

Q and A: CARES Act and State Funding

April 22, 2020

The Wisconsin Counties Association has received many questions regarding federal funds received by the state through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, of which Wisconsin will receive an estimated \$2.3 billion. These funds are to be used for expenses incurred in response to the public health emergency between March 1 and December 31, 2020. Below please find commonly asked questions on this issue. As always, do not hesitate to contact the Association with additional questions. We encourage you to contact Governor Evers' office today to encourage him to allocate 30% of these funds to Wisconsin Counties.

Q: What is the CARES Act and what funding does it provide to state and local governments?

A: *The CARES Act is the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. It appropriates \$150 billion to state, local, and tribal governments. The funds appropriated are to be used for expenses incurred in response to the public health emergency.*

Q: How much funding is Wisconsin allocated under the CARES Act?

A: *The state of Wisconsin is allocated approximately \$2.3 billion.*

Q: I thought the CARES Act provided funds directly to counties to help in the COVID-19 pandemic. Who is getting the assistance?

A: *The CARES Act provides for local units of government with populations of 500,000 or more to get a direct allocation from the US Treasury. Only 130 of the nation's 3069 counties received an allocation. In Wisconsin, only two of Wisconsin's 72 counties will receive an allocation from Treasury.*

Q: Is each Governor getting an allocation of funds for state and local expenses related to COVID-19?

A: *Yes. Wisconsin is being allocated \$2,258,000,000. After deducting \$102,700,000 for the City of Milwaukee, \$93,400,000 for Dane County, and \$62,000,000 for Milwaukee County (a reduced amount per Treasury implementation), there will be \$1,999,000,000 for state and local expenses related to COVID-19. WCA has asked that 30% of these funds (\$599,970,000) be reserved for counties, leaving \$1.4 billion for other purposes.*

Q: What are counties asking Governor Evers to do?

A: *We are asking Governor Evers to allocate 30% of the state's CARES Act allocation for counties.*

Q: Why do we need Governor Evers to set aside 30% of CARES Act funding for counties?

A: To date, Congress has not allocated direct funding to the vast majority of counties; yet, counties have incurred and will continue to incur unique costs related to the pandemic. Counties continue to interact with their citizens on a daily basis through their public health functions related to COVID-19. In addition, counties continue to perform vital health and safety functions including child protective services, adult protective services, income maintenance functions, as well as the provision of mental health services.

Q: Why are we making this request of the Governor and not the Legislature?

A: Governor Evers has sole discretion over the use of these funds.

Q: Have other states set aside a specific allocation for counties?

A: Yes. Several states have allocated a specified percentage of their CARES Act allocation to local governments. Examples of states that have taken this approach include California (45%), Alabama (45%), West Virginia (45%), Idaho (30%), and Maryland (28%).

Q: What can I do to help make this happen?

A: We need all county officials to proactively engage in communication with the Governor to ensure counties receive their fair share of CARES Act funding.

*You can call the Governor's office at **608-266-1212** or send an email to eversinfo@wisconsin.gov.*

Q: Do you have sample social media posts I can use?

A: Yes! You can engage the Governor and his administration through the use of social media as well.

Sample Tweet: Counties are facing immediate financial shortfalls and unknown future fiscal ramifications due to #COVID19. We respectfully ask @GovEvers to please allocate at least 30 percent of #CARESACT state funding to #WisCounties.

Sample Facebook Post:

Wisconsin counties are facing immediate financial shortfalls and unknown future fiscal ramifications due to COVID19. We respectfully ask Governor Tony Evers to allocate at least 30 percent of CARES Act state funding to Wisconsin's 72 counties.

No matter how you do it, we will only be successful if all county officials engage in this effort.

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