

April 19, 2021

Johnson County, City Municipalities and School Districts

Relief, Recovery, and Reparations for 18,000 Essential and Excluded Workers: *How Johnson County and Iowa City Should Spend \$47 Million in American Rescue Plan money*

Johnson County and local city governments:

Almost \$2.7 billion is coming to the state of [Iowa, counties, cities and towns](#), including more than \$29 million to Johnson County, \$18 million to Iowa City, and millions more to other cities in Johnson County.

County and local governments can use the funds for:

- Providing aid to workers and families, small businesses, nonprofits, and other "impacted" areas. Businesses have and will receive aid through other relief programs.
- Funding critical public services to prevent cuts due to a decrease in tax revenue. The booming housing market and stable university employment helped keep local revenue steady.
- Making "necessary investments" in infrastructure improvements. There is a federal infrastructure bill likely coming this year.

Governments are prohibited from using the funding on pensions or to offset revenue losses resulting from a tax cut.

Our Coalition's Guiding Principles on how COVID Relief money should be spent:

- Public money should be spent on the common good, with a preferential option for the poor.
- Relief aid should go directly to the essential and excluded workers most impacted by the pandemic.
- Covid Relief money should not go to big corporations or to line the pockets of political donors.
- Infrastructure projects must benefit essential and excluded workers and be either publicly owned or community controlled.

We demand Johnson County, Iowa City, and other county municipalities spend the more than \$47 million in Covid-19 Relief id in the following four ways:

1. **\$20 Million for an Excluded Workers Fund** to provide more than 6,000 undocumented, excluded workers and previously incarcerated people with a portion of the economic stimulus, enhanced unemployment insurance, derecho disaster relief, and other reparations they never received. This proposal is modeled after a recently passed state law in New York, the first of its kind in the country. *Grassroots groups with membership bases in the impacted communities must be able to oversee distribution of the aid.*

No burdensome paperwork requirements like proof of financial impact, loss of income, or back payments owed. Up to \$3,200 per person, including children.

2. **\$20 Million in Hazard Pay Raises** for the more than 12,000 public employees, school and hospital workers on the front-lines of the pandemic. An average of \$1,600 more per worker per year, or nearly \$150 in additional income per month.
3. **\$5 Million on Fifty-Four New Community-Controlled, Affordable Housing and Housing Cooperative Units** for undocumented workers, previously incarcerated people, and refugee resettlement, collectively-owned and managed by a housing cooperative and community land trust. Governor Reynolds is wrong, caring for migrant children is our responsibility, and we should welcome them here in Iowa.
4. **\$2 Million for Public Transportation and Sunday Bus Service**, expanding access to the city to everyone, seven days a week.

Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
SEIU Local 199
Iowa City Catholic Worker
AFSCME Local 12
Iowa Freedom Riders
LULAC Council 308