

# Coronavirus Emergency Relief Fund (CERF)

June 30, 2020 – Weekly Update



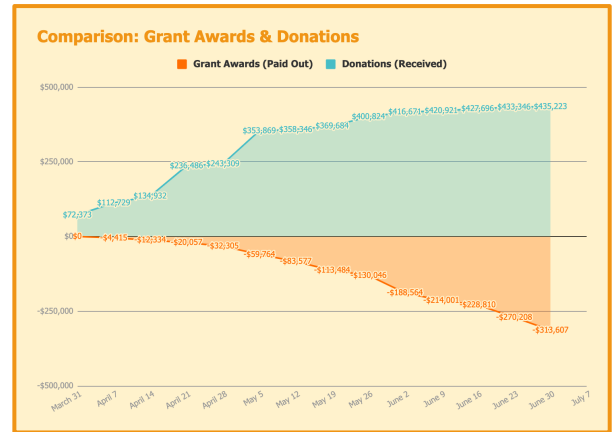
## CERF ETHOS

Our goal is for residents to be able to **stay in their homes** and to maintain access to utility service that enables **students to be connected to school** and enables **all residents to be connected to food resources** and other necessities during this crisis.



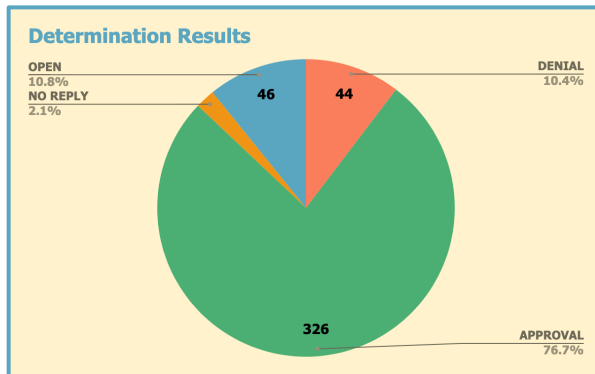
## FUNDRAISING – \$435,223 as of June 30<sup>th</sup>

The CERF is supported in part with grants from the **Princeton University Relief Fund** and the **Covid-19 Relief & Recovery Fund of Princeton Area Community Foundation**. We are grateful to the University, to PACF, and to the over **820 donors** who have contributed.



## APPLICATIONS – 425 as of June 30<sup>th</sup>

Of the 425 applications received, 229 are renewals and 326 grants have been awarded. The 326 approved applications have received grants totaling over **\$310,000**. The current average award dropped this week to **\$1,001.47**, and this is where our good news ends for this edition.



We had been optimistic that we were seeing early signs of economic recovery however the indoor dining pause ordered by Governor Murphy (as a result of data from states that moved too quickly to reopen and have had resurgences of the virus) put that optimism squarely in check. Most CERF applicants currently report 10 – 15 hours of partial return to work, which represent very few hours relative to their pre-COVID employment levels of 50+ hours per week. These few hours, while helpful, will not sustain a family or eliminate the ongoing need for

the CERF as we had hoped.

We estimate that we have **only enough funds to meet rental assistance needs in Princeton through August**. We've mentioned the **New Jersey COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program (NJCVERP)** in several of our recent updates and that is the basis for the second optimism check this week. After analyzing the CERF clients and how many **might** be eligible to apply for the NJ program, our optimism that NJCVERP will provide the much-needed support and transition from our effort to when normalcy returns has been eroded.



Given the eligibility criteria and the demographics of our clients, **as few as 30 to 45 CERF households are even eligible to apply** for NJCVERP. NJCVERP does not provide any information about how many applicants will be chosen from the total applicant pool. **If selected, NJCVERP applicants will then need to meet additional application requirements.** In a perfect world, if all of our NJCVERP-eligible CERF households are able to apply in the 1-week NJCVERP window, and all of them are selected by the computerized lottery for six months of rental assistance, we would still have well **over 100 CERF households with no option for ongoing assistance.**



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	Grant Award Total	Average Award	CERF Households Served
April	\$41,767.39	\$696.12	60
May	\$99,609.67	\$930.93	107
June	\$182,392.63	\$1,079.25	169

For CERF to continue for six months and serve this hypothetically small group of 100 households derived from a best-case scenario analysis, we would **need to raise over \$600,000**. It is foolish to believe the best-case assumptions are likely given our experience to date. We face a significant fundraising hurdle ahead that most likely exceeds twice what our efforts have yielded to this point.



## PROCESS

Given what now are limited resources, we will begin working on a process to determine which residents will receive August support should we be unable to fund all requests and continue our CERF mission.



## REASONS TO H.O.P.E. (Help One Person Everyday)

A casual stop on the Princeton University website is all it takes to begin to see their commitment and values. The first link – *In Service of Humanity* – under the tab, *Meet Princeton*, is clearly much more than an informal slogan. In fact, it is why they made us hopeful again this week.

Princeton University keeps an ever-watchful eye on our community and continues to identify areas where help is needed to keep this town, our town, the vibrant home to Princeton University that it has always been. In addition to the support they provided directly to CERF through the **Princeton University Relief Fund (PURF)**, last week PURF announced a **Small Business Resiliency Fund (PSBRF)** of \$250,000 to support local businesses! Our CERF households rely upon local businesses for their jobs, so this PSBRF was very welcome news to all of us at CERF.



We are hopeful that the grants (up to \$5,000 each) will enable small businesses to address the capital expenses needed to re-open safely and let customers (and employees) know that they are back. More information and applications can be found at [www.princetonresiliencyfund.org](http://www.princetonresiliencyfund.org).



## CERF TEAM

**Intake Coordinators** – this team answers the Human Services phone number and helps potential applicants navigate the application process.

- Katherine Cardona\* – Princeton Recreation Department (PRD)
- Kimberly Figueroa-Martinez\* – Human Services
- Sindy Sandoval\* – Corner House

**Steering Committee** – in addition to processing intakes, members check to see if applicants have access to reliable sources of food and refer them to available resources when appropriate.

- Emily Becker\* – friend of PCF
- Zoe D'Eugenio-Pinel\* – friend of PCF
- Andrea Dinan\* – Princeton High School & PCF
- Jordan Goodwin – Princeton Community Village
- Sharon Hurley – Princeton Senior Resource Center
- Christian Martin\* – friend of PCF
- Diane Paulsell\* – Solidaridad Princeton
- Nicole Paulucci – PRD
- Trinidad Rodriguez\* – JW Middle School & PCF
- Angie Vargas\*/Cecilia Avila\* – Arm in Arm



\* = dual-language speaker

