

**TO:** Progressive Partners, Allies, and Elected Officials  
**FROM:** All in for Ohio Campaign  
**RE:** Federal Aid for Local Governments Messaging  
**DATE:** May 2019

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Cities — large and small — are on the front lines of the fight against COVID-19. However, they are also bearing much of the financial burden. The social distancing and “stay at home” orders that will defeat this disease mean rapidly declining revenue for cities across the country. This is particularly acute in Ohio, where cities are primarily funded by municipal income taxes.

Unfortunately, Congress’ response to this crisis has not prioritized aiding local governments. In the emergency package signed into law last month, only localities with 500,000 people or more were eligible for direct assistance. That’s fewer than 40 cities across the country, and only one city (Columbus) and several counties in Ohio.

As Congress looks to take up another round of emergency funding, it is critical that they provide adequate support to local governments. Such aid will both help them keep their residents safe now and situate them for the eventual economic recovery in the future.

The messaging below is aimed at building support for providing direct federal aid to local governments in Ohio. These talking points are based on recent statewide Ohio polling and are a part of the broader All in for Ohio campaign in response to the COVID-19 crisis. For questions or further support, please contact Michael McGovern at [mcgovern@innovationohio](mailto:mcgovern@innovationohio).

## Talking Points

**This crisis reminds us that we are all in this together.** Often, we forget just how connected we all are. White, Black, or Brown, rich or poor, rural or urban, we all depend on one another. But being in this together and recognizing our dependence on one another also means investing in the people and services that keep our communities safe and functioning during a pandemic. That work happens at the local level, by committed public servants in big cities, small towns, and everything in between.

**When we invest in local government, we invest in all of us.** Local public health officials, first responders, and public school employees are on the front lines of this fight. They’re working to keep us healthy, educate our children, and provide the services we need. They’re all in for us - we need to be all in for them. Local governments need immediate and significant resources to do this work with and for us. That’s how we stay

healthy **and** ensure that we are positioned to come out of this crisis stronger economically.

**We must come together across our differences to solve the challenges before us.**

This disease reminds us that whether you're black or white, rich or poor, urban or rural, we're all human and vulnerable to illness. Ohio has faced big problems before, and we overcame them by coming together, being all in for each other and our state. Today, all of our communities, from big cities to small towns, are straining under the burden of dealing with COVID-19. It is time we tell Congress to give us the support we need so that we can stay healthy and get through this. We pull through this by pulling together. This moment calls on us to go all in for Ohio.

**We won't forget the people forced to risk their own lives to get us through this.**

First responders and bus drivers, sanitation employees and public health workers - these are the people seeing us through this crisis. Not corporate executives or investment bankers. We can't afford to forget this. And we can't we afford to turn our backs on our frontline workers when they need us. They're all in for Ohio - Ohio has to be all in for them. Let's give them the support they deserve, but protecting their collective bargaining rights and benefits they have earned, like pensions and healthcare.

**We cannot let fear divide us.** When paramedics respond to another COVID-19 call, they don't care who you voted for. But some politicians are trying to divide us. They've made clear that they're willing to risk our health by letting our cities go bankrupt in order to help a few greedy corporations keep lining their pockets during this crisis. But we won't let that happen – **its unfair, unsafe, and hurts us all**. By coming together, we can tell Congress that it is time to give our communities the support they need to pull through this crisis.

**This won't be the last time we have to come together to address a crisis.** This crisis will pass, but we must not forget its lessons. The choices we make now to help us weather the outbreak of this virus can also set a better course for the future of our communities. The urgency and scale of our response to this crisis shows what's possible when we unite across our differences and take action to help all people in pursuit of a safe and thriving Ohio.