

## El Centro Hispano Request for Support

El Centro Hispano is a Latino non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening the community, building bridges and advocating for equity and inclusion for Hispanics/Latinos in the Triangle Area of North Carolina. Our areas of focus are Education, Health & Well-being, Economic Development and Community Engagement & Advocacy.

Early on when store shelves were being emptied, five families reached out to ECH during the weekend of 3/13/2020 for help with food. Staff immediately mobilized and donated food and funds to meet the immediate need, however, staff reported more calls for help coming in.

Through its participation in an interagency call with food security organizations in Durham, ECH was able to inform of needs and learn of resources. As a result, an organization called PORCH dropped off a large donation of food, which was immediately sorted and packaged for families to pick up.

As shelter-in-place orders were issued, organizations eventually were not available to distribute food. In order to assure continued access to food, we partnered with local Latino stores to make available culturally appropriate food. We make the food purchase and payment electronically and then the families go and pick up the food directly at the store.

People apply to the fund through our website or by telephone; we screen the applications and confirm the information by phone. After approved, we inform them of the Latino store (El Compare or La Superior in Durham) where they pick up the food. Families get a two-week supply of food of their choice. Some of these families had an issue with transportation, so our staff picked up their groceries from the store and delivered to their home.

Groceries are a onetime purchase per family and amounts range from \$75 to \$150 depending the number of people in the household (2-5 or more people), between \$50-\$100 for other supplies such as cleaning supplies, hygiene products, etc., and \$50 for medicines related with COVID-19.

In addition to the need for food, community members are asking for financial assistance to pay for rent, utilities, medicine, and COVID tests. Community Support staff communicate with community members via phone, text, email, social media posts, and messenger to direct them to community resources.

ECH Staff continue to log calls, list needs, and make referrals but find that many safety net resources are not available. For this reason, ECH has started a COVID19 Crisis Response Fund to meet the immediate need and in the near future with recovery efforts.

Priority is given to families/applicants who meet the following criteria:

- households with multiple children under the age of 13 and/or adults over the age of 65;
- people who have lost all or significant sources of income due to the COVID-19 crisis;
- households with people, who are sick due to COVID-19; and
- homes currently and actively participating in ongoing programs at El Centro Hispano

From 3/13/2020 to date, El Centro Hispano has helped 128 families from Durham County: a total of 512 people of which 278 are adults and 223 are children. Four (4) of these families are recovering from COVID-19 and food and medicines were taken directly to their homes.

We are processing right now 93 additional applications from families who live in Durham.

Aside from the fund, we receive 12 bags of groceries every week from a farm that we distribute to families in Durham. We do not have other funding sources from Durham County.

If we are able to secure more funds for food, ECH could use funds to provide financial assistance to pay rent, utilities, health screenings, and medicine education during this time when government leaders are putting measures to stop the spread of COVID19.

El Centro Hispano is requesting \$36,000 to continue providing support with food to 300 Latino families in Durham from the third week of May to the end of July, when we expect our community members will be able to go back to work.

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