

Coronavirus Emergency Relief Fund (CERF)

June 1, 2020 – Weekly Update

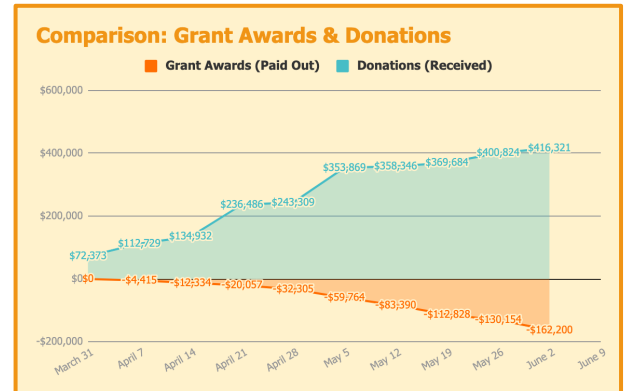


CERF ETHOS

Our goal is for residents to be able to **stay in their homes** and to maintain access to utility service that enables **students to be connected to school** and enables **all residents to be connected to food resources** and other necessities during this crisis.

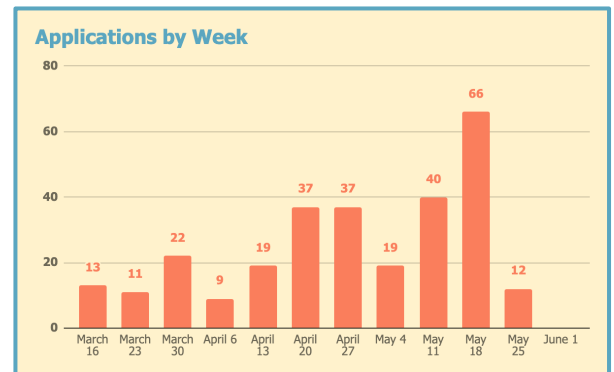
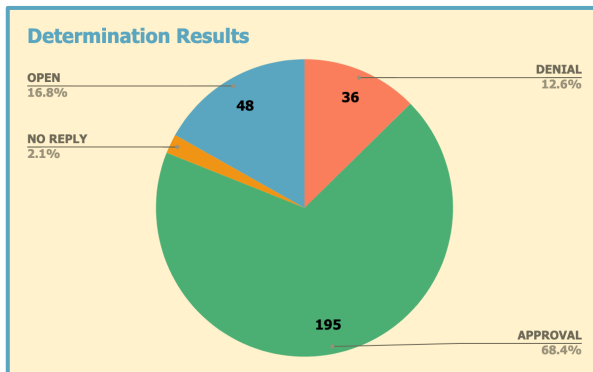
FUNDRAISING – \$416,321 as of June 1st

The CERF is supported in part with grants from the **Princeton University Relief Fund** and the **Covid-19 Relief & Recovery Fund of Princeton Area Community Foundation**. We are grateful to the University, to PACF, and to the over **780 donors** who have contributed.



APPLICATIONS – 285 as of June 1st

We have been able to help **164 unique households** stay sheltered and connected to resources 195 times. Of the 285 applications received, 121 are renewals. The current average award rose only slightly this week to **\$934.90**. At this award level and with our current funding, we will be able to help approximately 272 more applicants or times and have sufficient funding for 7 – 10 weeks (lower limit based on 40 applications per week and upper limit based on 27 applications per week).



CERF TEAM

Intake Coordinators – this team answers the Human Services phone number and helps potential applicants navigate the application process.

Katherine Cardona* – Princeton Recreation Department (PRD)

Kimberly Figueroa-Martinez* – Human Services

Sindy Sandoval* – Corner House

Steering Committee – in addition to processing intakes, members check to see if applicants have access to reliable sources of food and refer them to available resources when appropriate.

Emily Becker* – friend of PCF

Zoe D'Eugenio-Pinel* – friend of PCF

Andrea Dinan* – Princeton High School & PCF

Jordan Goodwin – Princeton Community Village

Sharon Hurley – PSRC

Diane Paulsell* – Solidaridad Princeton

Nicole Paulucci – PRD

Trinidad Rodriguez* – JW Middle School & PCF

Angie Vargas*/Cecilia Avila* – Arm in Arm

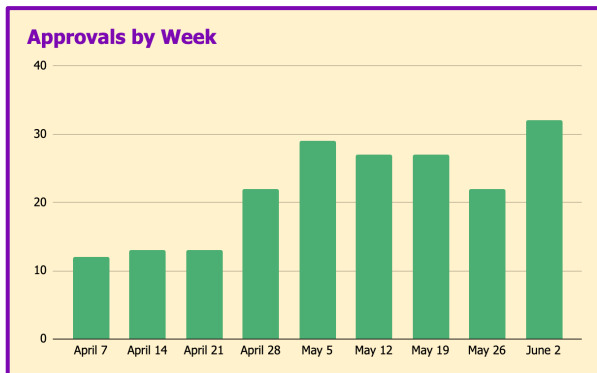
* = dual-language speaker



Coronavirus Emergency Relief Fund (CERF)

May 24, 2020 – Weekly Update

REASONS TO H.O.P.E. (Help One Person Everyday)



It's been pretty demoralizing on local and national fronts this week. If you have a story to share, please send it to: princetonchildrensfund@gmail.com.

PROCESS

We held an information session on Thursday and understand the recording will soon be available. Thank you to those who attended and access details for the recording will follow soon. We received follow on questions about the time it takes to process applications and thought we would include the

answer here. The time it takes to process an application is a function of several factors:

Day of the Week – we have Steering Committee meetings on Mondays and Thursdays. During the meetings, new cases are assigned. If a case arrives Monday after the call, it will not be assigned until Thursday. If it arrives Thursday after the call, it will not be assigned until Monday.

Time of Day – the online intake system and phones are staffed during regular business days and within standard business hours. If an application arrives after hours or over the weekend, it will not be processed until the next business day.

Day of the Month – we do not control or influence when the utility companies issue bills. If an applicant requests support on the 4th of the month and asks us to also cover utility bills, we must wait for the utility company to issue the bill. In May, PSE&G sent invoices May 18th which arrived by the 21st. On paper, that appears to be more than a two-week processing lag however, we are *unable* to process a payment request without the supporting invoice.

Month Requested – we received a request for support for July on May 26th. The coordinators took the application over the phone however this case will remain *on hold* until June 22nd. This was explained to the applicant and might appear to be more than a four-week processing lag even though it is now. We will wait for utility bills and also wait to verify that the applicant *remains unemployed* in four weeks.

Supporting Documents – sometimes, when helpers submit an application on behalf of an applicant, they neglect to forward the supporting documents. Sometimes they forget for days. We even had one helper call the case manager to scold her only to realize that she had neglected to send the documents, again. Our steering committee make calls to applicants to collect them only to be told “I already sent it”. Since the helpers very often do not sign their names, we keep calling applicants and asking. We are *unable* to process an application without any supporting documents.

Applicant Response – our Steering Committee use a variety of outreach methods to contact applicants. WhatsApp, text message, email, and phone calls to name a few. Ten of the 13 members are dual language speakers and able to switch between English and Spanish in their outreach. If applicants do not answer or respond to outreach, we are unable to process their applications. In order to pay utility bills, most utilities require the applicants to give permission. The utility calls the applicant for permission so we can pay with a credit card. Sometimes, applicants see the name of a utility and think the call is about the “late bill” so they don't answer. Or they answer and hang up repeatedly. The applicants' lack of response does slow down our processing, but we keep trying. We have only 6 applications closed for non-response.

