

**United Way of
Lebanon County**

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July 20, 2020

The Honorable Tom Wolf
Governor of Pennsylvania
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

As the leader of an organization focused on community solutions, I am respectfully requesting you reconsider distributing the CARES Act County Block Grant funds to Lebanon County. United Way has been involved in supporting the Lebanon community throughout the duration of this pandemic. We have convened stakeholders, raised funds to support our nonprofit partners, and shared critical information with our community. In addition, I'm proud to serve as the Human and Social Service Action Team Chair for Forward Together Lebanon, our county-wide economic recovery task force. This group of community leaders has been collaborating for weeks, working hard to create and implement a plan that will allow us to rebuild Lebanon County stronger than before. I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to request you consider possible solutions to disseminating these essential funds. This support could bring relief to various sectors who are struggling, all of which support our community at large.

As a local chapter of United Way, the largest nonprofit across the world, we invest our resources in programs and solutions to strengthen our community. Our focus is on supporting and promoting the health, financial stability, and education of every person in our community. Through the philanthropy of businesses and individuals, we are fortunate to support collaborative work across our county that makes a meaningful impact every day. Nonprofit organizations in Lebanon County provide a conduit for people to come together for the common good. An avenue to turn our hopes and dreams into palpable actions. These are the places our local families turn to for job training skills, educational resources, counseling services, food and shelter, healthcare, childcare, disaster support, and so much more. As a sector, we work collaboratively to support members of our community in many ways. While we may be deemed tax exempt under a 501c3 status, we are still organizations that must produce a positive operating margin in order to fulfill our missions. Collectively, we provide arguably some of the most critical services to our friends and neighbors, all while reinvesting all of our resources back into the fabric of Lebanon County communities.

The trickle-down effect of this pandemic, seeping into our nonprofit organizations, is not outwardly apparent to some. We rely on generous support from community members to do the work that we do and to support the work of other nonprofits. The weight is heavy as we stand witness to the health and economic impacts on our once strong corporate partners, small businesses, and community members with consistent income. The realization slowly surfaces as the pieces fall into place that if our supporters are not on steady footing, our obstacles become all the greater.

It is a challenging time to be a community leader in the state of the world. Watching our community struggle during a worldwide pandemic has been nothing short of heartbreaking. Individuals are trying to balance public health responsibilities with their livelihood, a seemingly impossible feat in itself. Like many, I have never felt such a divide in this place I call home. My sentiments are not meant to be political in nature, but simply a human response to the series of events that have brought us to this very point in time.

This next year will be challenging for everyone as we navigate the unknown. I respectfully request your reconsideration in providing these relief efforts to Lebanon County as established by the CARES ACT. Rebuilding a strong community is essential to our recovery efforts. We need all available resources to make this a reality. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Brooke Smith
Chief Executive Officer
United Way of Lebanon County

Submitted on behalf of United Way of Lebanon County and co-signed by the following members of our Board of Directors:

- Sue Allwein
- Fred Boltz
- Sherry Cassel
- Andrew Demler
- Philip Domencic
- Carolyn Haskell
- Philip Hess
- Robert Hoffman
- Kevin Keith
- Rene Numer
- Becky Price
- Geoffrey Roche
- James Rovito
- Alletta Schadler
- Ronald Stohler
- David Warner
- Kristen Watts
- Sean Young