops but need to figure out how.



2 agencies are open at their physical locations. 3 are open in limited circumstances.



1 agency closed its physical location & is not taking clients online or by phone.



1 agency had not yet decided what to do & was seeking guidance.

## Clients are seeking out services



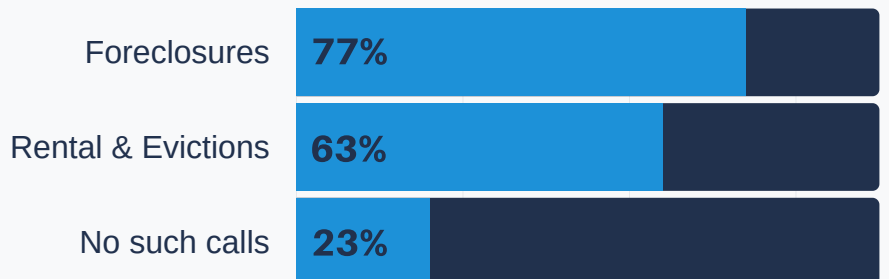
On March 16, housing counseling agencies were already seeing an **uptick in calls** from people concerned about their rent and mortgage payments.

**302**

such calls were reported across all agencies. Two agencies reported an increase, but did not have specific numbers.

*From 3/9/20 to 3/23/20.*

### Percentage of agencies reporting an increased number of calls for mortgage/foreclosure or rental/eviction services



### > ONLINE RESOURCE

Housing Action created a COVID-19 resource page with information related to housing & homelessness, including sections for housing counselors. Visit <http://bit.ly/resources-COVID-19> »

## Housing counselors need better technology to do their jobs remotely



Housing counselors need more than the typical work-from-home resources. Counselors must have a secure method of handling sensitive documents, such as social security numbers & bank statements. **Survey respondents said they don't currently have all the technology they need.**



**65%**  
need a secure way (e.g., a VPN)  
to handle client documents



**49%**  
need a laptop



**31%**  
need high speed  
internet access

## Agencies need staff capacity & training to meet their clients' needs



■ have enough counselors to meet needs    
 ■ need more counselors    
 ■ don't offer this service

Capacity to meet rental/eviction client needs

**57%**     **31%**     **17%**

Capacity to meet foreclosure client needs

**74%**     **37%**     **6%**

*Answers to this question were not mutually exclusive, so organizations may have picked more than one option (e.g., don't offer service, and need counselors to meet client needs).*



**31%**  
requested more **foreclosure**  
training for counselors



**49%**  
requested more **rental/eviction**  
training for counselors

### Additional Resource Requests

- Counselors see the need for guidance & funding being made available to help renters. While there are options and known practices for homeowners (such as forbearance plans), rental counselors don't have access to such programs for their clients.
- Funding for additional staff.
- Help converting workshops to an online format.
- Updates from mortgage servicers regarding relief for borrowers.
- Guidance & best practices for accommodating clients, who might have limited digital literacy or lack access to the equipment needed to participate in sessions online. LMI households may be especially impacted by the tech divide.

### Questions or suggestions?

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