

COVID-19 Grants (Round 1)

June 3, 2020

The Site Visit Committee reached out to the first round of WFED COVID-19 \$4100 grant recipients with the following questions:

- How is the Womens' Fund COVID-19 grant money being used/how long will it last? (on your application you indicated you expect to serve an additional 30 youth through shelter and crisis counseling)
- What additional or future needs do you see or anticipate?
- Any comments on the impact of the grant money on your organization or clients?

Here are the responses we have received (in alphabetical order):

THE CENTER FOR VIOLENCE-FREE RELATIONSHIPS

In describing our needs we identified the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of increased costs at our shelter and clients (victims) who had lost income and increased expenses. Since we applied, there were some other grant opportunities from Women's Fund of California and CalOES that we pursued and received, which enabled us to reserve the funds we had planned on use to defray COVID-related expenses at the shelter for clients in acute need as result of the pandemic with no other resources. As a matter of policy we do not give cash to clients. Instead, the clients whose needs are vetted are provided with gift card to specific vendors (e.g., grocery or department store), or checks are written to payees for a specific purpose (e.g., landlords for rent), so it takes some time.

Thus far, about 70% (or \$2850) has been committed to our clients, and it is likely that all funds will be used for three families within the week. One client paid her rent from the fund, and we are in the process of issuing checks for family of five (children ages 1, 6, & 7), and are evaluating giving to another client and 6-year old child. These are women (and children) who escaped domestic violence by fleeing to our shelter, and had been residents there for a year. All were at an early stage of becoming independent when the pandemic hit, and were/are at risk of losing housing. The Women's Fund is helping to bridge the gap before other assistance or other resources become available.

One family has a remarkable story worth sharing. Sometime ago, a mother and her three children fled a violent home, and resided in our shelter for a year. In this case, The Center not only provided services to the mother and children, but also to the father. He sought change, and voluntarily attended our Positive Solutions program twice. He learned how to become a better communicator, spouse, and father. They, as a couple, and as a family, participated in therapy and are in the process of reunification. The pandemic led to loss of income for the family (the father was laid off, and the mother was unable to start a new job because of the shelter-in-place order, so she could not work). They avoided losing their housing on the promise that the Women's Fund would help with rent if it came in time, or with bills deferred so they could pay rent. With the help of the Women's Fund El Dorado, there are at least six families (one man, seven women, nine children) who have found unexpected relief. In this number, I include residents of the shelter at the time of our application, because the fund enabled us to know that our added expenses there were accounted for, until other funding became available.

We are fortunate that the local, state, and national organizations have been responsive in meeting needs of The Center and those it serves. For example, we received protective gear (N95 and surgical masks) from ProCare, gift cards for clients from WalMart, and emergency grants from the Women's Fund of California, California Office of Emergency Services, and loans through the Small Business Administration. That said, funds such as the grant from the Women's Fund are important because they can have immediate impact on our clients, and can help to prevent a bad situation from getting worse. Unrestricted funds that can be used to as bridge to other aid or self-sufficiency are always useful.

Unfortunately, while these efforts meet current needs and help offset loss of revenue due to cancelled or delayed fundraising events, we expect demand for our services to increase as a consequence of the pandemic. We are concerned about future funding beyond the current crisis and how to ensure delivery of our services given the risks of pandemic and civil unrest. According to the district attorney, arrests due to domestic violence are on the increase, and this follows trends globally. We are working to increase the ways in which clients can access services, and do so safely in spite of the pandemic, by reconfiguring our offices and implementing some new technology.

Please let me know if you have any other questions.

Thanks again,

Joel

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EL DORADO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Thank you again for your assistance with this program!

In response to your questions:

To date (between March 16 – May 5) we have spent \$1500 and have served 291 individuals, which has kept us right on the estimate of \$5 per person on average. (For clarification purposes, this amount would be per delivery, not per day). During the initial period we were receiving donations of food as well, although those donations have tapered off to some degree. We were also given an additional \$1000 in various personal donations, which continue to come in incrementally (\$20 here and there).

I offer you this information because it helps paint the expectation for the next few months. If we were to stay exactly status quo, the current balance in our account would allow us to continue to mid-August, which is right around the time school will be starting. This was my initial goal for this program.

However, there are a few significant variables:

- 1) Our numbers are beginning to increase dramatically. Although we served 35 people yesterday, we have an additional 36 slated for tomorrow (our weekly average to date has been 41). While I have not yet reviewed this morning's emails, I do see three pending with a subject line of "food pantry referral".
- 2) Our food donations have slowed down.

If these two factors continue, we may only be able to operate through late June – mid July.

3) On the brighter side – I have applied for a \$5000 grant, which I should be hearing about soon. If this becomes available we should be able to continue into August with the significantly larger numbers with no problem. If it does not, we will be dependent largely upon public donations and will continue to operate as long as we can.

In terms of impact:

Our data is showing an exceptional number of families with young children (under 5) who are in need. The majority of families are completely without transportation or with income that prohibits them from affording gas.

The individuals receiving the deliveries have been very excited and appreciative of the food and have expressed relief, many saying that they don't know what they would have done without it. We have had more than a dozen "last minute" deliveries where the referring party asked for an emergency delivery as the family was nearing the very last of their food supplies.

Seven of the families we have served, for a total of 22 people, live in local motels.

Again, thank you so much for your support! The funds received are allowing us to continue to pursue this much needed service during this trying time.

Stay well,
Margaret Lewis

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MILITARY FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP (MFSG)

MFSG has spent close to \$3000 of the \$4100 in WFED grant money so far, in these areas:

- Weekly curbside food pickups (have been servicing over 80 families for the past 4 weeks)
- Helped a family of 5 whose two wage-earners had both lost their jobs pay their bills
- Housed 2 homeless people who had just been released from the hospital for 5 nights in a hotel while they continued their recuperation
- One local business, a former donor to MFSG, found itself needing help to pay bills and got that help

FOOD BANK OF EL DORADO COUNTY

Unable to reach by phone or email to date.

NEW MORNING

I preface this with a massive thank you to the Women's Fund. See my responses below.

1. Grant funds are being used to provide crisis services to youth/families impacted by the C-19 crisis. While we indicated we would serve an additional 30 youth we have actually served 115 youth in crisis directly impacted by the C-19 crisis (nearly add due to stay-at-home order and the family conflicts that have ensued).
2. What additional or future needs do you see or anticipate? **[]** While due to generous donors like you, we will survive the fiscal year. Down range challenges (economic uncertainty, increase in client needs, government funding availability, etc.) are entirely unknown. We will adjust our services to meet budget realities but I have concern for client needs. While in some families the crisis has brought out the best, for too many it has brought out the worst
3. As always, the ability to offer services to young people in need is our primary concern and the impact can be enormous.

Thank you for your inquiry and support!

David Ashby

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UPPER ROOM OF EL DORADO COUNTY:

Thank you for your concern. Actually, the Upper Room is doing quite well at the moment. Our numbers are up from 150 meals a day to 300-320 meals a day. In April we set a record breaking 8,153 meals served at a cost of \$3.73 per meal. Our normal monthly average is 4,200 meals and the Women's Fund COVID 19 Grant was used to offset the increase in food costs to provide the additional 3,900 meals in April.

However, our May meals are being provided by local restaurants/catering companies 5 nights a week who have been sponsored by local organizations and/or families that have offered to pay the restaurants for their services to cater our meals. This has turned out to be an unexpected but incredible partnership with the community. We are still providing meals 2 nights a week and lunch bags all 7 days of the week and expect the catered meals to end by the end of the month as local restaurants begin to open back up.

Additionally, we have just ended a social media fundraising campaign through Facebook that has brought in over \$100,000 in donations. (17% from grants - 83% private party

donations. 75% were 1st time donors with an average donation of \$224.) Our initial intention running the campaign was to cover the loss of our cancelled fundraisers and we never dreamed we'd get the response we did.

We are currently beginning to look at what it will take to open our doors back up and begin serving meals in our dining room and waiting to see what the guidelines will be and how they may affect the Upper Room. We will need to install a plexiglass divider between dining room and kitchen to prevent cross contamination and virus spread. Costs are expected to run approximately \$2,000.

We are operating on minimum staff for now. Not having to cook or serve meals 7 days a week allows us to work with skeleton crews. We have lost more than 50% of our volunteers due to health concerns over the coronavirus and are not sure how many will be returning. It's my feeling we will probably be rebuilding most teams when this finally ends, but for now we seem to have plenty of help with our limited services.

We want to thank the Women's Fund for their continued support through this difficult time. It is with partnerships like this that makes it possible for the Upper Room to do what it does best which is to serve the marginalized and broken members of our community.

Blessings

Charlie McDonald
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Upper Room Dining Hall
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