



# A Community in Need: Our Response to COVID-19



**\$1.2 million raised**

AND DISTRIBUTED TO 51 NONPROFITS SINCE MARCH 13, 2020

People are facing difficult decisions about which bills to pay, how to stay in their homes and access food, medical care, and other necessities. Conversations with nonprofit leaders, health officials, and community stakeholders tell us that the crisis is far from over. These needs continue and will last many months, and well into 2021.

While the COVID-19 Response Fund has been able to provide assistance to meet increased demand for basic supplies and services, local nonprofits are still struggling to keep up. **When you make a gift to the Fund, you're providing a lifeline to those who need it the most.**

## The People Most Impacted



### The Unemployed

**BECAUSE UNEMPLOYMENT RATES ARE REACHING ALL-TIME HIGHS AND ADDITIONAL FEDERAL AND STATE UNEMPLOYMENT SUPPORT IS ENDING THIS SUMMER, THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES COULD FACE ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY THROUGHOUT 2020 AND BEYOND.**

- Local unemployment rates have surged six times higher than this time last year.
- There have been over 141,000 new unemployment claims across the states since mid-March representing a 1,500% increase over the same period in 2019.



**141,000** new unemployment claims have been made.



### Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

**COVID-19 IS DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTING PEOPLE OF COLOR IN OUR COMMUNITY.**

- 67% of COVID-19 cases in Douglas County are people of color, but people of color make up only 29% of the population of the county. Minorities are at greater risk for contracting COVID-19, due in part to underlying economic systems and structural racism that have led to worse health outcomes for people of color.
- Only 20% of Black workers and 16% of Latino workers in Nebraska are able to work from home, according to an Omaha World-Herald survey, increasing the likelihood that these residents are at risk to contract the disease in a workplace.



**67% of COVID-19 cases in Douglas County are people of color.**

➤➤➤ **\$500,000 granted** from the Response Fund was given to local organizations led by people of color.



### Refugees and Immigrants

**COVID-19 IS HAVING A COMPOUNDING EFFECT IN REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES AS MANY ALREADY HAVE EXISTING EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS DUE TO LOW ENGLISH SKILLS.**

- Many local refugees work in the manufacturing or meatpacking industry; they are currently faced with the decision to either keep working and risk exposure, or resign and face unemployment without access to benefits or stimulus support.
- The Refugee Empowerment Center estimates that between 200-300 families continue to receive emergency food each week—and they have helped hundreds of families process unemployment claims. A grant from our Response Fund has funded caseworkers to be able to provide these critical services.



**200-300** refugee families receive emergency food each week.

➤➤➤ **\$258,000** from the Fund has gone to help refugees and **\$308,000** has supported immigrant communities.

# Areas of Most Urgent Need



## Food

**AS LONG AS UNEMPLOYMENT RATES REMAIN HIGH, THE NEED FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE WILL CONTINUE OR INCREASE.**

- Food distribution increased by 44% from March to May 2020. During the month of May alone, 2,638,633 meals were distributed, including SNAP, representing a 61% increase over the May average.
- Starting in early July, Food Bank for the Heartland increased mobile feeding sites for children from 13 to 19. The program will serve between 26,000-28,000 meals per week into August.
- The Food Bank estimates needing \$600,000 per month to fulfill the need for mobile and traditional pantries across the region.

➤➤➤ **The Response Fund has granted \$244,200** to support pantry partners being able to shift operations to provide drive-through pantries, increase hours, and partner with school districts to ensure children are receiving meals.



**Food insecurity jumped 43%**, affecting 89,000 more residents during the pandemic.



## Housing

**HOUSING IS THE MOST EXPENSIVE COST FOR FAMILIES, AND WILL LIKELY BE ONE OF THE MOST LASTING CHALLENGES AFTER THE PANDEMIC SUBSIDIES.**

- After a suspension on evictions during the first three months of the pandemic, local evictions courts re-opened in June. The first week of resumed eviction hearings in Douglas County saw 124 evictions, more than double the usual amount.
- The Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless (MACCH), a coalition of 16 organizations providing housing assistance, has depleted the initial funds they received, which served more than 1,000 households. While MACCH and other programs are likely to receive federal funding through the CARES Act, families will still need assistance connecting to these funds and navigating legal circumstances.

➤➤➤ **The Response Fund has granted \$501,400 to support housing needs. According to MACCH,** 595 households (1,502 individuals) have been served through the coalition with 82% citing COVID-19 as the reason for their need.



**Evictions have more than doubled** during the pandemic.



## Health Access

**POPULATIONS ALREADY STRUGGLING TO ACCESS AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE ARE SEEING EVEN DEEPER ISSUES AS THIS PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS EVOLVES.**

- Sustained challenges with gaining access to COVID-19 tests persist, including reliable transportation to the testing locations, pressure from employers not to get tested, staff capacity to administer tests, and sufficient testing capability and supplies in our community.
- Additionally, health service providers are predicting significant increases in substance abuse usage, depression and anxiety, and domestic violence and child abuse as a result of the pandemic. Nebraska adults are reporting four times higher rates of anxiety and depression since COVID-19.

➤➤➤ **The Response Fund has granted \$264,000** to support nonprofits working in the healthcare field, including mental health support.



**10,000+ people have tested positive** for COVID-19 in Douglas County.



## Education

**THE FALL WILL BRING NEW CHALLENGES AS SCHOOLS REOPEN AND TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND FAMILIES TRY TO ADAPT TO ONLINE LEARNING OR HYBRID IN-CLASS ENVIRONMENTS.**

- Several local districts estimated that as many as 20% of local students were not engaged in online or virtual lessons this past spring. In addition to providing less focus and support than classroom environments, online learning poses challenges to those families without internet access or sufficient digital devices.
- Out-of-school programming provides access to important safety nets, including behavioral and mental health supports, and support for academic achievement. However, many out-of-school programs reduced services this spring due to COVID-19 restrictions, and the upcoming school year brings even more uncertainty.



**20% of local students** were not engaged in online learning.

**Your support is urgently needed now.** Please consider a contribution to the COVID-19 Response Fund.