

**NOTICE OF AN OPEN WORK SESSION
OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
NORTH KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

**May 19, 2020
6:00 PM**

Due to the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and the State of Emergency declared by the City of North Kansas City and the Stay at Home Order issued by Mayor Don Stielow and the Clay County Health Department, and the ban on gatherings of more than ten people, this meeting will be held virtually, with the Mayor, City Council members and City staff joining the meeting on an online platform. The public may view the meeting live on Channel 2, the City's Cable Channel or YouTube channel, which can be found on the City's website at www.nkc.org/live.

The tentative agenda of this meeting includes:

- 1. Call Meeting to Order**
- 2. Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act Funding** 

Congress passed and the President signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act on March 27, 2020. The CARES Act provides for Federal Stimulus Funds to flow to the States by population and to Counties within the State also by population. Generally speaking, these funds are to be used for reimbursement of expenses related to dealing with the covid-19 pandemic since the crisis's beginning to the end of the year. The City Council and City staff will discuss administration of the funds and eligible uses.

- 3. Adjournment**

This open work session of the City Council of the City of North Kansas City, Missouri, has been duly called pursuant to the provisions of Section 2.04.030 of the Code of the City of North Kansas City, Missouri, by the undersigned Mayor of the City of North Kansas City, Missouri.

DONE this 14th day of May 2020 at 5:00 p.m.



Don Stielow, *Mayor*

Representatives of the news media may obtain copies of this notice by contacting:

Crystal Doss, City Clerk, City Hall
2010 Howell Street
North Kansas City, Missouri 64116
Telephone No. (816) 412-7815

MEMORANDUM



TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Eric Berlin, City Administrator
DATE: May 19, 2020
RE: CARES Act Funding

Introduction

Congress passed and the President signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act on March 27, 2020. The CARES Act provides for Federal Stimulus Funds to flow to the States by population and to Counties within the State also by population. Generally speaking, these funds are to be used for reimbursement of expenses related to dealing with the covid-19 pandemic since the crisis's beginning to the end of the year. The funds cannot be used to make up for loss of revenue due to the crisis.

County governments are responsible for the distribution of these funds. On May 1, 2020, the Clay County Commission approved Resolution 2020-139. The resolution provides that the City of North Kansas City will receive \$417,769.15 to use for eligible expenses incurred between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020 to deal with the covid-19 pandemic.

The CARES Act provides that payments from the Fund may only be used to cover costs that:

- are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19);
- were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020 (the date of enactment of the CARES Act) for the State or government; and
- were incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020, and ends on December 30, 2020.

Administration of Funds

CARES Act funds are to be spent in accordance with U.S. Treasury, State of Missouri and section 601(d) of the Social Security Act guidance issued or to be issued on what constitutes a necessary expenditure, as further discussed below. Clay County added the following stipulations in 2020-139:

- Funds disbursed to Community Partners be allocated to entities within the borders of Clay County, Missouri.
- Preference be given to vendors operating out of Clay County, Missouri.
- Transparency portal participation on the Clay County website.

Community Partners such as North Kansas City were required to adopt, sign and notarize the Community Partner Funding Certification Form. County Resolution 2020-139 provides terms and obligations for CARES funding recipients, including:

- Community Partners will track expenditures and provide documentation to Clay County on the 15th of each month.
- Community Partners will be asked to voluntarily return all or part of unused CARES Act funding on October 1, 2020 for reallocation to other Community Partners by October 30, 2020.
- Funds provided as a direct payment from the county that are not expended on the necessary expenditures on or before January 31, 2021 will be returned on or before February 1, 2021.

As directed by the CARES Act, Community Partners should keep records sufficient to demonstrate Fund payment use in accordance with section 601(d) of the Social Security Act, US Treasury and State of Missouri guidance. Clay County is requesting Community Partners submit records on the 15th of each month for prior month Fund payments. They have developed draft spreadsheets and expectations for backup supporting documentation, and cities and County staff are working through these together.

City staff will keep these funds segregated. To allow for full transparency, staff's intention is to put forth expenditures from this fund as a budget amendment on the City Council agenda the first meeting of each month for Council review and approval.

Eligible Uses

Please see as information two attachments from the U.S. Treasury website:

- Attachment A: Coronavirus Relief Fund Guidance for State, Territorial, Local and Tribal Governments
- Attachment B: Coronavirus Relief Fund Frequently Asked Questions

Expenditures must be used for actions taken to respond to the public health emergency. These may include expenditures incurred to respond directly to the emergency, such as by addressing medical or public health needs, as well as expenditures incurred to respond to second-order effects of the emergency, such as by providing economic support to those suffering from employment or business interruptions due to COVID-19-related business closures.

Funds may not be used to fill shortfalls in government revenue to cover expenditures that would not otherwise qualify under the statute. Revenue replacement is not a permissible use of Fund payments.

Based upon the guidance in the attachments, uses that staff could see using these funds for might include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Staff does not currently believe that the City would have eligible payroll expenses for public safety, public health, health care, human services, and similar employees whose services are substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID- 19 public health emergency. We will be responding to the emergency with employee already on the payroll and budgeted.
- Expenses for acquisition and distribution of medical and protective supplies, including sanitizing products and personal protective equipment.
- Expenses for quarantining individuals.
- Expenses to improve telework capabilities for public employees to enable compliance with COVID-19 public health precautions.
- Expenses of providing paid sick and paid family and medical leave to public employees to enable compliance with COVID-19 public health precautions.
- Certain grants, as further discussed below.

Grants: Certain types of grants are indicated in the guidance as potentially eligible:

- Expenditures related to the provision of grants to small businesses to reimburse the costs of business interruption caused by required closures. Governments have discretion to determine what payments are necessary. A program that is aimed at assisting small businesses with the costs of business interruption caused by required closures should be tailored to assist those businesses in need of such assistance.

Discussion: City staff has neither the capacity nor the qualifications to administer such a program. However, staff has been involved in discussions with the Clay County Economic Development Council, which staff believes does have the capacity and the ability/associations to administer such a program. If Council is interested in pursuing this use of CARES funds, staff recommends we continue to work with the Clay County EDC to use that organization as administrator of such funds for the benefit of NKC grantees.

- Emergency financial assistance to individuals and families directly impacted by a loss of income due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, if a government determines such assistance to be a necessary expenditure. Such assistance could include, for example, a program to assist individuals with payment of overdue rent or mortgage payments to avoid eviction or foreclosure or unforeseen financial costs for funerals and other emergency individual needs. Such assistance should be structured in a manner to ensure as much as possible, within the realm of what is administratively feasible, that such assistance is necessary.

Discussion: City staff has neither the capacity nor the qualifications to administer such a program. If Council is interested in pursuing this use of CARES funds, staff recommends the City work with a social service agency to use that organization as administrator of such funds for the benefit of NKC grantees.

Amount of Funds Available and Next Steps:

It is in the City's interest to use CARES Funds to:

1. Pay for eligible governmental expenses to deal with this health emergency.
2. If funds are available after paying for eligible governmental expenses, use these funds for eligible expenditures for the direct benefit of North Kansas City residents and businesses.

The CARES Fund is in its infancy. At the present time, in terms of non-grant eligible uses, staff is somewhat doubtful that the City will have anything close to \$417,769.15 in eligible expenses before the end of the calendar year. On the other hand, no one knows where this crisis is going. Some forecasters warn of a possible second wave of infection, even more dire in its effects than the first. This could cause City expenses to increase more rapidly than they have to date. This will likely be our one bite of the apple. It would not be a good outcome to allocate money for external purposes and then end up without enough funds to pay for internal City expenses.

Staff surmises that some councilmembers may wish to access these funds for grants. If so, staff would suggest that the City continue its discussions with Clay County EDC and/or begin discussions with an appropriate social service agency on how these grants might be administered, with assurances that all CARES Fund requirements are being scrupulously followed.

Thereafter, staff would suggest that a certain amount be reserved for City governmental expenses, as much as may reasonably be predicted to occur. To begin, staff would recommend that funds be considered for release to the Clay County EDC and/or a social service agency on a phased basis. For example, \$50,000 might be allocated for grant purposes initially, and when the initial amount is exhausted another allocation could be considered.

Attachment A

Coronavirus Relief Fund
Guidance for State, Territorial, Local, and Tribal Governments
April 22, 2020

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to recipients of the funding available under section 601(a) of the Social Security Act, as added by section 5001 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (“CARES Act”). The CARES Act established the Coronavirus Relief Fund (the “Fund”) and appropriated \$150 billion to the Fund. Under the CARES Act, the Fund is to be used to make payments for specified uses to States and certain local governments; the District of Columbia and U.S. Territories (consisting of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands); and Tribal governments.

The CARES Act provides that payments from the Fund may only be used to cover costs that—

1. are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19);
2. were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020 (the date of enactment of the CARES Act) for the State or government; and
3. were incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020, and ends on December 30, 2020.¹

The guidance that follows sets forth the Department of the Treasury’s interpretation of these limitations on the permissible use of Fund payments.

Necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency

The requirement that expenditures be incurred “due to” the public health emergency means that expenditures must be used for actions taken to respond to the public health emergency. These may include expenditures incurred to allow the State, territorial, local, or Tribal government to respond directly to the emergency, such as by addressing medical or public health needs, as well as expenditures incurred to respond to second-order effects of the emergency, such as by providing economic support to those suffering from employment or business interruptions due to COVID-19-related business closures.

Funds may not be used to fill shortfalls in government revenue to cover expenditures that would not otherwise qualify under the statute. Although a broad range of uses is allowed, revenue replacement is not a permissible use of Fund payments.

The statute also specifies that expenditures using Fund payments must be “necessary.” The Department of the Treasury understands this term broadly to mean that the expenditure is reasonably necessary for its intended use in the reasonable judgment of the government officials responsible for spending Fund payments.

Costs not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020

The CARES Act also requires that payments be used only to cover costs that were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020. A cost meets this requirement if either (a) the cost cannot lawfully be funded using a line item, allotment, or allocation within that budget *or* (b) the cost

¹ See Section 601(d) of the Social Security Act, as added by section 5001 of the CARES Act.

is for a substantially different use from any expected use of funds in such a line item, allotment, or allocation.

The “most recently approved” budget refers to the enacted budget for the relevant fiscal period for the particular government, without taking into account subsequent supplemental appropriations enacted or other budgetary adjustments made by that government in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency. A cost is not considered to have been accounted for in a budget merely because it could be met using a budgetary stabilization fund, rainy day fund, or similar reserve account.

Costs incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020, and ends on December 30, 2020

A cost is “incurred” when the responsible unit of government has expended funds to cover the cost.

Nonexclusive examples of eligible expenditures

Eligible expenditures include, but are not limited to, payment for:

1. Medical expenses such as:
 - COVID-19-related expenses of public hospitals, clinics, and similar facilities.
 - Expenses of establishing temporary public medical facilities and other measures to increase COVID-19 treatment capacity, including related construction costs.
 - Costs of providing COVID-19 testing, including serological testing.
 - Emergency medical response expenses, including emergency medical transportation, related to COVID-19.
 - Expenses for establishing and operating public telemedicine capabilities for COVID-19-related treatment.
2. Public health expenses such as:
 - Expenses for communication and enforcement by State, territorial, local, and Tribal governments of public health orders related to COVID-19.
 - Expenses for acquisition and distribution of medical and protective supplies, including sanitizing products and personal protective equipment, for medical personnel, police officers, social workers, child protection services, and child welfare officers, direct service providers for older adults and individuals with disabilities in community settings, and other public health or safety workers in connection with the COVID-19 public health emergency.
 - Expenses for disinfection of public areas and other facilities, *e.g.*, nursing homes, in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.
 - Expenses for technical assistance to local authorities or other entities on mitigation of COVID-19-related threats to public health and safety.
 - Expenses for public safety measures undertaken in response to COVID-19.
 - Expenses for quarantining individuals.
3. Payroll expenses for public safety, public health, health care, human services, and similar employees whose services are substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

4. Expenses of actions to facilitate compliance with COVID-19-related public health measures, such as:
 - Expenses for food delivery to residents, including, for example, senior citizens and other vulnerable populations, to enable compliance with COVID-19 public health precautions.
 - Expenses to facilitate distance learning, including technological improvements, in connection with school closings to enable compliance with COVID-19 precautions.
 - Expenses to improve telework capabilities for public employees to enable compliance with COVID-19 public health precautions.
 - Expenses of providing paid sick and paid family and medical leave to public employees to enable compliance with COVID-19 public health precautions.
 - COVID-19-related expenses of maintaining state prisons and county jails, including as relates to sanitation and improvement of social distancing measures, to enable compliance with COVID-19 public health precautions.
 - Expenses for care for homeless populations provided to mitigate COVID-19 effects and enable compliance with COVID-19 public health precautions.
5. Expenses associated with the provision of economic support in connection with the COVID-19 public health emergency, such as:
 - Expenditures related to the provision of grants to small businesses to reimburse the costs of business interruption caused by required closures.
 - Expenditures related to a State, territorial, local, or Tribal government payroll support program.
 - Unemployment insurance costs related to the COVID-19 public health emergency if such costs will not be reimbursed by the federal government pursuant to the CARES Act or otherwise.
6. Any other COVID-19-related expenses reasonably necessary to the function of government that satisfy the Fund's eligibility criteria.

Nonexclusive examples of ineligible expenditures²

The following is a list of examples of costs that would *not* be eligible expenditures of payments from the Fund.

1. Expenses for the State share of Medicaid.³
2. Damages covered by insurance.
3. Payroll or benefits expenses for employees whose work duties are not substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

² In addition, pursuant to section 5001(b) of the CARES Act, payments from the Fund may not be expended for an elective abortion or on research in which a human embryo is destroyed, discarded, or knowingly subjected to risk of injury or death. The prohibition on payment for abortions does not apply to an abortion if the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest; or in the case where a woman suffers from a physical disorder, physical injury, or physical illness, including a life-endangering physical condition caused by or arising from the pregnancy itself, that would, as certified by a physician, place the woman in danger of death unless an abortion is performed. Furthermore, no government which receives payments from the Fund may discriminate against a health care entity on the basis that the entity does not provide, pay for, provide coverage of, or refer for abortions.

³ See 42 C.F.R. § 433.51 and 45 C.F.R. § 75.306.

4. Expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any federal program, such as the reimbursement by the federal government pursuant to the CARES Act of contributions by States to State unemployment funds.
5. Reimbursement to donors for donated items or services.
6. Workforce bonuses other than hazard pay or overtime.
7. Severance pay.
8. Legal settlements.

Attachment B

**Coronavirus Relief Fund
Frequently Asked Questions
Updated as of May 4, 2020**

The following answers to frequently asked questions supplement Treasury’s Coronavirus Relief Fund (“Fund”) Guidance for State, Territorial, Local, and Tribal Governments, dated April 22, 2020, (“Guidance”).¹ Amounts paid from the Fund are subject to the restrictions outlined in the Guidance and set forth in section 601(d) of the Social Security Act, as added by section 5001 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (“CARES Act”).

Eligible Expenditures

Are governments required to submit proposed expenditures to Treasury for approval?

No. Governments are responsible for making determinations as to what expenditures are necessary due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19 and do not need to submit any proposed expenditures to Treasury.

The Guidance says that funding can be used to meet payroll expenses for public safety, public health, health care, human services, and similar employees whose services are substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency. How does a government determine whether payroll expenses for a given employee satisfy the “substantially dedicated” condition?

The Fund is designed to provide ready funding to address unforeseen financial needs and risks created by the COVID-19 public health emergency. For this reason, and as a matter of administrative convenience in light of the emergency nature of this program, a State, territorial, local, or Tribal government may presume that payroll costs for public health and public safety employees are payments for services substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency, unless the chief executive (or equivalent) of the relevant government determines that specific circumstances indicate otherwise.

The Guidance says that a cost was not accounted for in the most recently approved budget if the cost is for a substantially different use from any expected use of funds in such a line item, allotment, or allocation. What would qualify as a “substantially different use” for purposes of the Fund eligibility?

Costs incurred for a “substantially different use” include, but are not necessarily limited to, costs of personnel and services that were budgeted for in the most recently approved budget but which, due entirely to the COVID-19 public health emergency, have been diverted to substantially different functions. This would include, for example, the costs of redeploying corrections facility staff to enable compliance with COVID-19 public health precautions through work such as enhanced sanitation or enforcing social distancing measures; the costs of redeploying police to support management and enforcement of stay-at-home orders; or the costs of diverting educational support staff or faculty to develop online learning capabilities, such as through providing information technology support that is not part of the staff or faculty’s ordinary responsibilities.

Note that a public function does not become a “substantially different use” merely because it is provided from a different location or through a different manner. For example, although developing online

¹ The Guidance is available at <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Coronavirus-Relief-Fund-Guidance-for-State-Territorial-Local-and-Tribal-Governments.pdf>.

instruction capabilities may be a substantially different use of funds, online instruction itself is not a substantially different use of public funds than classroom instruction.

May a State receiving a payment transfer funds to a local government?

Yes, provided that the transfer qualifies as a necessary expenditure incurred due to the public health emergency and meets the other criteria of section 601(d) of the Social Security Act. Such funds would be subject to recoupment by the Treasury Department if they have not been used in a manner consistent with section 601(d) of the Social Security Act.

May a unit of local government receiving a Fund payment transfer funds to another unit of government?

Yes. For example, a county may transfer funds to a city, town, or school district within the county and a county or city may transfer funds to its State, provided that the transfer qualifies as a necessary expenditure incurred due to the public health emergency and meets the other criteria of section 601(d) of the Social Security Act outlined in the Guidance. For example, a transfer from a county to a constituent city would not be permissible if the funds were intended to be used simply to fill shortfalls in government revenue to cover expenditures that would not otherwise qualify as an eligible expenditure.

Is a Fund payment recipient required to transfer funds to a smaller, constituent unit of government within its borders?

No. For example, a county recipient is not required to transfer funds to smaller cities within the county's borders.

Are recipients required to use other federal funds or seek reimbursement under other federal programs before using Fund payments to satisfy eligible expenses?

No. Recipients may use Fund payments for any expenses eligible under section 601(d) of the Social Security Act outlined in the Guidance. Fund payments are not required to be used as the source of funding of last resort. However, as noted below, recipients may not use payments from the Fund to cover expenditures for which they will receive reimbursement.

Are there prohibitions on combining a transaction supported with Fund payments with other CARES Act funding or COVID-19 relief Federal funding?

Recipients will need to consider the applicable restrictions and limitations of such other sources of funding. In addition, expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any federal program, such as the reimbursement by the federal government pursuant to the CARES Act of contributions by States to State unemployment funds, are not eligible uses of Fund payments.

Are States permitted to use Fund payments to support state unemployment insurance funds generally?

To the extent that the costs incurred by a state unemployment insurance fund are incurred due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, a State may use Fund payments to make payments to its respective state unemployment insurance fund, separate and apart from such State's obligation to the unemployment insurance fund as an employer. This will permit States to use Fund payments to prevent expenses related to the public health emergency from causing their state unemployment insurance funds to become insolvent.

Are recipients permitted to use Fund payments to pay for unemployment insurance costs incurred by the recipient as an employer?

Yes, Fund payments may be used for unemployment insurance costs incurred by the recipient as an employer (for example, as a reimbursing employer) related to the COVID-19 public health emergency if such costs will not be reimbursed by the federal government pursuant to the CARES Act or otherwise.

The Guidance states that the Fund may support a “broad range of uses” including payroll expenses for several classes of employees whose services are “substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency.” What are some examples of types of covered employees?

The Guidance provides examples of broad classes of employees whose payroll expenses would be eligible expenses under the Fund. These classes of employees include public safety, public health, health care, human services, and similar employees whose services are substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Payroll and benefit costs associated with public employees who could have been furloughed or otherwise laid off but who were instead repurposed to perform previously unbudgeted functions substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency are also covered. Other eligible expenditures include payroll and benefit costs of educational support staff or faculty responsible for developing online learning capabilities necessary to continue educational instruction in response to COVID-19-related school closures. Please see the Guidance for a discussion of what is meant by an expense that was not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020.

In some cases, first responders and critical health care workers that contract COVID-19 are eligible for workers’ compensation coverage. Is the cost of this expanded workers compensation coverage eligible?

Increased workers compensation cost to the government due to the COVID-19 public health emergency incurred during the period beginning March 1, 2020, and ending December 30, 2020, is an eligible expense.

If a recipient would have decommissioned equipment or not renewed a lease on particular office space or equipment but decides to continue to use the equipment or to renew the lease in order to respond to the public health emergency, are the costs associated with continuing to operate the equipment or the ongoing lease payments eligible expenses?

Yes. To the extent the expenses were previously unbudgeted and are otherwise consistent with section 601(d) of the Social Security Act outlined in the Guidance, such expenses would be eligible.

May recipients provide stipends to employees for eligible expenses (for example, a stipend to employees to improve telework capabilities) rather than require employees to incur the eligible cost and submit for reimbursement?

Expenditures paid for with payments from the Fund must be limited to those that are necessary due to the public health emergency. As such, unless the government were to determine that providing assistance in the form of a stipend is an administrative necessity, the government should provide such assistance on a reimbursement basis to ensure as much as possible that funds are used to cover only eligible expenses.

May Fund payments be used for COVID-19 public health emergency recovery planning?

Yes. Expenses associated with conducting a recovery planning project or operating a recovery coordination office would be eligible, if the expenses otherwise meet the criteria set forth in section 601(d) of the Social Security Act outlined in the Guidance.

Are expenses associated with contract tracing eligible?

Yes, expenses associated with contract tracing are eligible.

To what extent may a government use Fund payments to support the operations of private hospitals?

Governments may use Fund payments to support public or private hospitals to the extent that the costs are necessary expenditures incurred due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, but the form such assistance would take may differ. In particular, financial assistance to private hospitals could take the form of a grant or a short-term loan.

May payments from the Fund be used to assist individuals with enrolling in a government benefit program for those who have been laid off due to COVID-19 and thereby lost health insurance?

Yes. To the extent that the relevant government official determines that these expenses are necessary and they meet the other requirements set forth in section 601(d) of the Social Security Act outlined in the Guidance, these expenses are eligible.

May recipients use Fund payments to facilitate livestock depopulation incurred by producers due to supply chain disruptions?

Yes, to the extent these efforts are deemed necessary for public health reasons or as a form of economic support as a result of the COVID-19 health emergency.

Would providing a consumer grant program to prevent eviction and assist in preventing homelessness be considered an eligible expense?

Yes, assuming that the recipient considers the grants to be a necessary expense incurred due to the COVID-19 public health emergency and the grants meet the other requirements for the use of Fund payments under section 601(d) of the Social Security Act outlined in the Guidance. As a general matter, providing assistance to recipients to enable them to meet property tax requirements would not be an eligible use of funds, but exceptions may be made in the case of assistance designed to prevent foreclosures.

May recipients create a “payroll support program” for public employees?

Use of payments from the Fund to cover payroll or benefits expenses of public employees are limited to those employees whose work duties are substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

May recipients use Fund payments to cover employment and training programs for employees that have been furloughed due to the public health emergency?

Yes, this would be an eligible expense if the government determined that the costs of such employment and training programs would be necessary due to the public health emergency.

May recipients use Fund payments to provide emergency financial assistance to individuals and families directly impacted by a loss of income due to the COVID-19 public health emergency?

Yes, if a government determines such assistance to be a necessary expenditure. Such assistance could include, for example, a program to assist individuals with payment of overdue rent or mortgage payments to avoid eviction or foreclosure or unforeseen financial costs for funerals and other emergency individual needs. Such assistance should be structured in a manner to ensure as much as possible, within the realm of what is administratively feasible, that such assistance is necessary.

The Guidance provides that eligible expenditures may include expenditures related to the provision of grants to small businesses to reimburse the costs of business interruption caused by required closures. What is meant by a “small business,” and is the Guidance intended to refer only to expenditures to cover administrative expenses of such a grant program?

Governments have discretion to determine what payments are necessary. A program that is aimed at assisting small businesses with the costs of business interruption caused by required closures should be tailored to assist those businesses in need of such assistance. The amount of a grant to a small business to reimburse the costs of business interruption caused by required closures would also be an eligible expenditure under section 601(d) of the Social Security Act, as outlined in the Guidance.

The Guidance provides that expenses associated with the provision of economic support in connection with the public health emergency, such as expenditures related to the provision of grants to small businesses to reimburse the costs of business interruption caused by required closures, would constitute eligible expenditures of Fund payments. Would such expenditures be eligible in the absence of a stay-at-home order?

Fund payments may be used for economic support in the absence of a stay-at-home order if such expenditures are determined by the government to be necessary. This may include, for example, a grant program to benefit small businesses that close voluntarily to promote social distancing measures or that are affected by decreased customer demand as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

May Fund payments be used to assist impacted property owners with the payment of their property taxes?

Fund payments may not be used for government revenue replacement, including the provision of assistance to meet tax obligations.

May Fund payments be used to replace foregone utility fees? If not, can Fund payments be used as a direct subsidy payment to all utility account holders?

Fund payments may not be used for government revenue replacement, including the replacement of unpaid utility fees. Fund payments may be used for subsidy payments to electricity account holders to the extent that the subsidy payments are deemed by the recipient to be necessary expenditures incurred due to the COVID-19 public health emergency and meet the other criteria of section 601(d) of the Social Security Act outlined in the Guidance. For example, if determined to be a necessary expenditure, a government could provide grants to individuals facing economic hardship to allow them to pay their utility fees and thereby continue to receive essential services.

Could Fund payments be used for capital improvement projects that broadly provide potential economic development in a community?

In general, no. If capital improvement projects are not necessary expenditures incurred due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, then Fund payments may not be used for such projects.

However, Fund payments may be used for the expenses of, for example, establishing temporary public medical facilities and other measures to increase COVID-19 treatment capacity or improve mitigation measures, including related construction costs.

The Guidance includes workforce bonuses as an example of ineligible expenses but provides that hazard pay would be eligible if otherwise determined to be a necessary expense. Is there a specific definition of “hazard pay”?

Hazard pay means additional pay for performing hazardous duty or work involving physical hardship, in each case that is related to COVID-19.

The Guidance provides that ineligible expenditures include “[p]ayroll or benefits expenses for employees whose work duties are not substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency.” Is this intended to relate only to public employees?

Yes. This particular nonexclusive example of an ineligible expenditure relates to public employees. A recipient would not be permitted to pay for payroll or benefit expenses of private employees and any financial assistance (such as grants or short-term loans) to private employers are not subject to the restriction that the private employers’ employees must be substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

May counties pre-pay with CARES Act funds for expenses such as a one or two-year facility lease, such as to house staff hired in response to COVID-19?

A government should not make prepayments on contracts using payments from the Fund to the extent that doing so would not be consistent with its ordinary course policies and procedures.

Questions Related to Administration of Fund Payments

Do governments have to return unspent funds to Treasury?

Yes. Section 601(f)(2) of the Social Security Act, as added by section 5001(a) of the CARES Act, provides for recoupment by the Department of the Treasury of amounts received from the Fund that have not been used in a manner consistent with section 601(d) of the Social Security Act. If a government has not used funds it has received to cover costs that were incurred by December 30, 2020, as required by the statute, those funds must be returned to the Department of the Treasury.

What records must be kept by governments receiving payment?

A government should keep records sufficient to demonstrate that the amount of Fund payments to the government has been used in accordance with section 601(d) of the Social Security Act

May recipients deposit Fund payments into interest bearing accounts?

Yes, provided that if recipients separately invest amounts received from the Fund, they must use the interest earned or other proceeds of these investments only to cover expenditures incurred in accordance with section 601(d) of the Social Security Act and the Guidance on eligible expenses. If a government deposits Fund payments in a government’s general account, it may use those funds to meet immediate cash management needs provided that the full amount of the payment is used to cover necessary

expenditures. Fund payments are not subject to the Cash Management Improvement Act of 1990, as amended.

May governments retain assets purchased with payments from the Fund?

Yes, if the purchase of the asset was consistent with the limitations on the eligible use of funds provided by section 601(d) of the Social Security Act.

What rules apply to the proceeds of disposition or sale of assets acquired using payments from the Fund?

If such assets are disposed of prior to December 30, 2020, the proceeds would be subject to the restrictions on the eligible use of payments from the Fund provided by section 601(d) of the Social Security Act.