

MEMORANDUM

TO Community-based Violence Prevention and Intervention Organizations

FROM Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence

DATE May 11, 2020

RE CARES Act Funding

**The CARES Act: Opportunities For Funding Community-based
Violence Prevention And Intervention Work**

As violence prevention and intervention practitioners, you know firsthand that shootings and other forms of violence have [continued](#) during lockdown, particularly in underserved communities of color [most vulnerable](#) to the virus's spread and related economic harms. At Giffords, we recognize that your programs operate at the [intersection](#) of these interrelated crises, and that your staff, who have always served so [bravely and effectively](#) on the front lines during outbreaks of violence, are now joining other emergency response workers on the front lines of a global pandemic.

Yet this [essential](#) work is all too often carried out with limited budgets, even under the best of circumstances, and many community organizations now require additional support in order to continue operating in the face of this crisis. Communities facing the dual public health threat of gun violence and COVID-19 need these services now more than ever, especially as [cash-strapped](#) city and state governments become less able to sustain investments in the work. During this time of nationwide uncertainty, it is imperative that frontline violence prevention and intervention professionals remain on the job.

This is why Giffords is committed to [advocating](#) for the resources necessary to sustain this lifesaving work and to helping groups on the ground identify, understand, and access critical funding opportunities. As part of that effort, we created this overview of emergency federal resources recently made available through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, also known as the [CARES Act](#). The CARES Act, which passed Congress in March 2020, includes several funding programs for state and local governments that may be leveraged to fund community-based violence prevention and intervention work. Because these programs give wide discretion to state and local administering agencies, advocacy may be required to persuade these administrators to include community-based organizations.

Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding Program

- The CARES Act includes \$850 million in funding through the [Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding Program](#) (CESF) in order to assist state and local governments with efforts “to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.”
- This funding is being allocated by the Department of Justice (DOJ) in accordance with a formula established by the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant program, and is being provided to states, territories, tribes, and local governments. Critically, these entities may use this funding to make grants, contracts, or subawards to [community-based organizations](#). Funding is not limited solely to law enforcement agencies.
- According to [DOJ](#), allowable projects and purchases include, but are not limited to: overtime, equipment, hiring, supplies (such as gloves, masks, sanitizer), training, and travel expenses (“particularly related to the distribution of resources to the most impacted areas”), and addressing the medical needs of inmates in state, local, and tribal prisons, jails, and detention centers. The application deadline is May 29, 2020.
- CESF funds are distributed both to [states and municipalities](#). Each state has its own unique state administering agency (SAA), which has discretion to determine how funds are distributed. A directory of SAAs is available [here](#).
- In Illinois, a broad coalition of community-based violence prevention organizations [made the case](#) to Illinois’s SAA to earmark a portion of nearly \$20 million in CESF funding for community-based programs. Several states grappling with ongoing community violence issues are set to receive large awards through CESF including California (\$58.5M), Florida (\$31.7M), Georgia (\$15.8M), New York (\$27.8M), Pennsylvania (\$17.6M), and others. Advocates and practitioners should work with SAAs and local governments to ensure that community-based organizations are not overlooked.

Coronavirus Relief Fund

- The CARES Act also provides \$150 billion in direct assistance through the Department of the Treasury for state and local governments through the [Coronavirus Relief Fund](#).
- To be eligible to receive this funding directly, a local government must have a population that exceeds 500,000. This funding may only be used for “necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency” with respect to the coronavirus, during the relevant time period. A listing of eligible units of local government is available [here](#).
- According to a [guidance document](#) issued by Treasury, this includes not only expenditures used to respond directly to the emergency, but also “expenditures incurred to respond to second-order effects.” Governments “[may presume](#) that payroll costs for public health and public safety employees are payments for services substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency, unless the chief executive (or equivalent) of the relevant government determines that specific circumstances indicate otherwise.”

- Practitioners and advocates should help state and local governments applying for resources through the Coronavirus Relief Fund understand the role of community violence prevention and intervention organizations in both promoting peace and preventing the spread of COVID-19 in vulnerable populations. Many of the articles linked to in this document will be useful in making this case.

Payroll Protection Program

- The CARES Act also includes direct financial support for some nonprofit organizations through the [Payroll Protection Program](#) (PPP). Under PPP, nonprofit organizations can apply for low-interest loans on a first-come-first-serve basis to cover two-and-a-half months of payroll costs. These loans will [generally be waived](#) as long as the borrowing organization maintains staffing levels and limits payroll reductions to no more than 25%.
- Due to [large demand](#) and limited funds, nonprofit organizations addressing community violence should apply immediately through their banking institution to access PPP funds if they have not already done so.
- Many smaller community-based organizations operate under fiscal sponsorship. Some fiscal sponsors are too large to qualify for PPP because they employ more than 500 employees, which has had the unintended effect of locking community groups out of PPP funding. Giffords is working with federal agencies to provide a fix to this situation.

For more information or assistance regarding these and other funding opportunities for violence prevention and intervention work, please contact [Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence](#) (info@giffords.org).