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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-SECOND SESSION

H. F. No. 1353

02/22/2021 Authored by Gomez, Hassan, Lee, Her, Xiong, J., and others
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Human Services Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to economic development; establishing a program for emergency
1.3 community relief grants; appropriating money.

1.4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.5 Section 1. COVID-19 EMERGENCY COMMUNITY RELIEF GRANTS.

1.6 Subdivision 1. Establishment. The COVID-19 emergency community relief grants
1.7 program is established to award grants to community action agencies to make grants to
1.8 individuals experiencing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

1.9 Subd. 2. Statewide grants. To the extent practicable, grants shall be made so that an
1.10 approximately equal dollar amount of grants are made to individuals in the metropolitan
1.11 area and the nonmetropolitan area. Priority shall also be given to community action agencies
1.12 serving culturally specific populations either directly or through grants to other organizations
1.13 who will make the grants to individuals.

1.14 Subd. 3. Eligibility for individuals. In order to qualify for a grant, an individual must
1.15 be able to demonstrate financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Financial
1.16 hardship includes but is not limited to showing that an individual:

1.17 (1) is not eligible to receive unemployment benefits. Such individuals may include but
1.18 are not limited to individuals in the country on an H1B or other work visa or who are
1.19 self-employed;

1.20 (2) will not receive unemployment benefits at a rate that is commensurate with their
1.21 earnings. Such individuals may include but are not limited to tipped employees whose
1.22 earnings do not accurately reflect income;

2.1 (3) will have significant difficulty getting COVID-19-related federal or state assistance.
2.2 Such individuals may include but are not limited to individuals who are adult dependents
2.3 or other minor or college-aged dependents; or

2.4 (4) will not be able to receive any COVID-19-related federal or state assistance. Such
2.5 individuals may include but are not limited to individuals who were not required to file
2.6 taxes for the past two years and adults who are elderly or disabled but are not receiving
2.7 Social Security benefits.

2.8 Subd. 4. **Maximum grant award.** The amount of assistance shall depend on the
2.9 individual needs of the household, taking into consideration other resources that an individual
2.10 or household is eligible to receive. The maximum amount of assistance may not exceed
2.11 \$1,500 per individual.

2.12 Subd. 5. **Use of grant funds.** Grant funds received by an individual under this section
2.13 may be used for food, emergency household items, rent support, utility bills, and other
2.14 similar expenses. Assistance for rent support and utility bills must be made directly to the
2.15 rental property owner or utility company.

2.16 Subd. 6. **Reporting on use of funds.** Community action agencies receiving grants under
2.17 this section must submit quarterly reports to the commissioner of human services on a form
2.18 developed by the commissioner with information about the purposes for which the funds
2.19 were awarded to individuals in accordance with this section. The first quarterly report must
2.20 be submitted no later than July 15, 2021, and the last quarterly report must be submitted no
2.21 later than August 1, 2022.

2.22 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

2.23 Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATION.**

2.24 \$50,000,000 is appropriated in fiscal year 2022 from the general fund to the commissioner
2.25 of human services for the COVID-19 emergency community relief grants under section 1.
2.26 Of this amount, up to ten percent may be used for the administrative costs of the agency
2.27 and the community grantees. This is a onetime appropriation and is available until June 30,
2.28 2023.

2.29 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.