

**For Immediate Release**  
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**Community Coalition Emergency Grants Help Migrant and Immigrant Communities**

*Local organizations provide additional immediate funding to area nonprofits on the front line of crisis*

Grand Haven, Mich. – The community coalition created to respond to the COVID-19 crisis has granted an additional \$84,250 from the Emergency Human Needs Fund to eleven area nonprofit organizations that are helping our community in this time of crisis. The majority of this round of emergency funding went to organizations focused on helping the migrant and immigrant members of our community.

Mike Goorhouse, President/CEO of the Community Foundation of the Holland/Zeeland Area explained the importance of taking care of this vulnerable population in our communities.

“Members of our community who are non-citizen residents (migrant workers, green card holders, etc.) are often choosing not to access unemployment benefits due to recent changes to the federal “public charge” rule, which could make them ineligible for citizenship or continued residency status if they accept any sort of public assistance.”

Despite the fact that migrant workers pay taxes like everyone else, many are choosing to forgo the federal stimulus resources that come through unemployment insurance so as not to risk their chance at citizenship or renewed visas. In addition, undocumented immigrant members of our community don’t have access to the various federal stimulus funds at all.

“During these times of uncertainty, it is critical for us to ensure that all of the people who call Ottawa County home are receiving access to the resources they may need,” said Reyna Masko, spokesperson for the Immigrant Relief Fund. “Some of our Ottawa County residents are afraid to seek assistance and if we don’t ensure everyone is healthy and cared for, eventually we will all

be impacted as a result one way or another. Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect and this fund reflects the value that Ottawa County has for all its residents regardless of their immigration status.”

Nonprofit agencies in Ottawa County have committed to keeping people fed, housed, and healthy as best as they can. But these organizations face challenges as they balance their missions with the additional workload of managing the threat of COVID-19.

In response to this need, the following funds have been granted:

- \$2,500 to ATLAS Ministries
- \$1,000 to Emmanuel Hospice
- \$15,000 to Harvest Stand Ministries
- \$3,000 to Holland Free Health Clinic
- \$2,500 to Lakeshore Pregnancy Center
- \$7,500 to Lighthouse Immigrant Advocates
- \$7,500 to Migrant Resource Council
- \$5,000 to the Emergency Needs Programming of St. Francis de Sales
- \$20,000 to the Immigrant Relief Fund of St. John’s Episcopal
- \$10,000 to West Michigan Hispanic Center
- \$10,000 to West Michigan Open Source Medical Supplies Group

“The DEI Office thanks the local non-profits and foundations for the successful collaboration and creation of this new fund,” said Robyn Afrik, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for Ottawa County. “Requests to extend critical information related to COVID-19, in multiple languages native to the communities being served, was limited. This fund can support the demands by meeting the immediate needs, while building capacity and accessibility beyond what any single organization can do alone. When a community can provide cultural and linguistic services that are accessible and at the highest standards possible, i.e. [National CLAS Standards](#), research shows the potential to reduce racial and ethnic disparities; will positively benefit the entire community overall.”

This latest grant round brings the total granted from the fund to \$736,310. Funding is provided on behalf of the Community Foundation of the Holland/Zeeland Area (CFHZ), the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation (GHACF), and the Greater Ottawa County United Way (GOCUW).

The community coalition has created a website to help with the rising need for volunteers, donations of both goods and funds, and ongoing updates: [www.careottawacounty.com](http://www.careottawacounty.com). Donations have continued to come in, and the generosity of our community will allow us to further respond to this crisis.

This is a time of great need, and the natural human impulse is to help our neighbors, so join us in helping in any way that you can.

#### ABOUT THE GHACF

The Grand Haven Area Community Foundation is a public, charitable organization serving the Northwest Ottawa County community since 1971. GHACF is regularly recognized as a top 100 Community Foundation in the nation and is the 8th largest community foundation in the State of Michigan. It encourages philanthropy by individuals, families, corporations, and organizations, and serves as a steward of their charitable funds and legacies. In addition to awarding grants, the Foundation offers technical support to nonprofits, convenes community leaders on issues of importance, and advocates for the nonprofit sector. For more information visit [ghacf.org](http://ghacf.org).

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