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Senator Murray Announces Legislation to Provide Federal Assistance for Cities, Counties with Under 500,000 People

Coronavirus Community Relief Fund would ensure federal funds reach communities throughout Washington state

Senator Murray has spent the week speaking with health care providers, educators, and elected officials in Eastern, Central, and Southwestern Washington communities that this bill would aid

Senator Murray: "I'm going to keep pushing to make sure workers, families, and businesses in small and rural communities across Washington state don't fall through the cracks"

(Washington, D.C.) – This week, U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) joined Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM) to announce the introduction of legislation that would provide \$250 billion in stabilization funds geared towards localities with populations under 500,000 that are struggling in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The *Coronavirus Community Relief Act* would ensure that all communities, regardless of size, are eligible to receive direct relief from the federal government to continue the COVID-19 pandemic fight and allow additional flexibility on how state and local governments could use funds to mitigate the economic crisis caused by COVID-19.

“Congress took some initial steps in the CARES Act to get critical assistance and support to the state and local communities that have been on the frontlines of this pandemic, but it’s not nearly enough—especially for our hard-hit small and rural areas—to help protect public health and slow the spread of the virus,” Senator Murray said. **“That’s why I’m proud to co-sponsor this legislation to provide additional funding directly for smaller cities and counties to address the current crisis, and I’m going to keep pushing to make sure workers, families, and businesses in small and rural communities across Washington state don’t fall through the cracks.”**

Across the United States, counties, cities, and towns are incurring significant costs responding to the COVID-19 health crisis through emergency operations, public service announcements, and telework services. Making matters worse, many are losing tax revenue as businesses shutter and tourism dries up.

While the recently enacted CARES Act provided \$150 billion to states and localities to help offset some of these costs, of which Washington state is expected to receive roughly \$2.95 billion, the assistance only covered cities and counties with populations of more than 500,000. Under the *Coronavirus Community Relief Act*, smaller localities would be eligible for direct stabilization funds, which could be used to make up for lost revenue, provide reimbursement for expenses already incurred, and cover for increases in costs reasonably believed to have been caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Senator Murray has spent the past week speaking by phone with elected officials, health care providers, educators, small business owners, and other members of smaller and more rural communities in [Eastern](#), [Central](#), and Southwestern Washington to hear about the specific issues that they’re dealing with, and how she can support these communities in future coronavirus legislation.