



WNY COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE FUND



FOCUSED FORWARD

Community Foundation
for Greater Buffalo

September 2020 Update

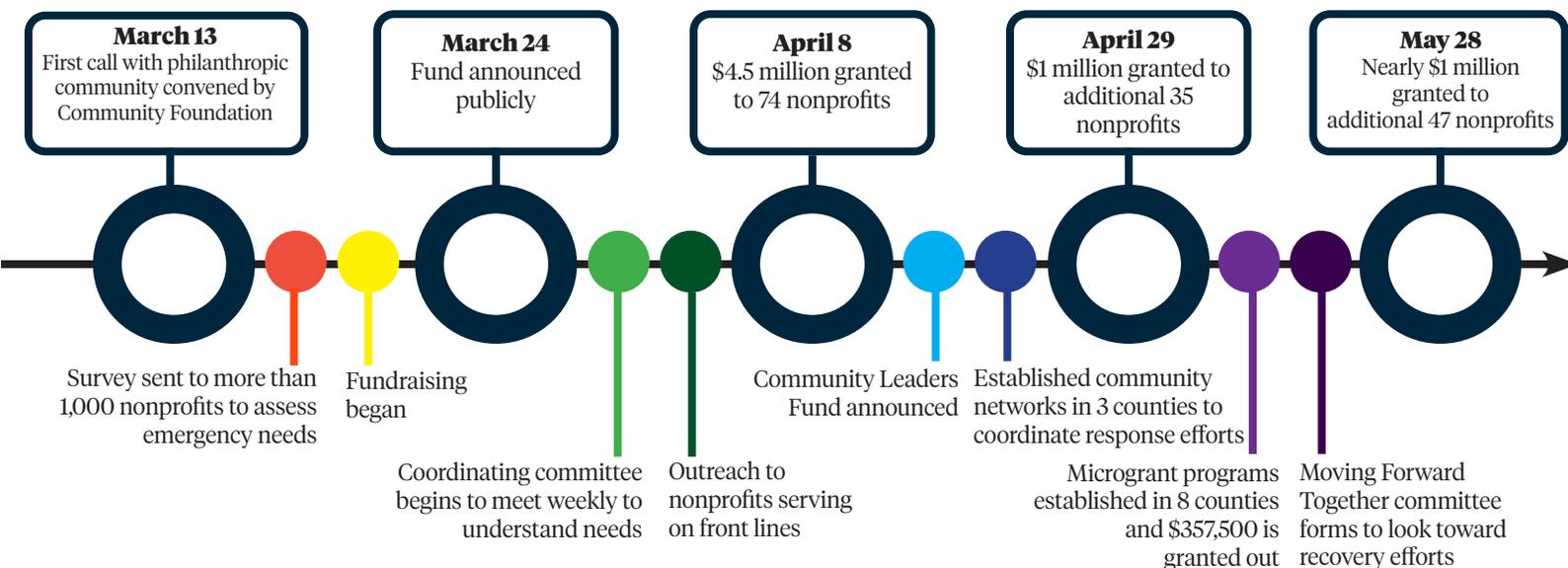
Coming Together to Overcome Crisis

Western New Yorkers are known for their resiliency, generosity and collaborative spirit. As the COVID-19 health crisis unfolded quickly, the philanthropic community immediately came together to create the Western New York COVID-19 Community Response Fund. In short order, millions of dollars were raised from foundations, corporations and individuals and then granted to support hundreds of nonprofits serving on the front lines of the crisis. The Community Foundation is honored to lead this effort with the Health Foundation of Western and Central New York, The John R. Oishei Foundation and United Way of Buffalo & Erie County.



- To date, nearly **\$9 million** has been raised from nearly 70 foundations and corporations, 40 community leaders and almost 1,900 individuals.
- **\$7.8 million** in grants has been awarded to more than 400 organizations serving all eight counties of Western New York.
- These organizations are serving on the front lines of the crisis in the areas of food, housing, healthcare, childcare, mental health, transportation and other emergency services.

Immediate Crisis Response Timeline



Immediate Response Grant Program

The sudden arrival of the COVID-19 crisis necessitated an immediate response to meet the significant need in the community. Less than two weeks after the Western New York COVID-19 Community Response Fund was announced, the Fund awarded \$4.5 million to 74 nonprofit organizations serving on the front lines of the crisis. Later in April, it awarded more than \$1 million to an additional 35 nonprofits, and in May, nearly \$1 million was granted to 47 nonprofits.

Grants were awarded to organizations serving all eight counties of Western New York, addressing immediate needs in our community as a result of the COVID-19 crisis in the areas of food, housing, healthcare, childcare, mental health, transportation and other emergency services.

Grants in Action



“As always, when schools are closed, Boys and Girls Clubs are open. In this case, some of our clubs were open to kids of essential workers from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. We developed and implemented advanced protocols to keep our staff and our members safe. We started cleaning and sanitizing everything –and I mean everything. Kids enjoy breakfast, a hot meal at lunchtime and an afternoon snack. They’re learning together while staying apart.”

- Boys and Girls Club of Buffalo

“Eight Days of Hope launched a plan to ‘Feed Buffalo’ during the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal was simple: find a way to provide groceries for families that would last them a week so they could stay home and stay safe. Serving with dozens of local churches and businesses, we were able to safely deliver groceries for 1,109 families in the city of Buffalo. We were able to hand out over 7,500 masks to the families living in the 14251 ZIP code, the hardest-hit area in Western New York.”

- Eight Days of Hope

\$6.6 million

AWARDED TO 156 NON-PROFITS
IN 8 COUNTIES



Microgrants Program

Recognizing that grassroots organizations were serving an important role to fill critical gaps during the COVID-19 crisis, a microgrants program was created to rapidly deploy resources to small urban and rural organizations. Microgrants supported projects ranging from creating and stocking community food pantries to purchasing personal protective equipment to supporting the infrastructure needed for increased demand for mental health services.

Microgrants in Action



“Because of your funding to Saving Grace Outreach in Cattaraugus, we have been able to provide additional protein and canned goods to our drive-through food pantries. The microgrant filled the gaps where other funding and resources fell short.

We would not have been able to provide these resources to our community without you!”
- Elizabeth O’Neill, Saving Grace Outreach

“This grant assisted The Salvation Army of Wellsville in providing bagged lunches for those in need in Allegany County. This was a new program we started after realizing there was a need for it during the financially difficult time of the pandemic. Many families were blessed to be provided with lunches for their children through the schools, but there were many families/singles who didn’t have school-aged children in the household. One client said that because of our bagged lunch program (in addition to our normal monthly pantry), they no longer had to make the difficult decision between purchasing medicine or food.”

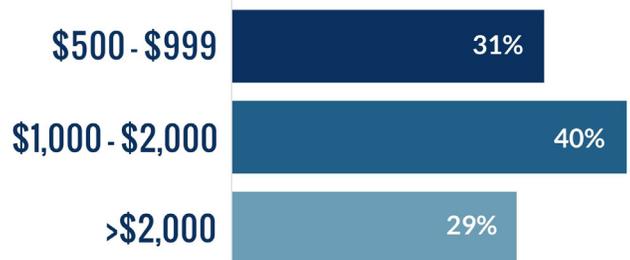
- Heather Purvis, The Salvation Army of Wellsville

\$357,500

AWARDED TO 246 NON-PROFITS

IN 8 COUNTIES

RANGE OF GRANTS



Moving Forward Together

In June, the Western New York COVID-19 Community Response Fund decided to collectively shift the response efforts to focus on strengthening systems that were stretched beyond capacity and so the Western New York COVID-19 Community Response Fund created the Moving Forward Together initiative.



Encouraging New Ideas

The Request for Ideas (RFI) process was created to surface collaborative solutions from nonprofit leaders to address challenges our community is facing due to COVID-19. Fourteen grants were awarded in early September to encourage development of ideas that seek to improve systems ranging from re-envisioning our affordable housing system to creating a more well-connected Western New York.



Connecting Food Systems

Understanding that food security has been a major need during the COVID-19 crisis, a community-focused, regionally coordinated planning effort is now underway. It will bring together stakeholders, representing diverse aspects and perspectives of the region's food system, who will identify action steps to address acute hunger, and to change the chronic conditions that have perpetuated long-term food insecurity in Western New York.



Developing Public Policy

The Fund has awarded a grant to the Partnership for the Public Good to embark on a yearlong public policy and advocacy initiative in partnership with the nonprofit sector, and with significant input from the community, that will be focused on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and changes in public policy at local and state levels.



Sourcing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Sourcing reliable and affordable vendors for PPE was a challenge from the start with COVID-19. By working with Visually Impaired Advancement (VIA), a coordinated effort to source and purchase PPE was launched to ensure our nonprofit community had the equipment they needed to safely serve our community.



Bridging the Digital Divide

Our service delivery system has completely changed due to COVID-19. The Fund is beginning to look at how we can find solutions to bridge the digital divide in both urban and rural areas of Western New York. The divide is impacting service delivery for everything from healthcare to education and is creating barriers to learning and earning for our most vulnerable residents.

We are incredibly grateful for the generosity of Western New York and the willingness to work together to address this crisis that has affected everyone in unprecedented and unimaginable ways.

To see a complete list of funders or to support the
WNY COVID-19 Community Response Fund, visit [WNYResponds.org](https://www.wnyresponds.org).