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Governor Walz, Lt. Governor Flanagan Announce Coronavirus Relief Funding for Communities Across the State

Funding will support local governments and food security efforts

June 25, 2020

[ST. PAUL, MN] – Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan today announced a plan to distribute $853 million in relief to communities across the state impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. $841 million will be distributed to Minnesota counties, cities, and towns to support local government coronavirus relief efforts. $12 million will be allocated toward food shelves and food banks to help combat hunger across Minnesota. The funding was authorized under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

"As we work to support the health and safety of all Minnesotans during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are also taking steps to build a stronger and more equitable economy," said Governor Walz. **"This funding will bring much-needed relief to communities across the state as we continue to battle this pandemic together."**

Approximately 300,000 Minnesotans have visited food shelves each month since the pandemic began, representing approximately a 30 percent increase over typical visits. Food banks are distributing approximately 2.4 million pounds of food per week, representing a 20-40 percent increase since 2019. To help meet this unprecedented demand, the Governor and Lt. Governor are allocating $12 million in emergency support for food shelves, food banks, and other emergency food efforts across the state.

"Access to nutritious food is a cornerstone of a safe and healthy life, and for too many Minnesotans, that need hasn't gone away during this pandemic—it has increased," said Lieutenant Governor Flanagan. **"Using CARES Act funding to alleviate this need is one way we can directly improve the lives of Minnesotans most impacted by COVID-19. While the Legislature was not able to come to a final agreement to distribute this funding, their work was critical in determining the greatest needs across our state."**

The $841 million for local governments across the state can be used to support local government services as well as grants to businesses, hospitals, and individuals who have been impacted by COVID-19.

The Minnesota Department of Revenue will distribute the funding to local governments. Local governments will receive a direct payment based on the per capita formula developed by the state legislature during special session.

Counties with population under 500,000: $121.28 x county population

Cities with population over 200: $75.34 x city population

Organized towns with population over 5,000: $75.34 x organized town population

Towns with population over 200 and under 4,999: $25.00 x town population

Cities or towns with a population of less than 200 will have their distribution sent to their county:

Cities with population under 200: $75.34 x city population

Organized towns with population under 200: $25.00 x town population

Prior to distributing the aid, local governments must certify their intent to follow federal guidelines for the use of funds received (https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fhome.treasury.gov%2Fsystem%2Ffiles%2F136%2FCoronavirus-Relief-Fund-Guidance-for-State-Territorial-Local-and-Tribal-Governments.pdf&data=02%7C01%7CHolland.Griffin%40state.mn.us%7C09c7ee4acbf848261f8208d8193cbf8d%7Ceb14b04624c445198f26b89c2159828c%7C0%7C0%7C
The CARES Act requires that payments may only be used to cover costs that are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency, were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved for the state or local government, and were incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020, and ends on December 30, 2020.

“Local governments urgently need this funding in order to effectively respond to this unprecedented public health emergency,” said Department of Revenue Commissioner Cynthia Bauerly. **“The Department of Revenue has a long track record of distributing aid to local governments. The infrastructure already in place will ensure this aid is distributed quickly and accurately.”**

The Governor is submitting this proposal today to the Legislative Advisory Commission for their review and is requesting their swift approval so the funds can be distributed. The Department of Revenue will distribute funds on a rolling basis beginning the week of June 29, 2020. Any remaining unspent funding must be returned to the state by December 10, 2020, and the state must recoup money if local governments are found to have spent the aid improperly.

Additional information is available on the Minnesota Department of Revenue website (https://www.revenue.state.mn.us/coronavirus-relief-fund-local-governments).

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