



# ARCHDIOCESE COVID-19 RELIEF FUND

## A partnership between the Archdiocese of Chicago and Catholic Charities

Today, while many of us are praying for an end to this global health and economic crisis, Archdiocese of Chicago and Catholic Charities workers and volunteers are on the frontlines supporting those affected by the devastation of COVID-19. As people of God, we strive for ways to support both the virus's victims and those who provide direct services during this time of crisis. To answer this call, the Archdiocese of Chicago in partnership with Catholic Charities is launching an ambitious effort to support individuals and communities impacted by COVID-19 to meet basic, financial, and spiritual needs.

Together, the Archdiocese of Chicago and Catholic Charities are supporting people in this moment of crisis through an unparalleled network of ministries, services, parishes, and schools. Catholic Charities is the largest service provider in the State of Illinois, and in this moment is seeing unprecedented levels of demand. The Archdiocese of Chicago serves the communities of Cook and Lake counties through 316 parishes, 173 schools, and countless ministries including food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters.

Thousands of volunteers, sisters, priests, and professionals, motivated by faith and compassion, are redoubling efforts to feed the hungry, tend to the sick, minister to the imprisoned, shelter the homeless, and assist those who are suffering.

Generous contributions are needed, now more than ever, to help those affected by COVID-19. A single gift to the Archdiocese COVID-19 Relief Fund will assist a range of efforts that are making a difference. **All gifts are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.**

---

### Your gift will provide support to:

- Food, Shelter, and Other Basic Needs
- Scholarships and Emergency Tuition Assistance
- Emergency Parish-Based Ministries
- Domestic Violence Prevention
- Kolbe House Reentry Ministry
- Vital Crisis Ministries

# FOOD, SHELTER, AND OTHER BASIC NEEDS

## Support for those who are struggling

Demand for food, rental assistance, and even burial costs are skyrocketing across the region. Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago, one of the largest service providers in the State of Illinois, facing an historic challenge in meeting the needs of thousands of people impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

### Food Assistance

Catholic Charities currently operates eight city and suburban food pantries in Cook and Lake counties, all of which have seen increases in food pantry usage in their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Starting in April 2020, families began experiencing the devastating financial impact of COVID-19, which consequently increased their risk for food insecurity. In April, Catholic Charities food pantries served 6,033 households, a 62 percent increase from April 2019 and 75 percent more than the average of the prior three prior months.

The number of food delivery sites (pantries, shelters, and soup kitchens) is currently down 30 percent, putting more strain on Catholic Charities' food pantries and others that remain open. To meet this significantly increasing need, Catholic Charities is doubling service levels across our Cook and Lake County pantries. Plans are underway to open an additional Lake County Food Pantry in Round Lake and another in Cook County on Chicago's North Side. More families than ever before will likely be relying on Catholic Charities' food pantries to feed their families.

Donations totaling \$3,000,000 would support 10 food pantries (eight existing plus two expected to open) plus increased demand to meet basic food needs.

### Shelter Assistance

Catholic Charities Homelessness Prevention Call Center (HPCC) is a telephone resource for community members and residents needing financial assistance to prevent homelessness. HPCC is a crucial component of Homeless Prevention program funds distribution and plays a vital role in connecting callers at risk of homelessness to available, short-term financial assistance for rent, mortgage, or utilities in a timely manner to prevent possible entry into homelessness. Catholic Charities has been providing this ministry for many years and has a thorough process to verify claims for assistance.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the amount of calls per day has increased by nearly 40 percent. This sharp escalation in financial hardship calls to our center has triggered an increased demand for funding to meet the dire needs of our families. Fifty-three percent of our calls during this time are requests for rent or utility assistance.

While assistance is normally provided in one-month increments, because of the severity of this crisis, recipients will need at least three months of support. Additional support for shelter assistance will likely be needed for years. Through the recovery from the 2008 recession, requests for support rose 13 percent each year for four years.

\$5,500,000 would assist 1,500 eligible families with three months of rent, mortgage, utility assistance, or security deposits at an average cost of \$3,600 per family (plus an administrative cost of \$100 per grant).

### Burial Assistance

Financial assistance will be made available to help pay for some or all of the burial or cremation costs of a loved one. The focus will be on low-income families, the working poor, senior citizens who live on a limited income, and others who are faced with financial hardship. A thorough process is in place to verify need before financial assistance is provided.

With the increasing death toll due to COVID-19, more grieving families are needing help to bury their loved ones. People in need will also be referred to available local, state, national, and charitable resources that may provide discounts or funds to offset the costs of the burial. This assistance will help grieving individuals to bury their loved one with love and dignity.

\$1,800,000 will provide \$3,500 burial grants to 500 families and cover any incremental administrative costs.

## **SCHOLARSHIPS AND EMERGENCY TUITION ASSISTANCE**

### Support for Catholic education

Since the start of the COVID-19 school closures, archdiocesan schools have received over 350 applications for emergency tuition assistance due to job loss, a significant decrease in income, illness, or other financial challenges. This number of applications for tuition assistance is triple what it was last year during the same time, and it is expected to increase if unemployment rates remain elevated into the fall. Families who have never asked for help are already seeking financial assistance for the 2020/21 school year.

\$2,000,000 in Emergency Tuition Assistance funds would be able to provide 1,000 families (approximately two percent of enrollment) with \$2,000 scholarships.

## **EMERGENCY PARISH-BASED MINISTRIES**

### Support for centers of faith, service, and community

Many parishes in the archdiocese support ministries that provide vital services to local communities. Food pantries, domestic violence prevention and counseling, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and more critical services are sponsored by parishes throughout Cook and Lake counties. Many of these ministries are seeing increasing demand due to COVID-19. Simultaneously, many parishes have seen dramatic reductions in offertory support, particularly those serving lower-income communities. This decrease in offertory will impact the parish's ability to support these ministries at a time when they are needed most.

Parishes with ministries providing critical services who need financial support will be able to apply for funding through this initiative.

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

### Support for those who are endangered

For victims of domestic violence, sheltering at home endangers their safety and well-being. The Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline has reported a 50 percent increase in calls since the shelter-in-place order began. During this challenging time, Catholic Charities is providing aid to victims of domestic violence as it has for over 40 years with counseling services, outreach, and housing.

There is and will continue to be a need for case management services, including housing and rental assistance, which will allow victims to flee unsafe home environments, educate clients about available benefits, help clients apply for benefits, and assist clients with job searches.

The cost to Catholic Charities of supplying counseling to clients is \$150 per counseling hour. Since many clients typically cannot afford these costs, funds are needed to support this important service. Similarly, it costs approximately \$115 per family per day to provide housing at a domestic violence shelter. Funds will be needed to sustain this ministry as well as meet anticipated increased demand.

## **KOLBE HOUSE REENTRY MINISTRY**

### Support for the vulnerable

For almost 40 years, Kolbe House, a highly respected agency of the Archdiocese of Chicago, has been dedicated to supporting and assisting newly released Cook County Jail inmates during the crucial first few days of their reentry into society. Almost all those released from incarceration come from poverty and are returning to poverty. Their only belongings are the clothes on their backs. Research shows that assessing needs and addressing them within 72 hours of release decreases recidivism rates.

To that end, Kolbe House provides food in various forms (pantry, grocery cards, immediate meals), clothing, bus passes, and financial assistance for essentials such as phone service and medication refills. Demand increased each week in April 2020. The pace is averaging 15 newly released clients per week, more than double the typical caseload. Funds are also needed for spiritual, counseling, and administrative services.

\$200,000 in funds would support Kolbe House's ministry for the next six months.

## **VITAL CRISIS MINISTRIES**

### Support for those reaching out

In these unprecedented times, the Archdiocese of Chicago is committed to ministering to members of our community in the moment of their greatest need. Some of these vital and innovative ministries include:

#### **Special Priest Anointing Team**

A team of 29 priests in the archdiocese has volunteered to provide the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick to COVID-19 patients. This has become a model utilized by other dioceses. Sufficient quantities of personal protective equipment are needed to keep our brave and selfless priests safe.

#### **Prayer Support Line**

A group of volunteers has launched a free prayer hotline to pray with individuals looking for solace in this crisis. Funding would provide additional training opportunities for this group.

#### **Critical Sacramental Preparation and Support Programs plus Technology Platforms**

If social distancing continues through the fall, activities such as religious education, formation classes, pre-Cana, baptismal prep, and confirmation would be compromised. The sustainability of these programs is crucial to the strength and renewal of our Church. To ensure the continuity of these essential programs, funding is needed to support the creation by the archdiocese of centralized programs through digital platforms.

#### **Equipment for Livestreaming Liturgies**

Since the COVID-19 crisis forced the closure of churches, the archdiocese Radio/TV crew has been livestreaming daily and Sunday Masses from St. James Chapel and Holy Name Cathedral. Parishes across the archdiocese also need assistance with livestreaming their Masses. Additional portable streaming equipment would go a long way in helping meet these demands. As this "new normal" is expected to continue for the foreseeable future, additional portable streaming equipment would assist parishes in need and improve the overall quality of livestreamed Masses across the archdiocese.

\$345,000 in funds would enhance and sustain these ministries through the COVID-19 crisis.

# Your Gift Will Go Where It Is Needed Most

The historic breadth and depth of this crisis means that our community's needs change on a day-to-day and week-to-week basis. In order to best match resources to the most pressing needs, funds donated to this effort will be allocated to the initiatives listed above in a manner recommended by a committee of clergy, donors, and leaders in the archdiocese and approved by Cardinal Cupich.

**One hundred percent of funds raised for the Archdiocesan COVID-19 Relief Fund will support the initiatives described above.**