

## **New Relief Program Targets CT Residents Hurt by Epidemic and Not Covered by Other Efforts**

**Author :** David Gurliacci

**Categories :** [Government & Politics](#), [Healthy Living](#)

**Tagged as :** [4-CT](#), [Coronavirus 2020](#), [COVID-19 2020](#)

**Date :** June 3, 2020

A partnership between the state and various philanthropies is trying to help state residents directly hurt by the COVID-19 pandemic but who have fallen through gaps in other relief programs, Gov. Ned Lamont and other officials announced Wednesday.

*Here's the [announcement](#) from the Governor's Office (we've also included a video of the announcement; for this article, the list of long quotes from various officials has been moved to the bottom):*

Gov. Ned Lamont today announced that the State of Connecticut is partnering with philanthropic organizations in an effort to provide emergency assistance to vulnerable residents in the state who are most directly impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency and are otherwise ineligible from receiving assistance through federal pandemic relief programs, including those from within the undocumented community.

The federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which was created at the outbreak of the pandemic to provide emergency assistance to those who have been impacted, excludes relief to any residents who are undocumented and any U.S. citizen who files taxes with an undocumented spouse or partner.

This same measure also denies emergency benefits to the U.S. citizen children of these parents. To address this situation, the Lamont administration and its philanthropic partners are taking a several steps to providing assistance. Connecticut is the first state in New England to provide targeted relief to these groups of residents.

This includes \$2.5 million in state funding that will be made available to provide rental assistance to those who are ineligible for similar aid by the CARES Act. The Connecticut Department of Housing will administer this program, which is currently in development.

---

***Here's a 29 1/2 minute video of the news conference for the announcement:***

---

Additionally, the philanthropic organization [4-CT](#), which was created with the express purpose of providing emergency assistance to the state's residents during the current pandemic, will be making \$1 million available to Connecticut families who are excluded from existing federal relief programs.

These funds will be made available through a novel solution — the 4-CT Card — which will provide direct, one-time payments to families. The program will engage trusted community-based organizations as partners that will write “prescriptions” for cash assistance.

Recipients will take these prescriptions to community health centers partnering with the program for validation, where they will receive gift cards to help pay for expenses like food and clothing.

By utilizing community health centers to get this assistance, individuals receiving the prepaid cards can be offered health services (including COVID-19 testing) they might otherwise not receive.

With the state's testing strategy targeting densely populated urban centers, this approach brings individuals in those cities closer to testing and health services.

“The COVID crisis has taken a toll on many Connecticut families, none more so than those from within certain vulnerable populations,” Lamont said.

“Together with 4-CT and other partners in philanthropy, we will be able to provide much-needed assistance

to Connecticut residents who are unable to access federal emergency supports. While more support for these families is needed, this is an important starting point, and we plan to move quickly to make this assistance available. I urge other philanthropic leaders to help grow the pot and meet the needs of impacted families. To these residents of Connecticut, I want you to know that you are not forgotten.” [...]

There are approximately 140,000 undocumented people living in Connecticut. While undocumented people make up 3.8 percent of Connecticut’s population, they represent 4.9 percent of the state’s workforce. Approximately 190,000 people, including 60,000 children, live in households where there is at least one undocumented person.

These households all pay taxes, including sales tax, property tax, and often income tax, but are ineligible to receive the benefits available to other taxpayers, including unemployment insurance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program support (food stamps), or the earned income tax credit. In 2018, 29,000 households filed taxes in Connecticut with an individual taxpayer identification number, a tax processing number available to those who are ineligible for a social security number. Of these, 7,760 filed taxes jointly with a U.S. citizen.

“The purpose of the CARES Act is to help the most vulnerable members of our society during this difficult time,” Lamont said. “It is an absolute outrage that the federal government is denying these families and their children the support they are entitled to as U.S. citizens. We call on the federal government to treat equally and fairly all citizens with regard to these emergency benefits.”

### **Comments from Various Officials**

Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz said: “Our vulnerable communities are facing heightened insecurity during this pandemic. All Connecticut residents, all Connecticut families need and deserve the support they need to survive this public health emergency. I am so proud that Connecticut is able to work with partners in philanthropy to provide emergency assistance to all those in need.”

Connecticut Housing Commissioner Seila Mosquera-Bruno said: “Housing is the single largest expense for most families in Connecticut. By providing rental support for families who are most in need and least able to access other forms of assistance, we can help them to stretch tight family budgets to afford other expenses including food, transportation to jobs, and other necessities.”

Ted Yang, co-founder and CEO of 4-CT, said: “4-CT is pleased to provide this support to those most impacted by the COVID crisis. We hope, through this program, to offer a bridge from crisis to a more stable footing. I ask other funders to partner with us to expand this program to other vulnerable populations, such as the families of essential workers, to help your fellow Connecticut residents in need.”

Patricia Baker, President and CEO of the Connecticut Health Foundation, said: “The Connecticut Health Foundation is pleased to support 4-CT in this important project. It is critically important that we provide emergency assistance for individuals and families, who cannot access other forms of assistance. It is our obligation to find ways to help them access the assistance and the medical care they need and deserve.”

Kica Matos, director of the Vera Institute of Justice said: “I applaud Governor Lamont and 4-CT for their work to make resources available to those most in need. While this is a step in the right direction, more is needed. That Connecticut is stepping up to reverse the injustice of the federal government denying support to these residents of our state – is an important step. We hope and expect that the governor and 4-CT will continue to raise money to support the desperate needs of immigrant families.”