

Coronavirus Emergency Relief Fund (CERF)

April 26, 2020 – Weekly Update



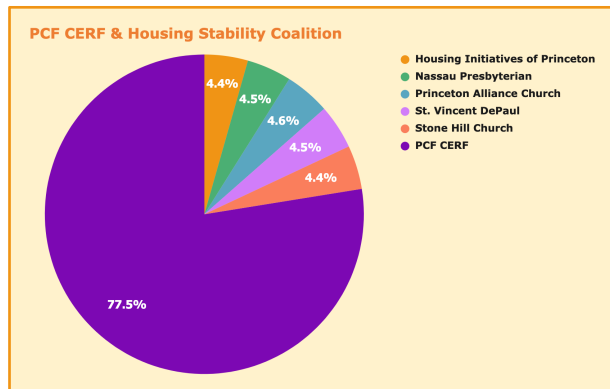
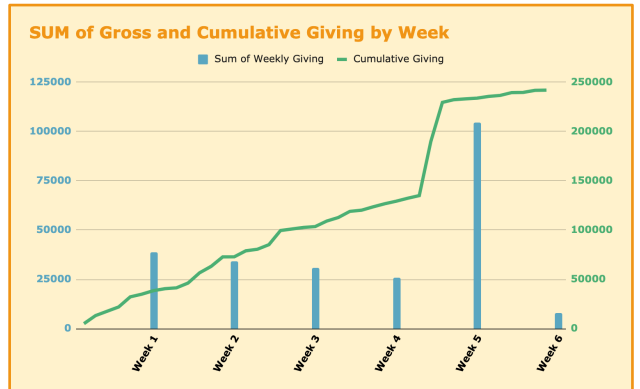
CERF ETHOS

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



FUNDRAISING - \$241,857

We have secured almost half of our goal through donations and grants. The CERF is supported in part with a grant from the Covid-19 Relief & Recovery Fund of the **Princeton Area Community Foundation**. We are grateful to PACF and to the **685 donors** who have given their support.



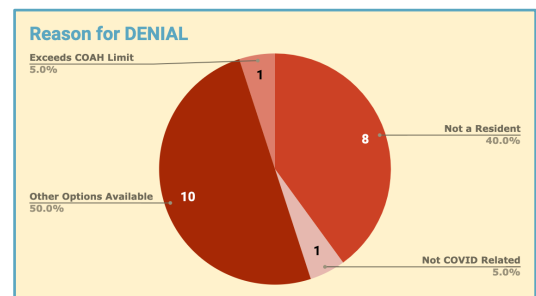
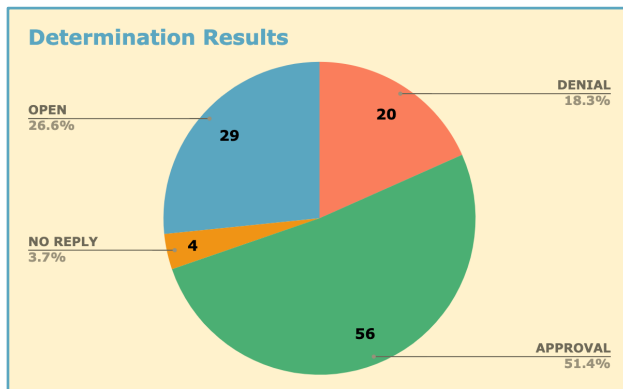
We are not alone in our desire to keep residents in their homes and connected to their community. Each week after applications have been through the CERF Steering Committee review, they are presented to members of the Housing Stability Coalition (HSC). The HSC was established in 2016 by Princeton Human Services to address homelessness

in our community. The HSC agreed to partner with CERF during the pandemic. To date, **the Housing Stability Coalition has underwritten 22.5% of the support that applicants have received**. Many thanks to the HSC for their support of our efforts!



APPLICATIONS - 109

We have begun to receive “renewal” applications from people who received assistance in March or April. Renewal applications represent four (4) of the OPEN applications. We have created a renewal application to streamline the process for applicants. **The average award per applicant is \$677.17** and with our current funding, will enable us to help approximately 350 people or times.



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

This week, we would like to highlight a “HOPE-er” named Connie at PSE&G who we met during our first week. When we first contacted Connie, we had 7 different bills to pay that day. Connie realized that we would not be able to navigate the automated pay system without incurring a fee of \$3.95 *per payment*.



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Connie couldn't do anything about the fees as they are paid to an outside organization, but there was a way she could help us avoid incurring them – it just meant a lot of extra work for her. As luck would have it, in addition to her “HOPE-er” spirit, Connie speaks Spanish too. Each Wednesday, Connie calls CERF and works case by case contacting the applicants for permission for CERF to pay, processing the payments, and then removing CERF payment details from each account.

Connie's story illustrates an important point, what can you do to spread hope? Each of us has it within our networks, our families, or our jobs to reach out a hand during this difficult time and **H.O.P.E.**

PROCESS



Applicants submit a request through the municipality's privacy-compliant system or an intake coordinator completes the request with the applicant over the phone. The initial review is conducted by the Director of Human Services who ensures that: the applicant is a resident of Princeton; the request is COVID-related; and the applicant's income falls under the COAH region 4 income limit for family size. If those 3 criteria are met, Human Services assigns the application to one of the case managers who comprise the Steering Committee. **The case managers are all volunteer social service professionals.**



The assigned case manager conducts an intake interview, collects any outstanding documentation, and then uses the CERF determination rubric to assess the application. Guidance and supervision for intakes is provided by the Director of Human Services and the President of Princeton Children's Fund (PCF). For all applications, PCF contacts the landlord to ask if they are willing to share in the effort to keep tenants housed by forgiving a portion of the rent. Landlords who agree send a sharing letter to PCF.

The Steering Committee meets on Zoom (Mondays and Thursdays) and discusses determination recommendations. Cases that are approved by the Steering Committee are then presented to the Housing Stability Coalition where, upon approval, the HSC contributes 30% of the applicant's rental request.

For approved applications, PCF receives Housing Stability Coalition checks, adds a PCF check for the remaining 70% of rent and sends payment to the landlord. PCF also contacts the utilities, monthly cell plan, etc. to make payments. Human Services sends the determination response letter to the applicant and includes copies of the landlord sharing letter, checks, and utility payment confirmation information for applicant to retain in their records.



CERF TEAM

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

- Kimberly Figueroa-Martinez* – Human Services
- Sindy Sandoval* – Corner House
- Community leaders
- Neighborhood captains



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.

- Zoe D'Eugenio-Pinel* – YMCA
- Andrea Dinan* – Princeton High School
- Jordan Goodwin – Princeton Community Village
- Sharon Hurley – PSRC
- Diane Paulsell* – Solidaridad Princeton
- Nicole Paulucci/Katherine Cardona* – PRD
- Trinidad Rodriguez* – JW Middle School
- Angie Vargas*/Cecilia Avila* – Arm in Arm

* = dual-language speaker

