



Aug. 10, 2020

As leaders of organizations from across Pennsylvania that fund and partner with human services nonprofits, we are concerned that the “new normal” these organizations are struggling to adapt to in the COVID-19 pandemic is bordering on a brutal “abnormal.”

The public health and economic crises have most of them reeling from lost revenue streams and exponential increases in demand for services. Many have been forced to cut back on their missions and limit operations. Some are facing permanent closure.

That is why we are joining together and asking in one voice for your support of the proposal laid out in [Senate Bill 1254](#) and [House Bill 2740](#). The legislation will provide dedicated funding from Pennsylvania’s federal CARES Act allocation to the statewide network of 8,500 human services nonprofits that are key determiners of basic quality of life in communities.

If this sector is allowed to fail, daily life will be much harsher for millions of Pennsylvanians who depend on essential services. Taxpayers will bear the costs of a discarded social safety net and the deep job cuts in an industry that accounts for 16% of the state’s workforce.

The legislation, which has bipartisan support, will establish the NEEDS (Nonprofit Economic Emergency Delivery System) Grants Program. It will be funded with \$200 million from the COVID-19 Response Restricted Account to the Commonwealth Financing Authority to provide competitive grants to eligible 501c(3) organizations statewide. Maximum allowable funding would not exceed \$500,000 per eligible organization.

The Program is reserved for community-based organizations that provide one or more of such services as child care, community public health, protection from domestic violence, food provision, career training and helping people manage various disabilities.

Why does the human services sector need this program? Eighty percent of nonprofit revenue comes from government grants or contracts and fees for service. Donors, foundations and government agencies also supplement that revenue so that these organizations can improve life

conditions in the communities *you* serve. If these organizations contract or close, so will the systems that provide such essentials as food, shelter, medical treatment and workforce training.

Staffs and boards of these nonprofits are clearly unsung heroes in Pennsylvania's response to the coronavirus pandemic. Amid an unprecedented public health and economic crisis, many human services workers have been on the frontlines protecting those most at risk from COVID infection and financial devastation, and also protecting public health – from delivering meals to homebound older adults and staffing homeless shelters to running community health centers during lockdowns. [Hear from Pa. nonprofits.](#)

Our fellow Pennsylvanians who work in the human services sector have more than earned the NEEDS Grants Program. For their sake, for those they serve and for the future of all Pennsylvanians, we ask for your support.

Respectfully,

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