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Heinz Endowments announces \$2.3 million “initial wave” in emergency grants to address COVID-19 crisis

More funding in the pipeline for frontline organizations

PITTSBURGH, Pa., April 8, 2020 – The Heinz Endowments has awarded over \$2.3 million in an initial wave of emergency grants to help meet urgent need in the Pittsburgh community as nonprofit organizations and local government agencies struggle to address unprecedented hardship in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additional funding is in the pipeline, and the Endowments “is continuing to monitor developments closely and will move quickly to help organizations operating in the frontlines of this crisis,” said Grant Oliphant, the foundation’s President.

The Endowments has re-focused its priority funding specifically to respond to the increasing strain on nonprofits, facing reduced resources and sharply escalating need among families and individuals, together with providing emergency support related to saving lives and public health.

In the early days of this crisis the foundation informed its grantees that it would be lifting project and deadline restrictions for most of its current grants, reflecting organizations’ greater need for general operating support during a time of dramatic uncertainty. Three weeks ago, the Endowments was a founding signatory to a pledge by foundations nationally to provide maximum flexibility to grantees during this time.

The Endowments is also working closely in collaboration with other major local philanthropies, including the Richard King Mellon Foundation, the Hillman Family Foundations, and The Pittsburgh Foundation, in coordinated efforts to maximize funding impact in areas of greatest need.

“We are dealing with a sweeping social and economic catastrophe unlike anything any of us has seen before, and our frontline nonprofits and local government have been overwhelmed by demand for essential human services,” said Grant Oliphant. “As a community, we must respond quickly and effectively to bring help and to mitigate hardship wherever and however we can.”

The Endowments has moved to expedite its grant approval process for organizations at the forefront of maintaining critical programs and services, especially those designed to help the most vulnerable, as well as for public health agencies and nonprofits preparing for an anticipated onslaught of demand.

The Endowments has focused its emergency funding response on four key areas: Saving Lives and Protecting Health, Meeting Essential Basic Needs, Shoring up Grantee Organizations, and Supporting Frontline Groups and Communities.

The following grants have been approved in the Endowments' first wave of emergency funding:

The Pittsburgh Foundation received \$1 million in funding from the Endowments towards the creation of an Emergency Action Fund in collaboration with the Richard King Mellon Foundation, and the Hillman Family Foundations as well as The Pittsburgh Foundation.

Global Links, a medical relief and development organization received \$190,000 to support the sourcing, manufacturing and distribution of high-quality emergency face masks and shields to protect local safety-net workers and vulnerable communities under their care, including low-income, homeless, elderly and at-risk populations.

1Nation Mentoring, a youth education and mentoring nonprofit, received \$35,000 to support staffing, programming and community engagement.

412 Food Rescue, a food recovery and redistribution organization, received \$170,000 for food distribution and support service to people in need.

ACTION-Housing, which provides affordable housing and related services in the Pittsburgh region, received \$70,000 to support staffing, delivery of food and emergency supplies, and transportation.

Bellevue Initiative for Growth and Revitalization, a community development corporation, received \$25,000 to support food delivery to those in the North Boroughs facing food insecurity, including the elderly and those in financial distress.

Community Kitchen Pittsburgh, a workforce development nonprofit that trains individuals for the food service industry, received \$100,000 to support emergency food distribution and feeding programs.

Farm to Table Buy Local, which connects Western Pennsylvania farms and other food and beverage producers with local consumers, received \$40,000 to provide food delivery in affordable housing, including senior and family communities.

Fishes and Loaves Cooperative Ministries, which provides fresh, healthy and reasonably-priced food to the Greater Hazelwood community received \$13,000 to provide nutritious fresh food to the elderly and food-insecure families and individuals in Greater Hazelwood and Greenfield.

For Good Pittsburgh, which develops and implements initiatives promoting diversity, inclusivity, and positive experiences for underserved populations, received \$20,000 to support entrepreneur occupants of Hollander Project together with funding for essential supplies for families.

Macedonia Family and Community Enrichment Center, a faith-based community outreach nonprofit, received \$30,000 to provide operations funding for emergency services and costs associated with staff displacement.

United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania received \$350,000 in funding support for (i) doubling staffing for its 2-1-1 helpline, and (ii) addressing the needs of families suffering employment layoffs and reduced access to food.

Bridgeway Capital, which promotes economic opportunity and community revitalization by providing support to underserved populations, received \$100,000 to support small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Casa San Jose, a community resource center for Latinos who have recently arrived to the Pittsburgh region, received \$100,000 to respond to emergency need among Latinx families and individuals.

Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council received \$100,000 to support the Council's Emergency Fund for Artists during the coronavirus crisis.

Total: \$2,343,000

Grant Oliphant expressed "huge admiration and support" for the region's essential workers, among them healthcare and medical professionals, first responders including police and fire departments, and staff working in food industries and public services. And he commended Pittsburgh's civic and local government leadership, especially Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and newly-appointed County Health Director, Dr. Debra Bogen.

"In the midst of this unprecedented crisis, our community is coming together and working for each other in extraordinary ways that have not happened on such a scale before," he said. "I am in awe of the compassion, resolve, ingenuity and heroic efforts of so many. It is this spirit that will carry us through, and I hope will help lay the groundwork for a future community that is better for everyone."

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