



# IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE

BRAD LITTLE – Governor  
DAVE JEPPESEN – Director

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
450 West State Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
P.O. Box 83720  
Boise, Idaho 83720-0036  
PHONE 208-334-5500  
FAX 208-334-6558

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Alex Adams, Administrator  
Division of Financial Management

**FROM:** Dave Jeppesen, Director  
Department of Health and Welfare

**DATE:** September 18, 2020

**SUBJECT:** CFAC Funding Consideration

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The Department of Health and Welfare appreciates CFAC consideration of an additional award of \$5.23 million to assist in covering our new COVID-19 operating and personnel expenses and our redirected personnel hours for staff whose budgeted hours are now being directed to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency. This amount will be used to cover allowable expenses per federal guidance issued as of 9-1-20 which were incurred and projected through December 31, 2020.

Our initial Coronavirus Relief Fund request was made prior to significant clarifications by the U.S. Department of Treasury regarding allowable covered expenses and before the full impact of the pandemic on our Department was known. We have reviewed the guidance issued up to 9-1-2020 from the Treasury and attest that these expenses are within the established perimeters. As this crisis continues, our Department's work remains substantially dedicated to mitigating and responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency. The narrative below provides some examples of the COVID-19 expenses we are experiencing.

Approximately one-third of the department's staff have diverted time to respond to COVID-19. Examples of these activities include:

- Researching, communicating and implementing guidance of CDC and other authoritative sources.
- Public relations, social media communications and messaging to DHW staff and the community.
- Work with state emergency personnel to ensure that PPE inventory is enough to protect those on the front line (including our staff) and to protect Idahoans.
- Ensuring rapid distribution to the community of CARES Act supplemental funds for programs like childcare, food assistance and foster care.

- Significantly adjusting financial systems to process federal supplemental COVID aid packages.
- Substantial revisions to our existing budgets response to the declines in allocated tax revenues associated with the COVID-19 shut-down and on-going restrictions.
- Inspections of long-term care facilities to assure that infection control protocols meet COVID-19 standards.

Operating expenses to date include:

- **Cleaning supplies and services**

As many of the department's employees are deemed essential workers, safety of employees and clients in various environments requires dramatic increases in the frequency and scale of cleaning and changes to protocol and products used to clean in the COVID-19 environment. Additional supplies continue to be purchased to meet standards in line with CDC recommendations during the pandemic.

- **Hand sanitizer, masks, and gloves**

CDC recommendations for responding to the public health crisis includes wearing face masks and gloves, frequent hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer when handwashing is not feasible. Additionally, personnel who might not normally use PPE as a normal course of their work, now must use PPE in response to CDC guidance or other policy. For example, our social workers who work with the public in a non-medical environment are in regular contact with people who may be carriers of coronavirus and protecting their health is critical. DHW purchased PPE to promote the safety of our own personnel but also the constituency we serve.

- **Lobby readiness**

DHW has several public lobbies across the state which are essential to providing services to Idahoans. Significant alterations to our public lobbies were necessary to comply with CDC guidance. For example, the installation of plexiglass in lobby areas where staff interface with clients and patients. Also included in this category are the supplies and tools necessary to install and adequately mark off safe social distances.

- **Telework expenses**

A significant part of DHW's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in accordance with CDC recommendations and state/local stay-at-home orders, is to maximize telework. Nearly two-thirds of our personnel were transitioned to telework which required additional equipment and security software. In addition, existing technology systems were significantly modified to enhance security in a teleworking environment and guarantee that communications and connectivity to DHW servers flowed as seamlessly as possible to prevent any delays in services being rendered to the public.

- **Technology system modifications**

Additional technology system modifications were required to comply with emergency federal regulations that extended additional benefits for food assistance, foster care, childcare and Medicaid recipients.