Jefferson County Coronavirus Relief Funds Talking Points

Outreach to Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee

Six Community Groups

What Are Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF)?

1. Under the CARES Act, the Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) are allocations made to units of local government to reimburse costs and expenditures directly related to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

2. The intent of these funds is to help jurisdictions cover the costs to local governments and their communities of the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 emergency.

3. Under current guidelines, all uses of CRF funds by the County and any subrecipient organizations must be spent or obligated and billed by October 31, 2020 to qualify for reimbursement. This deadline may get extended by the state.

4. Under an initial allocation from the state after paying for County costs to respond to the pandemic through this fall and already committing $150,000 for community assistance, the County has another $327,000 available to be allocated and expended for community assistance by the state’s deadline of October 31, 2020. To date, the County has made CRF commitments to assist small businesses, to assist area schools and to help the community comply with public health guidelines.

5. There is a possibility for a potential second round of CRF funding to be allocated to the County and to the City.

What Can CRF be used for?

a. County CRF may be used to for costs and expenditures incurred in response to community-experienced effects of the emergency.

b. County CRF can also support other COVID-19 expenses, for example:

- Small grants to help businesses/nonprofits & workers impacted by COVID pandemic;
- School District pandemic response costs and child meal programs;
- Response costs for other local governments;
- Homeless housing & support service costs in the pandemic;
- Isolation & Quarantine costs;
- Residential assistance (rental, mortgage, utilities) for people impacted by the pandemic;
- Food assistance related to the pandemic;
- Broadband access (for distance learning & work in the pandemic);
- Childcare assistance needed as a result of the pandemic;
- Testing/medical costs, prescription drug assistance;
- other areas that meet state and federal guidelines

c. County Funds may not be used by local governments to cover revenue shortfalls or for costs that are already budgeted or that are covered by other funding sources. See list of ineligible costs, below.
What is the timeframe for these funds to be used?

- Currently, the deadline to obligate and spend CRF is October 31, 2020.
- This deadline may be extended by the state in the near future.

What are the ICC Community Groups being asked to do?

- Jefferson County and the ICC invites each Community Group to submit written suggestions of eligible priority projects and uses within your Group’s subject area for the $327,000 of the first round of CRF funds for community assistance.
- We also seek suggestions of eligible priority projects and uses for a potential second round of CRF funding.
- While we need to spend the funds quickly on COVID-related assistance, we also should look for opportunities in doing so that invest in our long-term capacity to meet community needs.

What is the deadline for the community groups to provide their work?

The Community Groups are invited to submit projects or priority category ideas to the Board of County Commissioners via Leslie Locke, Executive Assistant, Jefferson County Administrator’s Office LLocke@co.jefferson.wa.us jeffbocc@co.jefferson.wa.us by close of business Friday, September 4, 2020.

More on Eligibility to use CRF to reimburse COVID-19 related costs:

Ineligible Costs

- Expenses for the state share of Medicaid
- Damages covered by insurance
- Payroll or benefits for employees whose work duties are not substantially dedicated to responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency
- Expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any federal program
- Reimbursements to cover lost revenue
- Reimbursement to donors for donated items
- Bonuses and severance pay
- Legal settlements

To be Eligible, uses must meet a 5-part Test: This is a five-part test from the Washington State Department of Commerce. The answer to each question must be “Yes” in order to qualify as an eligible, reimbursable expense.

1. The expense is connected to the COVID-19 emergency.
2. The expense is “necessary”.
3. The expense is not filling a short fall in government revenues.
4. The expense is not funded thru another budget line item, allotment or allocation, as of March 27, 2020.
5. The expense wouldn’t exist without COVID-19 OR would be for a “substantially different” purpose.