



April 30, 2020

Dear Elected Official,

As we continue to fight COVID19 and its attendant threats to human life and our economy, the Pathways for Prosperity (P4P) Coalition writes to express its gratitude for your work and that of your respective staffs in this most challenging time. We realize that while federal and state measures will provide the bulk of aid and support, local governments in this moment play a critical role in ensuring an adequate and equitable response. Indeed, local governments across the country are considering ways in which they can fill gaps, fully leverage public infrastructure, and support the recovery.

To begin, we commend the great work already undertaken by our local governments, namely:

- Actions in support of social distancing recommendations such as the City of Fayetteville's curfew
- Fayetteville City Council's establishment of three COVID19 related policy subcommittees
- Meeting accessibility through telephone, television and virtual platforms
- Robust food distribution through the Cumberland County School System
- Cumberland County Department of Public Health--daily communication of updates on COVID19 status and outreach to the public via radio
- Establishment of the Cumberland County COVID19 Collaborative to address non-congregant sheltering for persons experiencing homelessness with medical risk
- Waiver of fares on City of Fayetteville bus lines
- Initial efforts to stand up COVID19 testing capacity

In the spirit of partnership, we share the following list of recommendations for your consideration. These recommendations have been informed by observations of P4P Coalition members and affiliates and/or by innovations leveraged in other regions.

Access to Information

- Work with local internet service providers to maximize broadband access; engage providers on maintaining connection for customers in the event of non-payment due to COVID19 (see New Orleans, LA: https://newsroom.cox.com/cox_pledges_to_keep_america_connected)
- Leverage creative ways to share information regarding health and safety and the availability of support programs/local resources:
 - Focus on reaching residents experiencing homelessness, individuals who may not have internet access, and non-English speaking communities
 - Partner with local businesses and churches—distribute digital and *print* messaging (e.g., brief handbills covering health/safety and support program information) via grocery stores, convenience stores, restaurants serving take-out, churches
 - Coordinate and produce multi-lingual PSAs for television and radio broadcast
 - Commission local artists for temporary murals in key community locations (see Lancaster, PA: <http://www.lancasterpublicart.com/news/PSAmurals>)
 - Hold frequent *radio town hall* and FB Live events to allow for Q&A (English and Spanish) (see: Rochester, NY: <https://www.wdkx.com/podcasts/>)



- Establish a phone outreach program to check on seniors (consider engaging County library staff or Neighborhood Watch for this effort; see Chattanooga, TN: <https://connect.chattanooga.gov/covid/phonebank/>)

Local Systems and Supports

- Establish a local loan or grant fund to support small businesses and individuals/families *not otherwise eligible* for federal or state support programs (see Minneapolis, MN: <http://minneapolismn.gov/coronavirus/gap-funding> and Austin, TX: <http://www.austintexas.gov/news/city-council-approves-relief-state-emergency-fund-provide-immediate-and-direct-relief-vulnerable-austinites>)
- Include a local appropriation of \$250K to support Second Harvest Food Bank
- Offer voters the opportunity to approve a general obligation bond in support of affordable housing for low income residents (see recent examples in Asheville, Charlotte, Durham)
- Support a partnership between Cumberland County Schools, Fayetteville Metropolitan Housing Authority, and Fayetteville Cumberland County Continuum of Care on Homelessness; fully fund and leverage the Coordinated Entry System for the homeless (see Boston, MA: <https://www.boston.gov/news/subsidized-housing-be-created-1000-boston-public-schools-families-risk-displacement>)
- Establish a campaign to “buy local;” maximize use of local vendors in government contracting
- Optimize use of telehealth services within the County public health system, child welfare, and to support behavioral health broadly
- Extend application processes and reactivation periods associated with building/trade permits
- Limit city bus capacity to 15 passengers per bus and require rear door entry (see Madison, WI: <https://www.cityofmadison.com/metro/contact/covid-19-updates>)
- Continue to encourage local grocery stores and retailers to implement specific hours of operation for those who are considered most vulnerable
- Suspend evictions and arrests for non-violent offenses (Sheriff’s Office)

Equity in Response and Recovery

- Publish an affirmative statement of priorities over the next several months and include, as a key element, a focus on equity in response and recovery (See Boulder, CO Declaration, Section 3: https://www-static.bouldercolorado.gov/docs/Declaration-1-202004061631.pdf?_ga=2.132187533.2009813826.1587679806-1728997973.1587417044)
- Near term--establish a COVID19 response connectors program, hiring (or contracting with) community members to support information exchange and to create an immediate mechanism for inclusion in decision making/resource allocation (see Boulder, CO: <https://bouldercolorado.gov/newsroom/city-of-boulder-launches-emergency-response-connectors-program>)
- Intermediate/long term--create a jointly funded and staffed *office of community wealth building* within the Municipalities/County to institutionalize a focus on equity during the recovery and beyond; the purview of this office should include affordable housing and employment/re-employment strategies (see Richmond VA: <http://www.richmondgov.com/CommunityWealthBuilding/index.aspx>)



COVID19 has brought into sharp relief the precariousness of so many families living in or near poverty. We must do all we can to help absorb the shock of this crisis and to find our way to a stronger, more equitable future. The P4P Coalition stands ready to support you in pursuing these ends through bold and creative policymaking. If you have questions about these recommendations, or if we can assist in any way, please contact us via pathwaysforprosperity@gmail.com

Respectfully yours,

The Pathways for Prosperity Coalition--*Consisting of:*

Action Pathways Inc.
Alpha Kappa Alpha
Boys & Girls Club of Cumberland County
Carolina Collaborative Community Care (4C)
Center for Economic Empowerment and Development
Communities in Schools of Cumberland County
Community Interagency Council--Quality Education (CICQuE)
Cumberland Community Foundation
Delta Sigma Theta
Fayetteville Area Habitat for Humanity
Fayetteville Cumberland Re-Entry Council
Fayetteville Metropolitan Housing Authority
Fayetteville PACT
Fayetteville Rotary Club
Fayetteville State University
Fayetteville Technical Community College
Fayetteville/CC Economic Development Corporation
Giving Hands Association
Greater Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce
Greater Fayetteville United
Kingdom Community Development Corporation
Latino Community Connections
Latinos United for Progress
Methodist University
NAACP—Fayetteville Branch
North Carolina Justice Center
Partnership for Children of Cumberland County
Sustainable Sandhills
United Way of Cumberland County