

New local funding announced for the Emergency Community Support Fund

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By Michael Riley Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A fresh infusion of funding from the Government of Canada has been allocated from the Emergency Community Support Fund as of May 19. The amount, over \$500,000, will be disbursed locally by the United Way Hastings and Prince Edward and the County Foundation. The fund gives financial support to charities and other qualified organizations so they can adapt their frontline services to support vulnerable Canadians during the pandemic. The Emergency Community support fund is administered nationally by the United Way, the Red Cross and Community Foundations of Canada. Jessica Eritou is with the office of the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, and says the endowment originated from the \$350 million ECSF fund to support charities and non-profits and help them adapt their frontline services to vulnerable Canadians during the pandemic. Each charity can visit the websites of the Canadian United Way, the Canadian Red Cross and Community Foundations Canada to learn if they're eligible and what amount they could expect to help in their efforts, which is distributed based on need. "The Government of Canada is committed to helping Canadians get through this crisis and is assessing needs on an ongoing basis," she says. The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development commented on the funding allocation when it was first announced. "Canadian charities and not-for-profits are always there to help you in your time of need. But the COVID-19 pandemic is bringing real challenges to these important organizations. With today's announcement, the Government of Canada will be there for them so they can continue to be there for Canadians," he said. Jefferson Gilbert is the executive director of the County Foundation, which offers leadership and funding to support community-based initiatives. Their parent organization is Community Foundations of Canada. He says they'll get a good idea of which local organizations they'll be able to help when the first applications come in on the 26th of May. "The County Foundation has a number of annual granting processes and I can see a number of very well qualified recipients that work in Prince Edward County, both exclusively and as part of their larger mandates being a good fit. The types of vulnerable populations are broad. The key though is in the context of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on organizations and their work with these populations. The timing is terrific as many of the organizations that can benefit are facing stretched resources given the demands and limited resources without regular program and fundraising revenue coming in. It is a very interesting time in the sector," he says. Brandi Hodge is the executive director of the United Way HPE and says she is proud to partner with the Government of Canada, the County Foundation and the Red Cross to help those in need and ensure that nobody is left behind. She points out the deadline for local organizations to apply for the funding from the United Way HPE is June 15 for equal consideration. "It is open to any organization that is qualified under Revenue Canada guidelines, that are adapting their frontline services to support vulnerable Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic. So, we don't yet have an idea of which organizations specifically we'll be funding. That won't be determined until after the deadline. We strongly encourage organizations that have questions to contact us," she says. Prospective applicants can find more information and apply online through the United Way HPE (www.unitedwayhpe.ca) and the County Foundation (www.thecountyfoundation.ca) websites.