

For Release Tuesday, 6/23/2020

County of Berks / COVID-19 Leadership Team Press Release

Weekly Program to Focus on CARES Act Community Needs Assessment

Reading, PA— 6/23/2020 — The Berks County Board of Commissioners are set to launch an online Community Needs Assessment to assist with the distribution of \$38 million in CARES Act funding to Berks County. A presentation will be held Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 3:30PM during the Commissioner’s weekly media event. The presentation will be conducted by: Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt, County CAO Ronald Seaman, County CIO Justin Loose and representatives of Witt O’Brien’s of Washington D.C. This event will be broadcast live by BCTV and through [Microsoft Teams Live Event](#). This Press Event will also be streamed Live to the Berks County [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) pages.

The following areas will be addressed during the program.

- Review CARES Act allocation to Berks County.
- Why a community needs assessment?
- How it is the money to be distributed?
- Other CARES Act funding sources and non-CARES Act grants.
- High level overview of community needs assessment which will include a tutorial, and 2-week window to complete the assessment.
- Make the case for additional community financial support to both the federal and state governments.

With \$38 million of CARES Act funding allocated to Berks County, the Board of Commissioners is launching an online community needs assessment to gather specific

information to assist in the determination of how the CARES Act monies should be allocated to community providers to capture the highest and best application of the funds. The county hired Witt O'Brien's to assist in sourcing grant monies and aid our community partners to access additional CARES ACT funding sources.

The allocation of \$38 million is due to the county on or before July 15th. The board understands the allocation is woefully inadequate and dramatically less per capita than what was received in direct CARES Act funding by the seven larger Pennsylvania counties. Berks received about half of what was anticipated based on what the larger counties received. The results of the Berks County Community Needs Assessment will give the Board of Commissioners the justification to advocate for additional funds for our community partners to both federal and state leaders.

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For more information, press only:

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