

Our Mission: Providing quality services through responsible leadership, innovation and the cooperation of dedicated people

## **County Board receives update on Coronavirus Relief Funds use Dec. 1, 2020**

Washington County continues to use Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) funds to assist community members weather the COVID-19 pandemic.

The County Board received an update on use of funds in the county Dec. 1. Washington County received \$31.7 million in CRF funds. It has been used for:

- small business assistance: \$6 million
- rental, mortgage assistance and basic needs: \$4.4 million
- assistance to hospitals/health care providers: \$715,000
- assistance to public schools: \$3 million
- public health direct costs for testing/tracing: \$600,000
- internet access and computer access through libraries: \$520,000
- public service/equipment modification: \$2.5 million
- support for telework/remote working: \$1.6 million
- payroll for public health and public safety: \$11 million
- substantially redirected personnel costs: \$1 million
- federally required employee benefit costs: \$200,000.

Washington County undertook three separate application periods to provide grants to businesses impacted by the pandemic, which included both home-based businesses and those with employees. Businesses with up to \$5 million in annual revenue and fewer than 50 employees were eligible. To be eligible a business must have incurred increased costs because of the pandemic or a loss of revenue. A total of 477 businesses in the county received assistance. County communities and the number of businesses in them assisted are:

- Afton: 6
- Bayport: 5
- Cottage Grove: 27

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- Forest Lake: 33
- Hastings: 2
- Hugo: 16
- Lake Elmo: 17
- Lakeland: 3
- Mahtomedi: 15
- Marine on Saint Croix: 5
- Newport: 15
- Oak Park Heights: 13
- Oakdale: 47
- Saint Paul Park: 1
- Scandia: 9
- St. Paul Park: 3
- Stillwater: 131
- White Bear Lake: 4
- Willernie: 3
- Woodbury: 122

In addition, federal guidance allows the county to use funds to pay for certain public health and public safety staff, to avoid laying off these employees during the middle of a pandemic response. By using CRF funds to cover these expenses, the county will have about \$10 million available to continue the pandemic response into 2021. The County Board will determine how to use that money moving forward. Options may include:

- costs for vaccine distribution;
- continued COVID-19 testing costs;
- continued costs for contact tracing;
- small business assistance;
- non-profit assistance;
- rental and mortgage assistance for those with job losses/income declines;

- costs for sheltering homeless individuals and families; and
- personal protection equipment and safety measures for county facilities and programs.

The State of Minnesota provided coronavirus relief funds to cities and townships to pay for eligible pandemic related costs. They had until Nov. 15 to spend their funds. If not expended, the funds must be transferred to the county, and any funds returned to the county had to be expended by Dec. 1 along with the county's CRF allocation. Any county funds not expended by Dec. 1 must be returned to the state.