

**Xochitl Flores**

BUREAU CHIEF

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TONI PRECKWINKLE

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Date: July 13, 2020**To:** Honorable Toni Preckwinkle,
President, Cook County Board of Commissioners
and Members of the Cook County Board of Commissioners**From:** Xochitl Flores, Bureau Chief**Re:** Proposed Board Item #_20-3228, Economic Development Initiatives to Implement the
COVID-19, Funding Response Plan – From Rapid Response to Equitable Recovery

Dear Madam President and Cook County Commissioners:

The CARES Act established the Coronavirus Relief Fund (“CRF”) which provides aid to certain eligible local governments to address necessary expenditures incurred due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (“COVID-19”). Under the CARES Act, governments received CRF if their population base was at least 500,000. Accordingly, Cook County qualified as an eligible unit of local government and received CRF from the U.S. Department of Treasury.

Federal guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Treasury indicates that a unit of local government may use CRF for expenses associated with the provision of economic support in connection with COVID-19, including expenditures related to the provision of grants to small businesses to reimburse the costs of business interruption caused by required closures.

As a result of COVID-19, Cook County businesses and residents have been severely impacted and recovery initiatives are needed to assist Cook County businesses and residents as result of losses suffered and unforeseen expenses incurred. To ensure a comprehensive and coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic, President Preckwinkle released the Cook County COVID-19 Response Plan: From Rapid Response to Equitable Recovery. This Plan combines the County’s ongoing public health and healthcare priorities with parallel agendas that respond to the longer-term economic and social impacts of the virus.

Under the Equitable Recovery phase of the Cook County COVID-19 Response Plan, the Bureau of Economic Development (BED) collaborated with stakeholders to develop new programs to expand BED’s Community Recovery Initiative to assist suburban Cook County renters and homeowners, dislocated workers, small businesses and address critical social service needs that will help restore the economic well-being of residents and businesses.

In order to assist suburban Cook County businesses and residents, Cook County, through the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, has allocated nearly \$82 Million to fund specific economic and community recovery initiatives administered by the BED, in addition to the Cook County Community Recovery Loan Fund that was implemented pursuant to Executive Order 2020-9 in the amount of \$10 million. Such economic and community recovery initiatives are listed as follows:

1. **Cook County COVID-19 Small Business Recovery Grant and Technical Assistance Program** in the amount of \$15 M to support small businesses in Cook County, who urgently require access to funding that will help businesses recover from the negative effects of COVID-19.
2. The **Southland Development Technical Assistance Network**, in the amount of \$1M, to provide free direct technical assistance services to small businesses located in Cook County's South Suburbs.
3. The **Back to Work Cook County** program in the amount of \$4M to provide retraining and employment services to dislocated suburban Cook County residents due to COVID-19.
4. **Cook County Manufacturing Cares Package**, in the amount of \$500,000 to identify urgent and important needs for Cook County manufacturers as a result of COVID-19.
5. The **Cook County Rental Assistance Program** to provide **\$20M** in rental assistance payments for residents financially impacted by COVID-19, either for past due payments or upcoming payments.
6. The **Cook County Mortgage Assistance Program** in the amount of **\$20 M** to provide mortgage assistance payments directly to the servicer for residents financially impacted by COVID-19, either for past due payments or upcoming payments.
7. The **Cook County Critical Social Service Programs** in the amount of **\$11.4 M** to provide services to the homeless (\$5 M); to provide legal aid, housing counseling, and foreclosure mediation services (\$1.1 million); to provide utility assistance to residents impacted by COVID-19 (\$2.1 M); to provide food assistance (\$1.1 million); and to provide direct financial assistance to residents impacted by COVID-19 (\$2.1 million).

The Bureau of Economic Development appreciates your continued support while we work together to navigate the effects of COVID-19. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,



Xochitl Flores

cc: Lanetta Haynes Turner, Chief of Staff
Jose Rivera, Deputy Chief of Staff
John Roberson, Legislative and Governmental Affairs
Matthew DeLeon, Secretary to the Board