



Interfaith Council to Prevent Homelessness
P.O. Box 330
Vashon, Washington 98070

August 31st, 2020

RE: Virus Rent Fund

IFCH can not think of housing without thinking of Health, a person's and family's well being. Having the security of a safe place to live. Being indoors during inclement weather. Being able to shelter in place during this pandemic. How can a person quarantine for 14 days without housing? Homelessness leads to so many illnesses, physical and mental.

We are aware that Granny's usually does not provide grants for rental assistance programs. But these are extraordinary times. The pandemic along with the Governor's "Stay-at-Home" order shuttered most businesses. People were laid off through no fault of their own. Self-employed people lost business. At the height of unemployment it was estimated that 25% of the working population on Vashon was unemployed. While most were able to receive unemployment, many on Vashon can not for various reasons. Today the extra \$600 unemployment from the Federal government has expired. Many parents with young children will not be able to work while the school is remote learning. We have seen new families asking for rental assistance as others have gone back to work. People are still hurting financial.

We are asking the Granny's Board to please let the membership vote on this grant proposal. Let the voting members decide if assisting people, who have lost their jobs due to the coronavirus, with their rent during the pandemic is worthy of their vote. If they believe that rental assistance does indeed qualify as health related, during our public health crisis, then this grant request should be honored.

THE PROGRAM:

IFCH started the Virus Rent Fund in March, as soon as the "Stay-at-Home" order was put in place. We knew that many in our community living paycheck to paycheck, would not be able to meet their rental obligations. Only people who have lost their jobs during this pandemic qualify for this fund and only money specifically earmarked as "virus rent" is used to pay these rents. This allows the IFCH general operating monies to continue supporting our mission of preventing homelessness on Vashon. The word "Prevent" is overlooked far too often, but that is what we diligently and persistently do — keep people in their homes or at least try the best we can.

To spread the word about this new program, we have reached out to Vashon Youth and Family Services (VYFS), Comunidad Latina Vashon and the school counselors, asking them to let their clients know that money would be available to pay part of their rent. Information about the Virus Rent Fund and requests for support are continually circulated throughout the community.

Each month tenants complete a new form requesting rent assistance. Questions are asked about current income. No family receives more than \$1,000 each month and very few have their entire rent paid by IFCH. Before any checks are written we share our list with St. Vincent de Paul, who also pays some rents, to make sure no one is double dipping. Rent checks get sent directly to each homeowner. Speaking with homeowners each month, I hear them express their gratitude for this program. They tell me their tenants are long term renters and they care about them. Many homeowners are using the rent money to pay the mortgages on these homes. Others are retired and living on this income. The Vashon Virus Rent Fund money is circulating on Vashon. Donations come in, rent is paid. Tenants get to stay in their homes and homeowners get their income. It is a win-win situation.

To date IFCH has received \$146,000 in donations. Only \$3,000 of this has been from off island grants. We have paid \$137,000 for April to September rent, averaging 30 families each month. We put at a call out each month for donations. The community has been very generous, but we are seeing some donor fatigue. Every month we try to receive \$25,000, a large task. Miraculously, contributions seem to show up at the last minute. We do not know how long the contributions will continue to flow in, but we do know the need is not going away anytime soon.

IFCH has no paid staff. We are all volunteers, so 100 percent of donations received go to direct services.

We are requesting \$20,000 for the Virus Rent Fund. This is not only for the health and welfare for the specific people in need but for the benefit of our whole island. When we help others stay on the island and be housed we help our community as a whole.

The complete performance data for the Virus Rent Fund program is on the following page.

Thank you for considering our request for grant money.



Summary of the Virus Rent Fund as of August 26th, 2020:

Total Collected: \$146,531

Total Grants: \$137,434 (paid April, May, June, July, August & September rents)

Total Remaining: \$9,097

Donations by Month:

March = \$28,785

April = \$25,813

May = \$36,969

June = \$7,864

July = \$22,780

August = \$22,820

Total People Donating: 445

By Month:

March = 114

April = 116

May = 75

June = 33

July = 58

August = 50

People Served by Month:

April Rent: 27 Families (102 people) (55% Latinx Families)

May Rent: 36 Families (107 people) (50% Latinx Families)

June Rent: 28 Families (109 people) (75% Latinx Families)

July Rent: 27 Families (99 people) (78% Latinx Families)

August Rent: 30 Families (109 people) (73% Latinx Families)

September Rent: 29 Families (99 people) (72% Latinx Families)

PSE Paid:

June: 9 Families (30 people) 100% Latinx

July: 4 Families (9 people) 100% Latinx

August: 7 Families (23 people) 100% Latinx

September: 6 Families (24 people) 100% Latinx