

Cook County Suburban Municipality Application for Coronavirus Relief Funds

Funding Guidance and FAQ

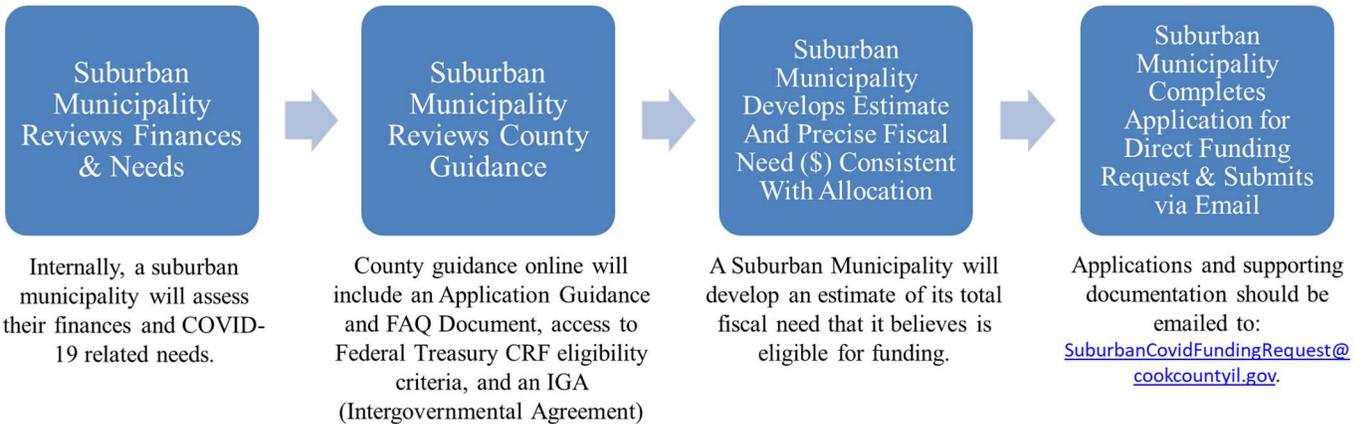
Funding Guidance and FAQ – As of August 3, 2020

Municipalities (which for the purposes of the Cook County Suburban Municipality Application for Coronavirus Relief Funds include municipalities, townships and fire protection districts 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. To be approved for funding under the Cook County COVID-19 Funding Response Plan, municipal applicants must complete the Cook County Suburban Municipality 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.

Figure 1 below summarizes the steps the municipal 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. Municipality Application Steps

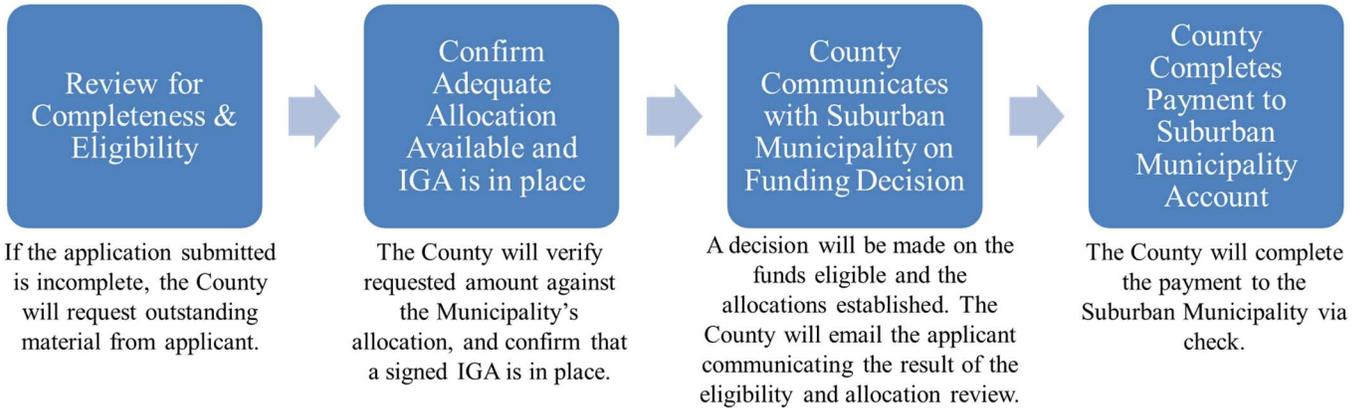


The County will review each funding application for consistency to ensure that it meets the CRF eligibility criteria set forth in the US Department of Treasury Guidelines. If the application is complete and requested expenditures meet the CRF eligibility requirements, the County may

approve the funding request. Applications that are incomplete will be returned 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. 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?

Suburban Municipalities must complete three County documents to request reimbursement or funding of their respective CRF allocations, in addition to their expenditure substantiation documentation:

- 1) The Cook County Suburban Municipality Application for Coronavirus Relief Funds;
- 2) The Intergovernmental and Subrecipient Agreement;
- 3) the Vendor ID form; and
- 4) the most recent financial statement.

Added August 3, 2020

Each municipality must submit a resolution or ordinance along with their IGA evidencing that the governing body of that municipality 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 municipality 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?

Applications may be submitted for any expenditures incurred through December 30, 2020 and will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

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 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 a plan of use 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 the application is submitted. The County generally expects to issue checks for approved funding requests within 30 calendar days following receipt of completed application and execution of the Intergovernmental and Subrecipient Agreement. These timeframes may be longer in July/August due to anticipated volume of initial requests and process refining.

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 municipality following approval by the authorizing municipal legislative body – usually 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 a municipality submits their first application, which could be after September 30, 2020.

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

A single IGA is needed for a Suburban Municipality regardless of how many applications the Municipality submits. As long as the suburban municipality 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?

Each municipality received an email on Monday, July 20, 2020, including a 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 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 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 \$51,000,000 to fund the Cook County COVID-19 Funding Response Plan for suburban municipalities. 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.

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

\$51,000,000 has been set aside for Cook County Municipalities. For the purposes of the application and allocation, municipalities may include suburban municipalities and fire protection districts in Cook County.

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

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

14. Are Townships and Fires Protection Districts included in the funding eligibility for CRF funding from Cook County?

Yes, eligible expenditures made by Townships and Fire Protection Districts in Cook County qualify for funding. Currently, Cook County has not allocated CRF for other units of local government such as park districts or library districts.

Added July 23, 2020

15. How do I know my Municipality's allocation total?

The allocations for each municipality are published under the downloads section on <https://www.cookcountyil.gov/service/cares-act-information-local-governments>.

FEMA Funding

16. Is a Suburban Municipality required to apply for FEMA funding to be eligible for CRF funds?

Applying for FEMA funding is not required, but strongly recommended.

17. Should the Suburban Municipalities apply first for CRF funding, then for FEMA if necessary?

No. Suburban Municipalities should apply first for FEMA funding of 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.

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. 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.

21. 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

22. 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. A national update on the status of the COVID-19 emergency period should be released in the coming weeks to update the declared emergency period dates.

Eligible Expenses

23. What costs will be reimbursed under this application process?

Cook County will reimburse eligible municipalities for COVID-19-related expenditures consistent with Federal Treasury CRF Eligibility guidelines. 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 municipal applicant for compliance.

24. 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 to cover costs it believes are eligible.

25. Can a Municipality 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 a Municipality may submit as many funding request applications as needed up to its allocation.

26. 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?

A Municipality 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.

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.

27. 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.

28. Should subsequent applications submitted by a Municipality show expenses cumulatively, or only show expenses not yet applied for?

Municipalities should submit applications 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

29. 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

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

Yes, the applicant can apply 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.

- 31. 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.

- 32. 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

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

Timesheets by person indicating the number of hours each week of the emergency period the employee performed substantially dedicated COVID-19 activities are required documentation.

This documentation is also required for public health and safety employees.

- 34. 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

- 35. 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 Suburban Municipality CRF reimbursements for consistency with Federal Treasury Guideline (found here: [Federal Treasury Site with CRF Guidance](#)).

Other Questions

36. What if I have other questions about the application?

Questions about this application process can be sent to:
SuburbanCOVIDFundingQuestions@cookcountyil.gov

Additional support will be provided during weekly webinars hosted on Tuesdays at 10:00am starting July 21 through August 30, 2020 , and can be accessed via <https://www.cookcountyil.gov/service/cares-act-information-local-governments>.

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

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

38. Can the County help to facilitate my Municipality's 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 Municipality may be submitted via email to SuburbanCOVIDFundingQuestions@cookcountyil.gov.

Reference Information

Email for applications: SuburbanCovidFundingRequest@cookcountyil.gov.

Email for questions: 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>