

June 11, 2020

Ms. Sandy Hart
Lake County Board Chair
18 N County Street, 10th Floor
Waukegan, IL 60085

Dear Chairwoman Hart:

Lake County has received direct federal funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act for distribution to units of local government. The Lake County Board is likely creating rules and guidelines that will assist governments in applying for these funds. The federal guidelines provide examples of governmental units that are eligible to apply for economic relief and do not mention park districts. Park districts are units of local government and have been impacted by COVID-19, just like other government entities. We are requesting on behalf of twelve Lake County park districts that the Board include park districts as eligible to apply for reimbursable costs that qualify under CARES Act funding. All Lake County Park Districts that are not part of a city/village government have been contacted to join this cause. We felt they could be represented with city/village units as we are a separate taxing body.

Park districts are vital contributors to the health and welfare of their respective communities; parks and trails have served as a respite for many who practiced safe social distancing and isolation to protect themselves and their neighbors. Park districts, too, have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. We have seen the impact from March to May so far, but the true impact is coming moving into our peak season June through September. Compliance with the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and Lake County Department of Health directives has been costly, with numerous expenditures to safely open facilities, not to mention lost revenues due to closures caused by COVID-19.

The funding Lake County has received will help alleviate the economic hardship to Lake County communities and the need is great. As you move into the next round of reimbursements, please include park districts for all qualified, reimbursable costs. The twelve districts have kept records of COVID-related expenses and Waukegan and Zion Park District have begun compiling the collective cost to make it easy for review by the County. Receipts and proof of cost can be made available by each park district upon request.

We respectfully request that the Lake County Board please include park districts in the equation as they create a fair and equitable plan for recovery. We have and will continue to serve the needs of our residents during these unprecedented times.

We would be happy to meet with you and the Board to discuss this request and the financial impact of the pandemic on park districts.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Waukegan Park District

Jay Lerner, Executive Director
Jon Beckmann, Superintendent of Finance
Ben Richards, Grants & Special Projects Administrator

Zion Park District

Marilyn Krieger, Executive Director
Eric Bradley, Superintendent of Finance & Administration

With support from and on behalf of:

Waukegan Park District, Zion Park District, Vernon Hills Park District, Buffalo Grove Park District, Gurnee Park District, Foss Park District, Mundelein Park District, Park District of Highland Park, Lake Bluff Park District, Wauconda Park District, Deerfield Park District, and Grayslake Park District