



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR THE ALLEGHENIES

SERVING BEDFORD, CAMBRIA, SOMERSET, AND INDIANA COUNTIES

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For Immediate Release

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Nonprofit Leaders Launch Fund to Address COVID-19 Impacts

Lee, CFA Contribute \$200,000 to New Crisis Fund

JOHNSTOWN—Community Foundation for the Alleghenies (CFA) and the Lee Initiatives Health and Wellness Endowment are launching an emergency fund to support the community through the immediate and evolving hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. On Monday, CFA announced the new fund—the COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund—with a \$100,000 pledge each from Lee Initiatives and CFA.

The COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund is designed to quickly provide financial resources to organizations meeting the community's critical and changing needs, such as health, human services, and economic challenges, CFA President Mike Kane said.

“Part of our role as a community foundation is to understand the needs on the ground and to facilitate philanthropic responses to those needs as they arise,” Kane said. “We are honored to be able to help our community members help each other, and we are deeply appreciative of our donors and nonprofit partners working in the field.”

Lee Initiatives CEO Donald Gardill said the move aligns with Lee Initiatives' mission.

“This fund creates an opportunity for us to address our community's needs as quickly as possible as this health and economic crisis continues to unfold,” he said. “Now is the time for all of us to join together in caring for one another.”

The Portage Endowment Fund, also managed through CFA, already has stepped up to contribute to the COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund. Other community members who want to join the call to support those affected locally by the pandemic may visit [cfalleghenies.org/COVID-19](https://www.cfalleghenies.org/COVID-19). Every dollar contributed will go directly to local relief efforts through the fund. CFA is waiving all credit card and management fees for this effort.

The same webpage also provides updates for grantees and nonprofit organizations seeking information about this funding opportunity as well as information about new flexibility in grants they may have already received through previous spring or fall grantmaking. CFA Associate Director Angie Berzonski said the Community

Benefiting our region every day, forever. Community Foundation for the Alleghenies is a public, nonprofit foundation that manages funds to strengthen communities in Bedford, Cambria, Indiana, and Somerset counties. CFA empowers individuals to become philanthropists, donors to make meaningful change, and caring citizens to design a legacy. For information about creating a fund or contributing to one of the 740+ funds the Foundation manages, visit www.cfalleghenies.org.

Foundation is working hard to support nonprofits in their mission, moving quickly to ensure they can continue to operate and provide much-needed outreach to the community at this time.

“We understand that many of our nonprofit partners may have questions and concerns about how grants from the Community Foundation may be affected,” Berzonski said. “In addition to the creation of this new fund, we have also taken two important steps to be flexible in our support. First, grantees have discretion to re-allocate any grant in the amount of \$7,500 or less that was awarded through our spring or fall grantmaking prior to March 2020, if needed, for emergency reasons. Grantees will simply need to disclose all re-use of funding on their final grant reports. Secondly, decisions on grant requests made through our Spring 2020 Grant Round are being deferred for at least a month.”

However, if any organization that submitted a Spring 2020 grant application is already aware that their request is no longer valid (due to cancellations, delays, changes in organization priorities, etc.), please email aberzonski@cfalleghenies.org to discuss options.

CFA and an advisory group will work with county emergency services officials, other nonprofit leaders, and local and state elected officials to fill gaps in support and make sure resources are channeled where they will have the greatest impact, as swiftly as possible.

Last week, CFA invited local nonprofit leaders, including Lee Initiatives, 1889 Foundation, and United Way of the Laurel Highlands, to form a strategy to address this fluid situation and its impact on people and nonprofits in the region. This new fund is established in addition to that ongoing collaborative effort.

Grants from the COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund will be distributed on a rolling basis as fundraising continues and as CFA works to address the immediate, short-term, and long-term needs that arise from the pandemic.

Nonprofit organizations in need of emergency funding can apply through a streamlined process: The nonprofit should send an email to aberzonski@cfalleghenies.org with the subject line “Emergency Funding Request.” The email should include a description of need, the amount requested, and a breakdown of how the funding will be used. CFA will receive requests, compile information, and disseminate to the new COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund Advisory Committee.

Founded in 2005, the Lee Initiatives Health and Wellness Endowment (LIHWE) was established as the “Legacy of Lee Hospital” to improve the health and well-being of the residents of the area served by the former Lee Hospital in western Pennsylvania. By collaborating with people, organizations, and resources, Lee Initiatives works to fulfill its mission: “Caring for our future, honoring our past.”

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