

MISIÓN PENIEL

COVID-19 RELIEF FUND PROGRESS REPORT

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Supporting our community

MISSION HIGHLIGHTS



From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, farmworkers have been considered “essential workers,” yet their lives have largely been treated as expendable. Transported on crowded diesel school buses, working shoulder to shoulder while harvesting, and crammed into housing where social distancing is impossible, the men and women who grow and harvest our food wake up every morning to tremendous risk in order to earn enough money to care for their own families.

Approximately 15,000-20,000 agricultural workers live in Immokalee at the height of the season (November-May). While the country plunges into recession, the need for social support in the form of cash assistance to this vulnerable population is profound. Most individuals and families in our community were excluded from federal COVID-19 stimulus payments and similarly do not qualify for other relief programs or social safety nets. And perhaps most disturbing, most are not offered paid time off or sick days -- even if they test positive or fall ill with coronavirus. As a result, direct social support is critical, not only to provide security to farmworkers and their families, but also to contain the spread of COVID-19 by making it economically possible for workers to stay home from the fields and recuperate.

HISTORY OF THE FUND

Recognizing the unique vulnerabilities faced by the Immokalee community Misión Peniel set up a designated relief fund to alleviate the disparate impact of the pandemic on those who were directly affected by the virus. The fund was launched in May of 2020, with the modest seed money of \$5,000 which was disbursed within two weeks. Initially, social support was designated to assist applicants with basic needs - helping them pay rent and avoid eviction, keeping their utilities connected, and covering the cost of groceries for their children.

In anticipation of the need during harvest season (November to May), approximately \$500,000 was raised by November 2020. Recognizing the tremendous need for social support went beyond meeting essential needs the fund expanded to provided cash assistance in December of 2020. Many farmworkers and other essential workers have feared testing because a positive result would require them to miss several weeks of work, which could exacerbate already precarious financial situations for themselves and their families. Cash assistance has enabled fund recipients to take time off work to recuperate and self-isolate. Instead of choosing between public health recommendations or making ends meet, they can prioritize both.

GOALS OF THE FUND

1. Alleviate the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Immokalee households.
 2. Incentivize testing and implementation of public health measures including isolating/quarantining.
 3. Support recipient's ability to take recommended precautions to limit COVID-19 transmission and to prioritize their health/recovery.
 4. Rapid response, with a goal that individuals receive support & funds within 5 day of assessment/referral for current cases and 7-10 days for previous cases.
 5. Promote humanity and dignity of individuals throughout this process.
 6. Build relationships and trust within the community.
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HISTORY OF THE FUND

COVID -19 Social Support



The COVID-19 Emergency Fund was created to support members of the Immokalee community who have been directly impacted by the virus. This support is available to help you prioritize your and your family's health and wellbeing while recovering from COVID-19, whether you are currently ill or got COVID-19 in the past.

By taking care of yourself, your family, and your community, and by following public health recommendations, we can save lives, slow the spread of the virus, and end the pandemic.



Do you live in Immokalee?



Have you tested positive for COVID-19, now or in the past?



Do you live with someone who has tested positive in the last 10 days?

YOU CAN APPLY FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT!

 Call or Text | +1-866-992-5377

Leave a message with your name, date of birth, spoken language, and phone number.



IMPORTANT: Please have a copy (paper or photo) of your positive COVID-19 test available when you apply.

In the month of January we saw an exponential increase in applications for social support. . The volume of applications for assistance increased ninefold, due to a number of factors including: rising case numbers, increased testing events, improved public outreach, and and growing awareness of the fund in the community from those who had received assistance from the fund.

Initially, the social support funding was open to anyone who had tested positive, whether they were currently ill or had tested positive in the past, and to household members of applicants with current infections. Once one infectious member of a family was connected to social support, we were often able to reach other eligible family members. This is vital in helping to prevent household transmission, which can lead to cluster outbreaks among families, by allowing individuals who have been exposed to quarantine during the critical period when they may be infectious but have not yet developed symptoms or tested positive.

When half of the fund had been dispersed by late January, Misión Peniel began discussions with community partners about how to triage resources while additional funds were raised to meet our goal of continuing to provide social support through out this critical phase of the pandemic.

HOW THE FUND OPERATES

We made the decision to prioritize our goal of incentivizing testing and implementing effective public health measures in response to the threat of new more virulent strains of the virus, increased positivity rate, and limited vaccination opportunities. Accordingly, in early February the eligibility for the fund was restricted to prioritize those current infections. A current infection is defined as having tested positive in the past 10 days. Needs-based assistance is still being offered to those on our waitlist who had reached us via our hotline before this policy change. At this time funding is not being offered to household members who have been exposed but have not tested positive.

Needs-Based Assistance

- Requirements:
 - All recipients must be Immokalee residents, demonstrate financial need, and provide proof of a past COVID-19 Infection.
- Individuals apply based on their household's need.
- Up-to \$1,000 of assistance is available per household.
- Assistance is available for rent & mortgage payments, utilities, medical bills, transportation, & food.
- Payments are made directly to the billing agency on the applicant's behalf.
- Applicants may apply more than once for need's based assistance if a balance was available from previous assistance received.

Cash Assistance

- Requirements:
 - All recipients must be Immokalee residents and provide proof of current COVID-19 Infection documented by a positive test in the past 10 days.
 - Each adult who meets requirements is eligible for \$800.
 - A parent with minor children living with them is eligible for \$1,000 .
 - The support thresholds were bench-marked to replace two weeks worth of income.
 - Check are addressed to recipients or someone the recipient designates who is not infectious.
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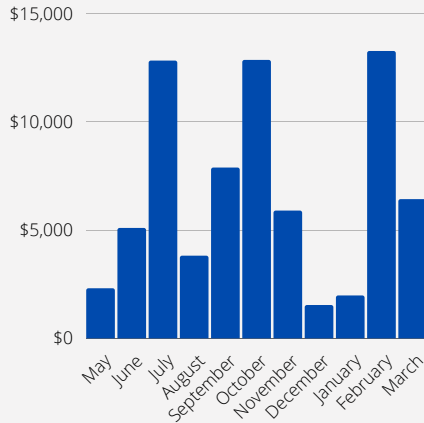
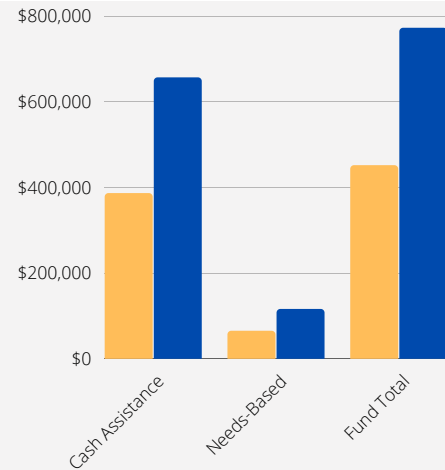
Fund Overview

COVID RELIEF FUND

COVID RELIEF FUND

To date 64% of the funding for allocated for needs-based assistance and 59% of the funding allocated for cash assistance has been utilized. Funds utilized include funds that have been distributed, applications that have been completed and are currently being processed and funds that have been approved for disbursement but have not been distributed.

	FUNDS UTILIZED	FUNDS RAISED
CASH ASSISTANCE	\$386,600.00	\$656,500.00
NEEDS-BASED ASSISTANCE	\$65,156.76	\$115,822.34
RELIEF FUND TOTAL	\$451,765.76	\$772,322.34

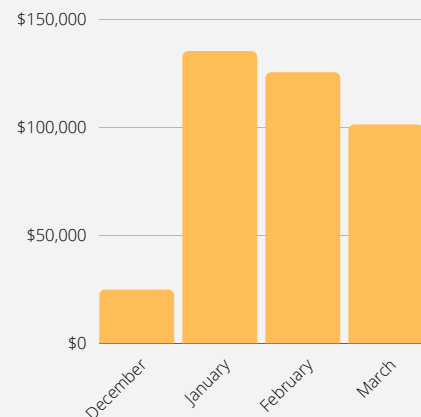


NEEDS-BASED ASSISTANCE PROVIDED: MONTHLY BREAKDOWN

May	\$2,303.72	November	\$5,893.44
June	\$5,091.37	December	\$1,529.72
July	\$12,823.54	January	\$1,971.62
August	\$3,809.65	February	\$13,267.23
September	\$7,881.69	March	\$6,422.10
October	\$12,854.85		

CASH ASSISTANCE PROVIDED: MONTHLY BREAKDOWN

December	\$24,800.00
January	\$135,200.00
February	\$125,400.00
March	\$101,200.00

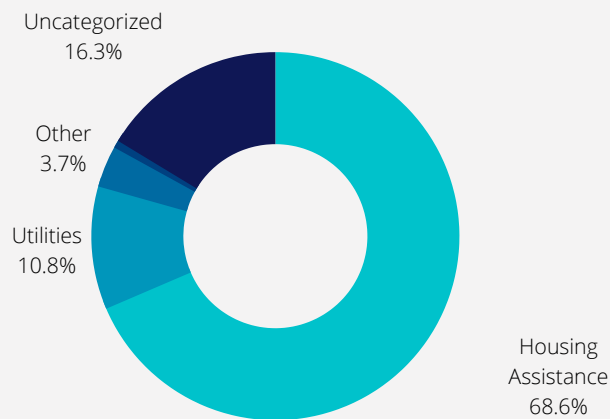




Fund Distribution

NEEDS-BASED ASSISTANCE

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY CATEGORY



Uncategorized:	\$10,751.07
Housing:	\$48,400.64
Utilities:	\$10,006.09
Healthcare:	\$432.96
Other Assistance:	\$4,218.17
Total Distributed:	\$56,739.54

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY MONTH

MONTH	INDIVIDUALS	TOTAL HOUSEHOLD	AMOUNT
May	4	22	\$2,303.72
June	10	31	\$5,691.37
July	22	105	\$12,223.54
August	9	35	\$4,121.94
September	18	65	\$7,569.49
October	22	73	\$14,450.85
November	5	26	\$4,297.44
December	5	19	\$1,529.72
January	4	11	\$1,971.62
February	23	77	\$13,267.23
March	9	34	\$6,422.10
TOTALS:	130	496	\$56,739.54

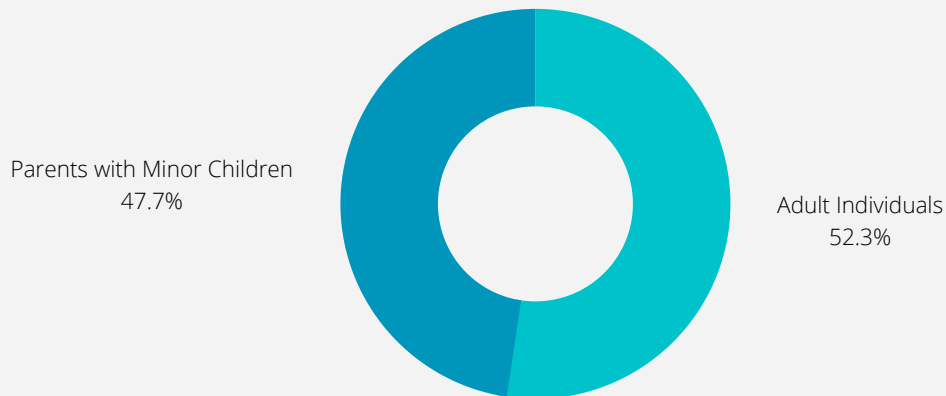
(8 Repeat Clients Served)



Fund Distribution

CASH ASSISTANCE

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY RECIPIENT STATUS



Adult Individuals: 212

Parents: 193

Children: 385

EMERGENCY NEEDS IDENTIFIED

Eviction	1.46%
Rent/Mortgage Payments	20.25%
Food Insecurity	18.05%
Utilities Payments	7.56%
Without Income (2 WEEKS OR MORE)	35.37%

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY MONTH

MONTH	INDIVIDUALS	PARENTS	AMOUNT
December	13	12	\$24,800.00
January	70	66	\$135,200.00
February	65	65	\$125,400.00
March	64	50	\$101,200.00
TOTALS:	212	193	\$386,600.00



Fund Projections

CONNECTING TO SOCIAL SUPPORT

Testing & Self-Referrals

	Month	Total Number of COVID Tests	Number of COVID+ Cases Identified
	January	598	40
	February	1364	66
	March	1395	100

Month	Average Number of COVID Tests/Week	Average Number of COVID+ Cases/Week	Average Positivity Rate	Average Number of Self-Referrals Calls/Week
January	150	10	7%	65
February	353	17	5%	45
March	349	25	7%	28

In January, our community partners, the Healthcare Network (HCN), Partners In Health (PIH), the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), & the Alliance for Fair Food (AFF) held 8 mobile rapid testing events in Immokalee. There were 40 total positive cases identified at these collaborative testing events during this pilot phase of the program. In subsequent months, we've seen an increase in testing numbers and positive cases identified. As a result there is an increased demand for social support as individuals and families need resources in order to safely stay home and isolate without fear of threats such as exacerbated food insecurity and eviction.

In addition to direct referrals from testing events community members can also connect to social support via Mision Peniel's COVID relief hotline. In January, our hotline number was the primary way in which community members connected to social support. As the eligibility criteria has shifted to focus on supporting current cases we have seen a decrease in the volume of self-referral calls to our hotline. Direct referrals from testing events is anticipated to become the primary means by which the community connects to social support moving forward.

Current Waiting List

Referrals Waiting for Intake
March 30, 2021

Active COVID Cases: 8

Past COVID Cases: 89



Looking forward

SOCIAL SUPPORT FUNDING



The pandemic is far from over and the Immokalee community is still in critical need of support. Vaccines are not yet widely available to the farmworker community which means continued risk and exposure for workers, and more suffering for their families if we can't help them fill the financial gaps of lost wages.

As a community, we are all connected. We are answering the call to help our farmworker neighbors and their families. We welcome and invite your continued support.

