



Our Rapid Response to COVID-19 | March 16 – October 31, 2020

COVID-19 devastated our client community, as disproportionate numbers of parents and caregivers lost jobs, became ill or both – and many of our young people already struggling to succeed in school were suddenly thrust into the deep waters of distance learning.

Identity responded immediately, not only to keep young people engaged in their education, older youth in their work skills development and parents equipped to help them – but also with lifesaving safety-net support and caring human connections to stave off hunger, homelessness and despair in our most vulnerable families. All front-line staff were cross trained in case management and non-clinical community mental health support techniques to help more youth and families manage the unrelenting stress of the pandemic that exacerbated existing stressors. In addition to connecting current, former and walk-in clients to safety-net services, those who need emotional support have greater access to a trained, empathetic ear, and tools to help cope with stress and anxiety.

Increased Case Management and Direct Client Assistance

- ▶ Provided support and case management to **more than 4,670 families** (almost 7 times more than the same period last year) and completed 9,436 referrals (5 times more than the same period last year), including:
 - ◆ 3,490 food referrals (almost 7 times more than the same period last year)
 - ◆ 551 healthcare referrals (10 times more than the same period last year)
 - ◆ 416 housing referrals (52 times more than the same period last year)
 - ◆ 187 low-cost or no-cost internet referrals (nearly twice the number compared to the same period last year)
- ▶ Vetted almost 1,000 families yielding nearly \$900,000 in Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Relief Program (EARP) payments aimed at preventing widespread eviction and homelessness.
- ▶ Distributed \$417,000 in aid to families for food, medicine, rent, baby supplies and other emergency assistance.
- ▶ Provided assistance accessing Unemployment Compensation to 120 clients (new service).
- ▶ Completed 3,228 interventions to help students transition to remote learning.
- ▶ Reached 2,873 families with critical information to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and take care of ill family members.

Carried Out Special Projects

- ▶ In partnership with Manna Food Center, trained 11 community promotoras who connected more than 500 hard-to-reach neighbors with emergency food.
- ▶ In partnership with the Montgomery County Food Council and Business Leaders Fighting Hunger, trained Youth Opportunity Center clients to help small nonprofits and residents access SNAP.
- ▶ In partnership with CAPSMD, distributed 295 Creative Learning Kits to elementary and middle school students.
- ▶ 56 Youth Opportunity Center clients made 2,200 reusable masks for low-income neighbors.
- ▶ In partnership with the University of Maryland School of Public Health and the Black and Brown Coalition for Educational Equity and Excellence, documented the barriers to virtual learning among underserved students and what they believe is essential to learn in a remote environment, culminating in a report entitled [Securing Educational Equity: Learning From the Lived Experiences of Black, Latino and Low-Income Families During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond](#).
- ▶ Filled 1,000 backpacks with supplies for remote learning like noise-cancelling headphones, surge protectors and fitness trackers, along with pens, pencils and notebooks.

Identity assists thousands of students and disconnected youth and families living in high poverty areas of Montgomery County, Maryland. We work with them after school, in the community and on playing fields to help improve social-emotional learning, achieve academic success and prepare for work. Learn more at [Identity-youth.org](https://identity-youth.org).