



April 6, 2020

Dear Representatives:

The unprecedented public health emergency and related economic disruption have hit every one of us across the state of Minnesota. Every one of us needs to be included in the state's response.

We are writing with urgency on behalf of thousands of working Minnesota parents and children who will most likely not have access to pandemic unemployment insurance or paid leave, may struggle to access federal stimulus rebates, and are under a shelter-in-place state order.

We are asking the Legislature to immediately authorize the release of \$13M in existing federal TANF funds to provide a \$500 emergency stipend to 27,000 families in the Minnesota Family Investment Program.

DHS and DEED data repeatedly show that more than two-thirds of parents accessing MFIP have a recent work history, most often in one of four industries: hotel/restaurant, retail, temp work, and low-wage health care. At least two of those industries are the hardest hit economically during this crisis. If these parents lost jobs before January 27 and were ineligible for unemployment insurance due to low earnings, sporadic hours, or uncovered employment – they will not be able to access a traditional weekly \$200 UI payment. They will also be excluded from the new \$600 per week UI booster created under pandemic unemployment insurance.

Rent will be due. Utilities must be paid. Children are out of school so everyone is eating food at home. Diapers and basic household goods are a major cost burden for families earning less than \$20,000 a year.

Minnesota has the federal resources in our TANF reserve to send a \$500 emergency stipend to these families, which represents two weeks of missed unemployment insurance for a minimum wage worker.

We appreciate your consideration to this urgent request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Webster", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jessica Webster
Staff Attorney

Joined by:

AEOA (Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency)
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
Ayada Leads
Bii Gii Wiin Community Development Loan Fund

Black Women's Wealth Alliance
Casa de Esperanza
Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis
Children's Defense Fund Minnesota
Community Action Duluth
Community Emergency Assistance Programs
Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES)
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America – Saint Paul Synod
Foster Advocates
Francesca Pagan - Eden Prairie, 55447
HOME Line
Hunger Solutions Minnesota
ICA Food Shelf
Inter-County Community Council, Inc.
ISALAH
Jewish Community Action
Joint Religious Legislative Coalition
KOOTASCA Community Action
Lakes & Prairies Community Action (CAPLP)
LatinoLEAD
Legal Services Advocacy Project
Literacy Minnesota
MAHUBE-OTWA Community Action Partnership
Midwest Minnesota Community Development Corporation
Midwest Minnesota Community Development Corporation
Minnesota Budget Project
Minnesota Catholic Conference
Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless
Minnesota Community Action Partnership
Minnesota Conference of the United Methodist Church
Minnesota Council of Churches
Minnesota Head Start Association, Inc.
Minnesota Social Service Association
Mount Olivet Rolling Acres
Neighborhood House
Northside Residents Redevelopment Council
People Serving People
PRISM
PROP Food Shelf
Southwest MN Housing Partnership
St Louis Park Emergency Program
Urban Homeworks
The Concerned Parents of ANEW BAM
The Food Group
Three Rivers Community Action
Tri-Valley Opportunity Council
Violence Free Minnesota
Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People (VEAP)
Voices for Racial Justice
White Earth Investment Initiative