

May 8, 2020

Governor Tony Evers
115 East, Wisconsin State Capitol
2 East Main Street
Madison, WI 53703

Provided via Hand Delivery and Electronic Copy to the cc List

Dear Governor Evers,

I appreciate your staff's time recently to discuss the situation in Brown County and opportunities for assistance to aid in their efforts. As I discussed with Maggie and Zach on the call, I wanted to provide more information on the specific requests for assistance from Brown County.

Under their current strategy, Brown County is receiving a 75% match from FEMA for expenses incurred during COVID-19, including:

- Staff time for the response to COVID-19;
- Testing supplies;
- Ancillary testing charges;
- Cost of space utilized for warehousing functions, and;
- Public works staff time and costs for operating a warehouse.

They are requesting that the 25% match that needs to be provided is offset by state assistance. Another area of need for financial reimbursement or assistance by Brown County would be areas that [aren't eligible for FEMA assistance](#), but may be eligible for Coronavirus Relief Fund help. This includes:

- Loss of revenue for county-related functions, programs, and departments;
- Event cancellations, as tourism is a big part of the county's economy;
- Sheltering costs and expenses, and;
- Tax assessment expenses.

Finally, other areas that Brown County has identified as additional Coronavirus expenses that could be partially offset by state assistance includes:

- Increasing the capacity and other special expenses related to COVID-19 for a cross-jurisdiction coordinated Medical Examiner function;
- All related expenses for remote working for County employees (this includes many of the Technology Service-related costs covering equipment, staff time, and other expenses);

- Lost revenue for behavioral health services (clients who already have to overcome hurdles to come in for appointments, access care in-person, now have a pandemic to worry about);
- Facility modifications made at County buildings in order to properly address increased safety for staff and visitors (including changes made at the Brown County Jail, Courthouse, etc.), and;
- Legal costs and staff time spent addressing, researching, and crafting emergency procedures, proclamations, interpretation of federal and state changes in procedures and policies.

This is simply some of Brown County's more immediate concerns for funding, but their expenses from the public health emergency certainly expand beyond this list. As you are aware, Brown County has worked with the National Guard and area providers to establish community testing sites at two locations: one on the East side of Green Bay and a second just outside the City limits on the west side of town. The assistance already being provided by the National Guard and test kits being sent to the region's providers is much appreciated, but it's only a first step.

Brown County has also undertaken efforts to combat one of the worst outbreaks in the state though holding daily media briefings, establishing at least two isolation centers, hiring or using volunteer contract tracers, outfitting their Deputies with PPE, performing facility inspections in collaboration with DHS and CDC, and more.

While all 72 County Governments have been working to respond to this public health emergency in their own ways and these efforts cannot be overlooked, Brown County's rate of positive cases per 100,000 continues to be the highest in the state and is over four-times greater than the statewide average. Brown County's actions in response to this pandemic have been rapid and substantial.

Other County Governments with higher rates of cases, including Dane and Milwaukee, have received direct relief payments by the federal government, with \$95.4 million and \$61.5 million having been disbursed, respectively. I am asking for your strong consideration and action to provide a similar level of financial relief to Brown County through the CARES Act discretionary funding for additional expenses incurred and to substantially cover costs of future county actions in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Once again, I thank you for your time, and I look forward to your response and any continued dialogue about this important issue.

Best,



Senator Robert L. Cowles
Proudly Serving Wisconsin's 2nd Senate District

cc: Maggie Gau, Chief of Staff
Barb Worcester, Deputy Chief of Staff
Zach Madden, Legislative Liaison