



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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To: County and City Elected Officials

Delivered Via: Chief Executive Officer, Manager, or Administrator

From: Aubrey L. Layne, Jr.
Secretary of Finance

Subject: Local Allocations for Federal CARES Coronavirus Relief Funds

Background

As most of you are aware, Congress passed and the President recently signed the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020*. This Act provides funding for a number of different programs to address the COVID-19 pandemic. A primary component of the CARES Act is \$150 billion in assistance to state, local, territorial, and tribal governments for the direct impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through the establishment of the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF).

Allocations were sent to states based on population. Each state received 55 percent of its share based on total state population and the remaining 45 percent was based on the local populations of each state's cities and counties. Localities with populations greater than 500,000 could apply to receive funds directly. All other CRF funds were distributed to the states to determine the allocations to localities.

Virginia has received approximately \$3.1 billion as its share of the CRF total. This amount does not include approximately \$200 million that went directly to Fairfax County since it qualified to receive its funding directly.

These funds may be used for qualifying expenses of state and local governments. The CARES Act provides that payments from the CRF only may be used to cover costs that:

1. are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19);
2. were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020 (the date of enactment of the CARES Act) for the State or government; and
3. were incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020, and ends on December 30, 2020.

At this point, federal guidance indicates that the CRF funds can only be used for the direct costs associated with the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and cannot be used to make up for revenue shortfalls. State and local government officials have requested that this restriction be lifted or that additional federal funds be provided to address the loss of state and local revenue. To date, no action has been taken by Congress to allow that flexibility or to provide funding for that purpose.

Allocation of CRF Funds to Localities

While the federal CARES Act does not require that states distribute funding to local governments with populations less than 500,000 residents, the Governor recognizes that localities are experiencing the same COVID-19 related expenses as the Commonwealth. Therefore, fifty (50) percent of the locally-based allocations will be distributed to counties and cities on or around June 1, 2020, by the Department of Accounts (DOA) after receipt of a signed certification from the locality. This distribution will be made to the local treasurer in the same manner that Car Tax Relief Payments are made.

Each locality's allocation will be based on the proportion that the locality's population represents of the statewide total population. Appendix A reflects the population used by US Treasury to allocate CRF funds to the states. This population data is the basis for determining the allocations to each locality.

This table also reflects each locality's share of the current distribution based on the population data displayed. Please note that the population data for each county includes the populations of the towns within its borders. Consequently, the allocation indicated for each county includes any allocations based on residents that live in the towns located within that county.

CRF funds should be considered "one time" monies and should not be used for ongoing services and/or base operations. Because the funds must be expended by December 30, localities are advised not to create services with expenses beyond that period. Any expenses beyond December 30, 2020, must be paid entirely by the locality from local funds.

Requirements for Use of Funds and Certifications

General

The amounts listed in Appendix A reflect the funds that will be transferred to each locality after receipt of a certification form (Appendix D) from the locality signed by the chief executive officer, the chief financial officer, and the chief elected officer. Before signing the certification, I recommend that you read and understand the federal guidance and the frequently asked questions contained in Appendix B and Appendix C, respectively. The most recent information on this guidance and the frequently asked questions can be obtained at: <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares/state-and-local-governments>

Please note that the certification statement includes an acknowledgment that you may be required to return funds to the federal government if it is determined that those funds were spent for purposes that do not qualify. Since these funds are being provided to you “up front” rather than on a reimbursement basis, it is important for you to understand that the burden of ensuring that all CRF funds are spent for qualifying purposes falls to the local government. You are responsible for maintaining all necessary documentation to ensure compliance with the federal requirements.

If the federal government determines that you have used CRF funds for purposes that do not qualify, you must return those funds to the state promptly so that they may be returned to the federal government. As a condition of receiving CRF funds, you are agreeing that the state can use state aid intercept to recover any funds necessary for expenses that were not for a qualifying purpose or that were unexpended as of December 30, 2020.

For Counties Only

As previously stated, the population data for each county includes the populations of the towns within its borders. Consequently, the allocation indicated for each county includes any allocations based on residents that live in the towns located within that county.

Counties must ensure that an equitable share of the CRF funds it receives are shared with and granted to each town within its jurisdiction. Just as with the funds retained by the county, the funds granted to towns must be spent in accordance with the same requirements and the same documentation must be retained for audit purposes. The county issuing the grant is responsible for the ensuring compliance with the documentation requirements and must ensure that the use of the funds meets the requirements set forth by the federal government.

Submission of Certification

The certification in Appendix D contains more specific details on the responsibilities of the local governing body. A fillable .pdf form can be downloaded from the Secretary of Finance’s Website under “Recent News” at: <http://finance.virginia.gov/>

In order to receive your locality’s allocation, the signed certification form must be submitted no later than **May 22, 2020**, to the Department of Accounts in electronic or hard copy form:

By Email to: GACCT@DOA.Virginia.gov

By US Mail to: Department of Accounts
Attention: Local CRF Certification
P.O. Box 1971
Richmond, VA 23218-1971

If you have any questions about this process, you may contact my office at (804) 786-1148. If you have technical questions about the certification form or the distribution of the funds, please contact Melinda Pearson, Director, General Accounting, Department of Accounts, at Melinda.Pearson@DOA.Virginia.gov or by phone at 804-225-2376.