



**VIOLENCE FREE**  
**MINNESOTA**

THE COALITION TO END RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

## State Legislative Update

*(Updated April 2, 2020)*

After passing a \$330 million rescue package, state lawmakers are back on recess until April 14<sup>th</sup> at 12pm, unless called back before then for an urgent matter.

The legislature agreed to remote committee and legislative meetings – to be available to the public. Details are posted and updated on House and Senate websites.

### [HF 4531/SF 4451 Passed the House and Senate on 3/27/20](#)

- \$200 million (from General Fund) for an emergency COVID-19 fund
  - Minnesota Management and Budget would administer to state agencies to respond to the outbreak.
- A COVID-19 Response Commission, made up of legislative leaders and chairs of the House and Senate finance committees, was created to review expenditures from the fund greater than \$1 million.
- \$26.54 million in **emergency services grants** – DHS to administer:
  - \$15.21 million of which is to provide additional shelter space, purchase hotel/motel vouchers or for funding other housing options, in order to provide housing that promotes health and safety, or to isolate homeless individuals exposed to COVID-19 or who are experiencing respiratory illness.
  - \$5 million is to purchase hygiene, sanitation, and cleaning supplies
  - \$6.33 million is for staffing:
    - to protect the health and wellness of program recipients,
    - for increasing the number of persons served,
    - or for providing staffing when workers are quarantined or cannot work because they are caring for someone with COVID-19.
  - Grant applicants must describe how they intend to use grant funds for the purposes listed above.
  - “Individuals experiencing homelessness” is the only qualification
  - This is a onetime appropriation and is available until February 1, 2021, or until 60 days after expiration of the peacetime emergency declared by the governor in an executive order that relates to the infectious disease known as COVID-19, whichever occurs earlier.
  - The way funding requests are made is through a survey. The survey will stay open for people to request funding on a rolling basis when funding needs arrive and people can request funds multiple times through the survey. If a funding request is accepted and



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the entity requesting funds is an eligible entity, funds will be sent to the provider approximately two weeks from the date of survey submission. For more information and to access the survey, visit [headinghomealliance.com](http://headinghomealliance.com).

- The Heading Home Minnesota Funders Collaborative has also launched a COVID-19 Response Fund to support providers serving the homeless community. The fund will make **one-time unrestricted grants to homeless service providers** that provide emergency overnight shelter, day shelter/drop-in centers, domestic violence shelter, and street outreach. Proposals are due on Wednesday, April 8, and will be reviewed on Friday, April 10. Grant agreements and payments will be issued within 10 days. If funding remains, they will continue to accept proposals. This information can also be found on [headinghomealliance.com](http://headinghomealliance.com).
- Other inclusions in the bill:
  - \$30 million to create an account for small business emergency loans at the Department of Employment and Economic Development, codifying provisions in an existing executive order;
  - \$29.96 million for a grant program to support licensed child care providers, who, in part, agree to care for the children of health care and other emergency workers;
  - \$11 million to help Minnesota's 11 tribal nations address the crisis;
  - \$10 million to the small business emergency loan account to guarantee loans from private banks to small employers;
  - \$9 million in one-time funding for the state's food shelf program, at least \$3 million of which must be used to help regional food banks make specialized responses to community needs;
  - \$6.2 million to provide financial assistance to veterans and surviving spouses in need of assistance as a result of COVID-19;
  - \$5.53 million to provide housing support relief by increasing limits and rates for room and board and supplementary services; and
  - \$2.4 million to streamline Real ID applications.
- Policy measures in the bill will:
  - Codify the March 16 Executive Order on Unemployment Insurance that provides protections for workers who are quarantined, told not to come into work, or are impacted by school and child care closures;
  - authorize the Department of Commerce to make licensing exemptions, such as extending registration or licensing renewal deadlines;
  - provide driver's license expiration forgiveness;



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- provide exemptions to the state's standard purchasing process, allowing Minnesota to more quickly buy supplies and services from companies around the country that may not have previously done business in the state;
- include diapers and toilet paper as items eligible for purchase under the state's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program;
- align state and federal work-study guidelines to help students receive payments;
- temporarily suspend Student Educational Loan Fund rules to allow the Office of Higher Education flexibility in providing payment relief and allow students to complete coursework;
- hold state grant recipients harmless from changes due to COVID-19, temporarily suspending Office of Higher Education rules about repayment of aid;
- modify the state's Disaster Recovery Loan Program to provide more flexibility; and
- require the Department of Public Safety to report to the Legislature about the department's use of temporary powers during the COVID-19 emergency.