

Nebraska State Legislature



June 8, 2020

Governor Pete Ricketts
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848

Thank you to you and your staff for your hard work in managing and administering CARES Act funds. The relief and response efforts are truly vital to meeting the needs of Nebraskans at this difficult time. We appreciate the recent information provided about progress so far. The CARES Act and the Coronavirus Relief Fund provide important opportunities to help meet the needs of the workers, families, and businesses impacted by the pandemic. As the Legislative Branch representing the people, we believe that this is an important opportunity to provide the people of the state input into the distribution of resources. We urge you to take the following steps to promote transparency and responsiveness to the needs of Nebraskans:

1. Implement a public comment period based on the model developed in Montana (<https://commerce.mt.gov/CARES-Act>) and ensuring equal access for rural communities, English as a second language speakers, stakeholders from diverse and low-income communities, and people with disabilities. This provides an opportunity for stakeholders to express their views in a socially distant manner.
2. Provide an ombudsman for questions, comments, and appeals of funding decisions for stakeholders seeking resources and assistance.
3. Develop a public and transparent online tracker of resources and expenditures of taxpayer dollars related to the CARES Act and the Coronavirus Relief Fund.
4. Provide regular public briefings for members of the Legislature about state and federal resources.
5. Encourage the Nebraska Forecasting Board to meet in July to provide a fiscal outlook for the state as we all make decisions regarding resource allocation. Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to a response to our recommendations and we are ready and willing to partner with you.

Sincerely,

Senator Carol Blood
District #3

Senator Steve Lathrop
District #12

Senator Dan Quick
District #35

Senator Mike McDonnell
District #5

Senator John McCollister
District #20

Senator Sue Crawford
District #45

Senator Michaela Cavanaugh
District #6

Senator Matt Hansen
District #26

Senator Adam Morfeld
District #46

Senator Tony Vargas
District #7

Senator Anna Wishart
District #27

Senator Megan Hunt
District #8

Senator Patty Pansing Brooks
District #28

Senator Sara Howard
District #9

Senator Kate Bolz
District #29

Senator Wendy DeBoer
District #10

Senator Rick Kolowski
District #31