

Coronavirus Pandemic Response



Washington County supports on-going state and federal efforts in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, including efforts to support businesses and residents financially impacted by the pandemic, and the corresponding public health mitigation efforts to support testing, contact tracing, and vaccination distribution.

Issue At-A-Glance

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had a tremendous toll on the health of county residents and the financial health of many small businesses.
- The number of residents who are unemployed remains much higher than prior to the pandemic, and many residents have fallen behind on rental and mortgage payments and may experience significant impacts when eviction moratoriums are lifted.
- A number of businesses are facing the possibility of closing, with many falling behind on rent payments, payments to suppliers, and other expenses.
- The economic impact of the pandemic has affected state and local budgets with increasing costs and declining revenue.
- Continued state and federal funding is needed for local public health services, and to support businesses most impacted by the pandemic, which is critical to the health of our local business community and to their ability to continue to employ workers.

500

In 2020, the county received more than 500 applications for business relief grants and in grants for rental, mortgage and basic needs

\$4.5M

In 2020, the county provided more than \$4.5 million in assistance to county residents

County COVID Support

Washington County has provided the following with financial assistance through the Coronavirus Relief Act (CARES Act)

- Efforts to ensure food security for residents
- Efforts to provide housing for residents who lack permanent and reliable housing
- Testing for targeted COVID groups
- Contact tracing for county cases
- Rental & mortgage assistance
- Small business support
- Reimbursement to hospitals and schools for costs incurred through pandemic response

Support

There is broad support for continuing federal and state assistance from many industry groups and service providers. Efforts to continue support for county services is being led by the National Association of Counties and the Association of Minnesota Counties.

Previous Consideration

This is a new position.

No Action

If no additional financial support is provided for county residents and businesses there will be significant pressure for county safety net services that will increase county costs. In addition, businesses and residents will continue to struggle, slowing down the necessary economic recovery from COVID-19.

Financial Implications

County levy increases are likely to be larger than otherwise necessary in coming years if the state and federal governments do not provide the necessary assistance to respond to this national emergency.

Contact

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