

BERKS COUNTY **CARES** GRANT PROGRAM



FAQ Sheet for Educational Institutions and Services Application

Revised 10/9/20

What is the purpose of the Berks County CARES Grant Program?

The COVID-19 public health crisis caused the Berks County community to confront immense challenges. The Program seeks to assist educational institutions and educational services in the County that have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Who is administering this program?

The County of Berks is administering the Grant Program.

What is the source of the grants?

Funds were made available to Berks County under the COVID-19 County Relief Block Grant through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

Is there a cap on the amount of the grant?

Yes. Organizations who are providing educational services can apply for up to \$100,000.

Will all applicants be awarded grant funds?

No. Due to an anticipated high number of applicants, there is no guarantee that all applicants will receive the funding for which they have applied.

What are the eligibility requirements?

Applicants are and/or were negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Applicant must deliver services in Berks County.

Applicants that have accepted or received funding from the Paycheck Protection Program, Economic Injury Disaster Loan or FEMA Public Assistance are eligible, but the level of funding received will impact the applicant's competitiveness.

Are faith-based organizations eligible?

Faith-based organizations may apply for funding if they are designated as a 501(c)3 or 501(c)19 organization.

How can the funds be used?

The funds can be used for “necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019” that are incurred between March 1 and September 30, 2020.

Protective Measures

- Facility security and/or COVID-19 screening contract labor and materials
- PPE or related protective equipment not covered by FEMA Public Assistance
- Costs for acquisition and installation of protective equipment not covered by FEMA Public Assistance
- Increased disinfection costs of learning areas
- Lease and/or outfitting costs for temporary facilities to comply with Centers of Disease Control health guidance
- Materials and equipment to encourage or enforce compliance with health directives (e.g.: signage, communications, barriers, etc.)

Costs associated with modifying method of teaching

- Distance learning costs, including online or televised instruction and independent study packets
- Information Technology hardware and software costs associated with distance learning

Any other emerging need with a clear nexus to COVID-19 not covered by any other federal, state or local funding source, and deemed appropriate and necessary by Berks County.

What are some examples of ineligible expenses?

- Revenue replacement
- Expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any federal, state, or local program such as Department of Education’s Education Stabilization Fund, FEMA Public Assistance (excluding local cost share requirement)
- Reimbursement to donors for donated items or services
- Workforce bonuses other than hazard pay or overtime
- Severance pay
- Legal settlements

Can the grant funds be used to cover the same items covered under another grant or loan program (i.e. Paycheck Protection Program or the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program)?

No. Your application for, or receipt of, federal or state funds does not disqualify you from receiving the Berks County CARES Grant, however, funds received may not be used for costs that have been covered under another grant or loan program. Preference will be given to organizations that did not receive funding through other CARES Act programs.

If a nonprofit does not have an outside audit will it still be considered for the grant?

Yes, please provide any financial documentation that your organization had filed with your application. Some small organizations may not have a completed financial audit by a third party.

Will I need to pay the money back?

This is a grant, not a loan, so you will not need to pay it back if you comply with all the terms and conditions of the grant agreement.

Does an applicant have to be following all applicable federal, state, and local laws, statutes, and regulations?

Yes. All applicants must certify that they are following federal, state, and local laws. Questions concerning certifications should be directed to the applicant's attorney.

Is an applicant eligible to apply if it has delinquent real estate taxes?

No.

Will it be necessary to provide documentation at the end of the grant?

Applicants, who receive grant funds, may be audited in the future, and are required to document how the funds are used, including all data, reports, contracts, documents, and other information relevant to the use of the funds. You may be subject to monitoring by Berks County for compliance with program and financial requirements in preparation for potential State or Treasury-OIG audits.

What are the record retention requirements of the grant?

All required records shall be maintained by successful applicants for a period of three (3) years from the final audit or close out of the contract, except in cases where unresolved audit questions or litigation may require maintaining some or all records for a longer period.

When will the grant application process open?

The application will be available on the County of Berks website beginning, Wednesday, September 30, 2020 at 9 AM.

When is the deadline to submit?

The application is due by 5:00 PM on Friday, October 16, 2020. Late applications will not be considered.

Why is this program only open for a short time period?

The goal is to get funding disbursed to organizations as quickly as possible. A longer process would delay payments.

Does it matter if I submit my application by email or mail?

Yes. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications, with all supporting documents, by email to CARESAct@CountyofBerks.com. Applications may also be submitted by facsimile to 610-898-7460. Mailed applications will not be accepted.

How long will this process take; when will I receive the grant funds?

The County plans to announce the awards by the end of October. Funds will be distributed before the end of the year.

If I am approved, what will be required to receive the funds?

An executed grant agreement between the successful applicants and the County together with a completed and signed certification form, including supporting reimbursement documentation as outlined in the agreement.

Will my information be kept confidential?

Financial information is kept confidential. Organizations that receive grants, and the dollar amount of the grant received, are public information.

If my application is not complete, can I still submit it?

No. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Who should I contact with questions concerning my application, eligibility or required documents?

Please contact Jessica Blausen by phone at 610-478-6136 x6133 or email: CARESAct@CountyofBerks.com