

Local nonprofits use Mother Cabrini grants to boost services during pandemic

Earlier this year the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation [awarded](#) \$150 million in grants to more than 500 programs across the state. That money and a subsequent pledge of \$50 million in Covid-19 relief for nonprofits have helped to support an expansion of essential services during the pandemic.

The Institute for Community Living and BronxWorks have both used funding from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation to help address greater demand for food, housing and other health-related services in Brooklyn and the Bronx. They say funding from Mother Cabrini and other foundations like it have helped fill a critical gap during the current crisis.

Jerry Ramos, senior vice president for integrated care and family and youth services at the Institute for Community Living, said the organization has used a \$500,000 grant from Mother Cabrini to form and run a program called ICL Connects, which serves residents in East New York and Brownsville. It deploys care navigators into communities to do outreach and engage individuals who may be in need of housing support, nutritious meals, health care and mental health services.

When there wasn't public funding available for such outreach, the grant enabled the organization to target more people not already aware of the services it provides, Ramos said. Two of the greatest areas of need during the pandemic have been access to healthful food and supportive services for children.

"This pandemic has affected the kids," Ramos said.

Many families have turned to the institute to help secure counseling and other mental health-related services for children. To date, ICL Connects has served more than 260 people.

At BronxWorks, a \$125,000 Covid relief grant from Mother Cabrini helped it ramp up capacity to provide emergency assistance during the peak months of the outbreak. Eileen Torres, executive director, said the support was especially important as the Bronx had a disproportionate number of cases, hospitalizations and deaths.

BronxWorks, which serves tens of thousands of Bronx residents each year through more than 40 sites, used the funding to scale up its kitchens for people in need of food and distribute food vouchers. It also bolstered food delivery for seniors and other support services for residents who had lost jobs as a result of the pandemic.

"It's certainly striking the number of families right now who need food assistance," Torres said. "We're hoping that we'll continue to receive funding through foundations, corporations or individuals to really be able to help us operate [food] pantries and provide other services," she added.

The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation was formed in 2018 through proceeds from the Catholic Church's sale of nonprofit health plan Fidelis Care to publicly traded Centene for nearly \$3.8 billion. It is among the largest foundations in the country and focuses exclusively on New York.