

**For Release Monday, 6/29/2020**

## County of Berks / COVID-19 Leadership Team Press Release

*Berks County's online Community Needs Assessment is now open*

**Reading, PA— 6/29/2020** — The Berks County Board of Commissioners launched an online Community Needs Assessment today designed to collect and compile information about the unmet financial needs of local businesses and organizations from COVID-19 and assist with the distribution of Berks County's \$38 million of CARES Act funding. The assessment is available on the county's website and includes a tutorial video from Commissioner Kevin S. Barnhardt and Chief Information Officer Justin Loose to guide applicants through the process.

The Commissioners hope to make the most of the CARES Act funding and therefore believe it is important to get a thorough understanding of the critical needs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The county has hired Witt O'Brien's to assist in sourcing grant monies and find additional CARES Act funding sources for community partners. The Commissioners recognize that Berks County's \$38 million allocation is woefully inadequate and dramatically less per capita in comparison to the amount the seven larger Pennsylvania counties received in direct CARES Act funding. The results of the assessment will give the Commissioners the justification to advocate for additional funds to both federal and state leaders.

"We're attempting to gather as much information as possible to help move the process along and get these important funds into the hands of our community partners," Commissioner Barnhardt said.

The assessment is the first step for the county to determine eligibility for the available funding or to direct a responder to the proper grant for their organization. The deadline to

complete the assessment is Monday, July 13. The process will require specific financial information, so it is advised that responders first print a copy of the assessment before attempting to complete the online form. The assessment can be accessed at [https://communityneeds.countyofberks.com/results/main\\_page.aspx](https://communityneeds.countyofberks.com/results/main_page.aspx). Any questions about the assessment should be forwarded to [communityneeds@countyofberks.com](mailto:communityneeds@countyofberks.com).

###

**For more information, press only:**

Stephanie Weaver, Public Relations Officer

Office: 610-478-6136 x6112

Cell: 610-816-1242

Email: [sweaver@countyofberks.com](mailto:sweaver@countyofberks.com)

[www.CountyofBerks.com](http://www.CountyofBerks.com) [www.BerksDES.com](http://www.BerksDES.com)