

# Suburban Cook County Local Government Application for Coronavirus Relief Funds

## Funding Guidance and FAQ

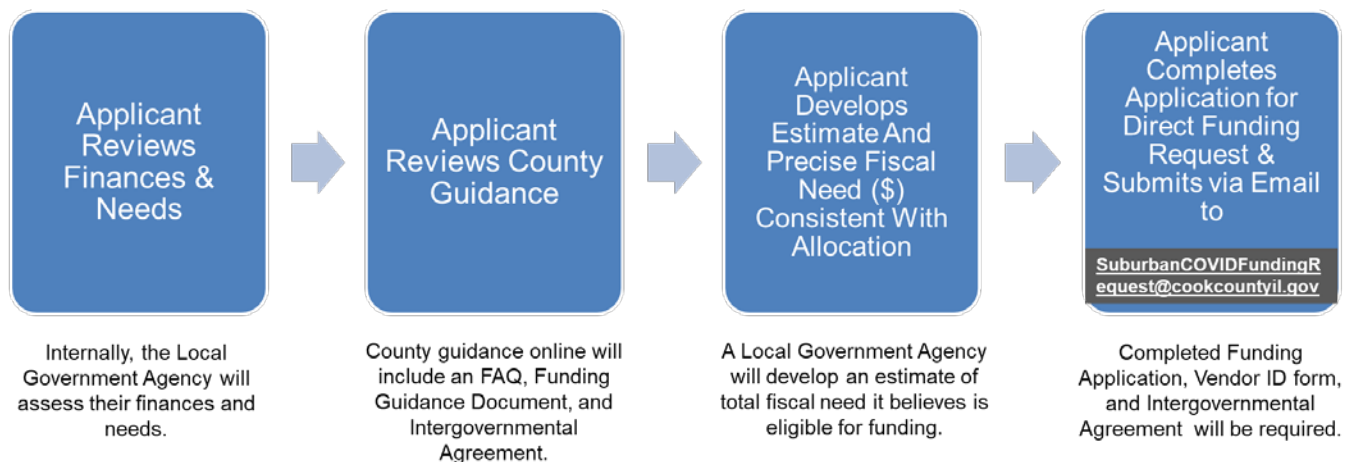
As of September 30, 2020

Municipal Agencies and units of Local Government (which for the purposes of the Suburban Cook County Local Government Application for Coronavirus Relief Funds include municipalities, townships, fire protection districts, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District and Forest Preserves of Cook County, as well as most library districts and park districts located in suburban Cook County ) may apply to Cook County (the “County”) for funding and reimbursement to cover necessary eligible expenditures related to COVID-19 from the amounts allocated to them under the Cook County COVID-19 Funding Response Plan.

In the spirit of intergovernmental cooperation, the County has created the Cook County COVID-19 Funding Response Plan and has allocated a portion of the County’s Coronavirus Relief Funds (“CRF”) to suburban municipalities and various units of local government which are noted above. To be approved for funding under the Cook County COVID-19 Funding Response Plan, those organizations must complete the Suburban Cook County Local Government Application for Coronavirus Relief Funds (the “application”) and meet the eligibility criteria set forth in the US Department of Treasury guidelines on CRF. Applications for funding requests for necessary eligible expenditures must be submitted via email to [SuburbanCovidFundingRequest@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:SuburbanCovidFundingRequest@cookcountyil.gov).

Figure 1 below summarizes the steps the applicant should take to complete the application and prepare a request to access CRF under the County’s allocation and the Cook County COVID-19 Funding Response Plan.

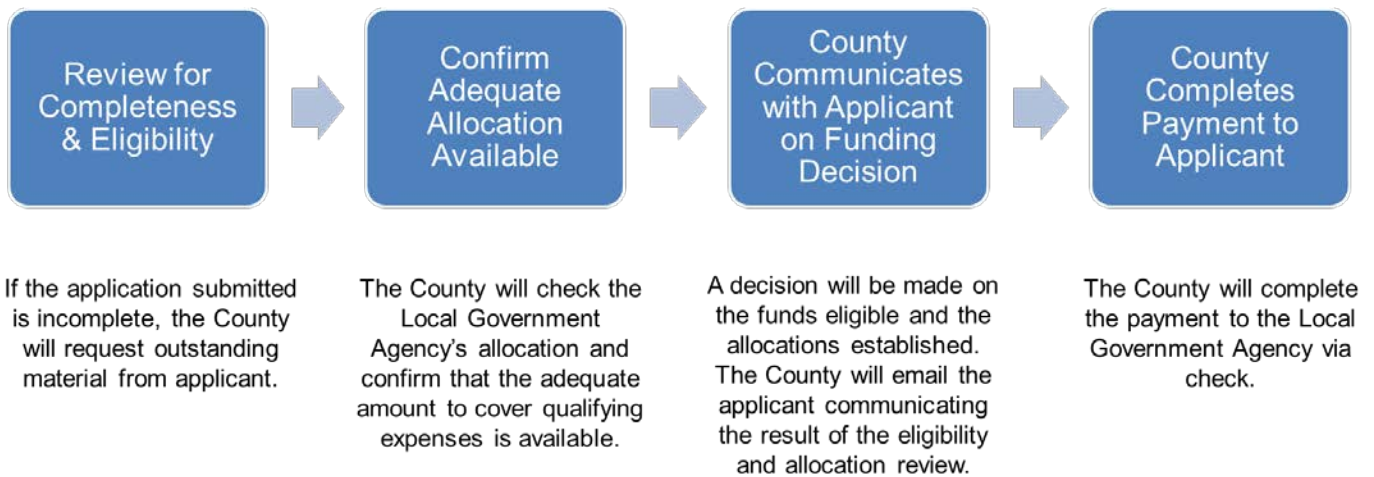
**Figure 1. Local Government Agency Application Steps:**



The County will review each funding application for consistency to ensure that it meets the CRF eligibility criteria set forth in the most recent US Department of Treasury Guidelines. If the application is complete and requested expenditures meet the CRF eligibility requirements, the County may approve the funding request. Applications that are incomplete will be put on hold and will not be processed until a complete application is submitted.

Figure 2 below summarizes the County’s review process.

**Figure 2. Application Review & Funding Process:**



## Application Submission

### 1. Where do I submit the application?

Applications with full supporting documentation should be submitted via email to: [SuburbanCovidFundingRequest@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:SuburbanCovidFundingRequest@cookcountyil.gov). The email is also published on the Cook County COVID-19 Funding Response Plan web page.

### 2. What documentation is required to submit a CRF Reimbursement Application?

Cook County Suburban Municipal Agencies and eligible units of Local Government must complete and submit the following documents to request reimbursement or funding of their respective CRF allocations, in addition to their expenditure substantiation documentation:

- 1) The Suburban Cook County Local Government Application for Coronavirus Relief Funds;
- 2) The Intergovernmental and Subrecipient Agreement (IGA), together with Board ratification/approval of the IGA;
- 3) the Vendor ID form; and
- 4) the municipal agency’s or unit of local government’s most recent financial statement.

Note that the Application for Coronavirus Relief Funds (#1 above) and the IGA (#2 above) are consolidated into a single document for Library Districts and Park Districts. Those agencies should complete that consolidated document specific to Library and Park Districts, to access their respective CRF allocations.

**Added August 3, 2020**

Each municipal agency or unit of local government must submit a resolution or ordinance along with their IGA evidencing that the governing body of that municipal agency has approved the IGA (pursuant to 5 ILCS 220/5).

The first three documents to complete can be found at the County's COVID-19 Funding Response Plan web page, at:

<https://www.cookcountyil.gov/service/cares-act-information-local-governments>.

**3. What documentation should applicants submit to substantiate expenditure funding requests in their applications?**

Expenditure documentation should support all amount(s) requested for funding, and must include copies of receipts, invoices, budgets, contracts, timesheets, etc. The County will work with the applicant should there be questions about the types of documentation that may be required to substantiate funding. In addition, the municipal agency or unit of local government should include a copy of its most recent annual financial statement as audited by a registered CPA.

**4. What is the deadline for the application?**

The deadline to submit the Suburban Cook County Local Government Coronavirus Relief Fund Application(s) is **October 30, 2020**. Applications may be submitted for any expenditures expected to be incurred through December 30, 2020 and will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

Note that for suburban municipalities that received notification of their allocations in July 2020, each municipality must indicate to Cook County by **September 30, 2020** (via the Notice of Intent form emailed on July 20) its intent (or not) to fully expend its allocated funds by December 30, 2020. In the case a suburban municipality reports to Cook County it anticipates spending less than its entire allocation, Cook County will reduce the municipality's total allocation by the anticipated unused amount. If by September 30, 2020, a suburban municipality has not provided an application for or its Notice of Intent for its remaining allocation, the County will rescind the municipality's remaining allocation.

**5. How long will it take to be notified of a decision and receive reimbursement through this process?**

The County will aim to communicate a decision to applicants within 5-10 business days after a complete application is submitted. The County generally expects to issue checks for approved funding requests within 30 calendar days following receipt of completed application, supporting documentation, and execution of the Intergovernmental and Subrecipient Agreement. These timeframes may be closer to the October 30<sup>th</sup> deadline due to anticipated volume.

**Added July 23, 2020**

**6. Who has the authority to sign the IGA?**

The IGA must be signed by the Chief Elected Official or other authorized officer of the municipal agency or unit of local government following approval by the authorizing municipal legislative body; for example, in the case of a suburban municipality, a Mayor/Village President.

**7. Does the IGA need to be signed on or before September 30th?**

An IGA needs to be submitted with or by the time an agency submits their first application, which could be after September 30, 2020 but in no event should be after October 30, 2020.

**8. Is a new IGA required for each time we request funds?**

A single IGA is needed for a municipal agency or unit of local government regardless of how many applications the agency submits. As long as the agency has allocation left to request, the same IGA can apply to multiple applications. The IGA only specifies the total allocated amount; it does not include any fields that indicate it is application specific.

**9. What is the “Plan of Use” form with the September 30, 2020, deadline that is applicable to Suburban Municipalities?**

Each suburban municipality received an email on Monday, July 20, 2020, including a “Notice of Intent” form to indicate if the municipality intends to use the entirety of its allocated funds, a portion of its funds, or none of its allocated funds. In the case of a partial use of funds, the specific amount to be used is also requested on the form. This form must be returned by each suburban municipality to the County by September 30, 2020.

## **Municipality Allocation Totals Questions**

**10. What is my municipality’s total allocation?**

Allocation notification letters were emailed to Mayors and Presidents of Municipalities and Villages in suburban Cook County by July 3, 2020. Notification letters were re-sent the week of July 13, 2020.

**11. How are CRF allocations for a Municipality determined?**

Cook County has assigned \$51 million to fund the Cook County COVID-19 Funding Response Plan for suburban municipal agencies. This amount was based on our understanding of initial direct and operational COVID-19 response needs. Allocations for each municipality were determined with consideration given to the following factors: immediate needs of the municipality to respond to the Pandemic, municipal population, municipal median income, and municipal public health statistics. Specifically, Cook County is allocating to each Suburban Municipality \$5.90 per person plus an additional allocation based on a weighted calculation of four Suburban Municipality demographic and public health metrics: 1) percent population in disinvested areas; 2) median income; 3) COVID-19 deaths per 100,000 residents; and 4) tax base per capita.

The [Equity Distribution White Paper](#) is on the Cook County site.

Separate allocations to suburban Cook County townships, fire protection districts, library districts, the Municipal Water Reclamation District, and Forest Preserves of Cook County have been made consistent with the County’s understanding of initial direct and operational COVID-19 response needs.

**12. How much funding was established for municipalities under the Cook County COVID-19 Funding Response Plan?**

\$51 million has been set aside for Cook County Municipal Agencies and the noted units of Local Government, the majority of which has been allocated to Suburban Municipalities located in Cook County. Allocations to Townships and Fire Protection Districts were made based in large part on the County's assessment of population and area served by those entities, respectively. Flat allocations of \$5,000 have been made to Library Districts and Park Districts serving suburban Cook County.

**13. How does the allocation take into account municipalities that span two counties?**

If a portion of a municipal agency lies within two counties, Cook County will only allocate funds to the portion of the population located within Cook County.

## **FEMA Funding**

**14. Is an applicant required to apply for FEMA funding to be eligible for CRF funds?**

Applying for FEMA funding is not required, but strongly recommended if the agency/applicant believes it has FEMA-eligible expenses.

**15. Should the Municipal Agencies and applicable Units of Local Government apply first for CRF funding, then for FEMA if necessary?**

No. Applicant agencies should apply to FEMA for any FEMA-eligible expenses. There is currently no ceiling on the amount of funding which FEMA will reimburse for COVID-19 related expenses, although FEMA has separate eligibility requirements. Use of CRF funding can address local cost share requirements of FEMA and related grants. In other words, FEMA will reimburse up to 75% of eligible expenses; CRF can be applied to the remaining 25% local match. Specific questions about eligibility criteria can be submitted to [SuburbanCOVIDFundingQuestions@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:SuburbanCOVIDFundingQuestions@cookcountyil.gov).

**16. How quickly will payment for FEMA funding reimbursement requests be received?**

Based on the County's experience, the Federal Government's FEMA application and funding process will generally take from 3 weeks to 3 months from the time that expenses are submitted to the time those expenses are processed, funds allocated, and received by the requesting entity.

**17. Do an applicant's local and state emergency declarations need to be in effect for expenses to be eligible?**

No, if the federal disaster declaration is in effect, applicants can apply for FEMA public assistance. Some governments are creating local declarations, because it is needed for flexibility on procurement rules. This should be confirmed on a state by state / city by city basis, depending on their policies.

**18. Can applicants submit a FEMA PA Project Application for expenses incurred up to a certain date, e.g., June 30, and then submit a second project application for July 1 through the end of the disaster?**

Yes. Applicants can also submit a combination of incurred actual costs and future costs expected to be incurred under one application now.

**19. Is there assistance available for applying for FEMA funding?**

Those looking to apply for FEMA funding are recommended to consult the [Illinois Emergency Management Agency](#).

**Added July 23, 2020**

**20. When are FEMA PA applications due?**

The deadline to apply for FEMA PA funds is 60 days after the end of a declared emergency period.

**Eligible Expenses**

**Added September 28, 2020**

**21. Are payroll costs eligible for CRF reimbursement?**

Per Federal Treasury Guidelines, a local government may presume that payroll costs for **public health and public safety employees** are eligible as payments for services substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency, unless the chief executive (or equivalent) of the relevant government determines that specific circumstances indicate otherwise. Public health and public safety employees are specific to, and determined by, the applicant, but can include, for example, police and fire protection employees.

**22. What costs will be reimbursed under this application process?**

Cook County will reimburse eligible municipalities and units of local government a for COVID-19-related expenditures consistent with Federal Treasury CRF Eligibility guidelines up to their respective allocations. The United States Treasury continues to refine its eligibility guidelines and FAQs applicable to the CRF; those guidelines and FAQs can be found here: <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares/state-and-local-governments>. The Federal Treasury CRF Eligibility guidelines are subject to review and revision and should be periodically reviewed by the applicant for compliance.

**23. If an application is partially approved or not approved, can the applicant submit another application with different costs incurred at a later date?**

Yes, the applicant can apply at a later date, up to October 30, 2020, to cover costs it believes are eligible.

**24. Can an agency apply for either full or partial amount of its allocation?**

Yes. Consolidation of expenditures into a single application is strongly encouraged for administrative efficiency but an applicant may submit as many funding request applications as needed up to its allocation.

**25. Will there be a pre-approval process that could be done prior to incurring costs? For example, prior to purchasing new office furniture needed for social distancing, can the County confirm that the cost will qualify?**

An applicant can submit an application for prospective expenditures provided such expenditures are consistent with Federal Coronavirus Relief Fund eligibility criteria. Specific questions about eligibility criteria can be submitted to [SuburbanCOVIDFundingQuestions@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:SuburbanCOVIDFundingQuestions@cookcountyil.gov).

Please note that prospective funding applications should include a detailed description of the proposed expense and proof of the expenditure of such funds must be submitted to the County once the expense is incurred.

**26. If only some expenses submitted are deemed eligible, is partial funding available, or will the application be denied in full?**

Partial funding requests can be approved.

**27. Should subsequent applications submitted show expenses cumulatively, or only show expenses not yet applied for?**

Applications should be submitted only for expenditures not yet applied for in a previous application submitted by the County or submitted for reimbursement from any other source.

**Added July 23, 2020**

**28. If employees were unable to work due to honoring the stay-at-home order, are these employees' salaries and benefits eligible for reimbursement under CRF?**

Per the Federal Treasury Guidelines: If the cost of an employee was allocated to administrative leave to a greater extent than was expected, the cost of such administrative leave may be covered using payments from the Fund.

## **Timing of Expenses for Reimbursement**

**29. Can an application funding request be submitted for anticipated expenses not yet incurred? What if an applicant does not have the ability to fund a Coronavirus Relief Fund eligible expenditure up front?**

Yes, the applicant can apply by October 30, 2020 for expenditures it will incur in the future so long as such expenditures will be paid for by December 30, 2020 and include an eligible expense.

**30. What timing restrictions apply to CRF expenditures?**

CRF requests must be (a) necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19); (b) not accounted for in the applicants budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020; and (c) incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020, and ends on December 30, 2020.

**31. Can expenditures from a prior month for which reimbursement was never requested be included in a future month's request?**

Yes, if the reimbursements were never previously requested and are eligible for funding, they may be included.

Added July 23, 2020

**32. What kind of documentation would you expect to see/approve for reimbursement of public safety and health regular salaries dedicated to COVID? All timesheets?**

The following are the required documentation to request CRF reimbursement for public health and safety workers:

- List of employees and their job titles
- Timesheets for the period requesting reimbursement showing hours/days worked and types of hours worked (regular, overtime, etc.)
- Hourly rates of the employees

**33. To allow for social distancing some of our departments were working reduced hours to allow for fewer employees reporting at one time but being paid their full salaries. Would the salary paid for the time not worked be eligible for reimbursement?**

Per the Federal Treasury Guidelines, if the cost of an employee was allocated to administrative leave to a greater extent than was expected, the cost of such administrative leave may be covered using payments from the Fund.

## Reporting Requirements

**34. Will our funding usage be audited?**

All recipients are subject to audit and additional documentation must be provided upon request. Cook County reserves the right to conduct an audit of CRF reimbursements for consistency with Federal Treasury Guideline (found here: [Federal Treasury Site with CRF Guidance](#)).

## Other Questions

**35. What if I have other questions about the application?**

Questions about this application process can be sent to:  
[SuburbanCOVIDFundingQuestions@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:SuburbanCOVIDFundingQuestions@cookcountyil.gov)

Additional support will be provided during weekly webinars hosted on Tuesdays at 10:00am starting July 21, 2020, and can be accessed via <https://www.cookcountyil.gov/service/cares-act-information-local-governments>.

**36. How long should I continue to track COVID-related expenses?**

Coronavirus Relief Funding-eligible expenses should be tracked through December 30, 2020.

**37. Can the County help to facilitate my agency's COVID-19 expenditures?**

Yes, Cook County is already working to coordinate and consolidate similar expenditures across municipalities for certain expenses, including expenditures like Personal Protective Equipment.



Specific questions about how the County can help your agency may be submitted via email to [SuburbanCOVIDFundingQuestions@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:SuburbanCOVIDFundingQuestions@cookcountyil.gov).

### **Reference Information**

**Email for applications:** [SuburbanCovidFundingRequest@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:SuburbanCovidFundingRequest@cookcountyil.gov).

**Email for questions:** [SuburbanCOVIDFundingQuestions@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:SuburbanCOVIDFundingQuestions@cookcountyil.gov)

**Cook County Funding Application Website:**

<https://www.cookcountyil.gov/service/cares-act-information-local-governments>

**Federal Treasury Link With Guidance:**

<https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Coronavirus-Relief-Fund-Guidance-for-State-Territorial-Local-and-Tribal-Governments.pdf>

**Illinois Emergency Management Agency with FEMA Guidance:**

<https://www2.illinois.gov/iema/Pages/default.aspx>