



Laura Belin <desmoinesdem@bleedingheartland.com>

seeking info/comment: CARES Act spending

Laura Belin <desmoinesdem@bleedingheartland.com>
To: "Garrett, Pat" <pat.garrett@iowa.gov>, sara.craig@iowa.gov

Wed, Oct 21, 2020 at 9:08 AM

Trying again to get answers to these questions. If you have any communication from the U.S. Treasury's OIG about this, it would be useful to see as well.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Laura Belin** <desmoinesdem@bleedingheartland.com>
Date: Tue, Oct 13, 2020 at 4:33 PM
Subject: Fwd: seeking info/comment: CARES Act spending
To: Garrett, Pat <pat.garrett@iowa.gov>, <sara.craig@iowa.gov>

Circling back on these questions. I noticed when poking around on the Department of Management's site that this money is listed as going to "COVID Staffing" (a government unit that does not exist) as opposed to revealing that it went to the governor's office. See attached screenshot. This is the page I'm talking about:

https://recovery-finance.iowa.gov/#!/year/FY2020-2021/operating/0/object_class_name/Intra-State+Transfers/0/state_department

Whose idea was it to publicly display this transfer as going to "COVID Staffing," rather than to the governor's office?

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From: **Laura Belin** <desmoinesdem@bleedingheartland.com>
Date: Fri, Oct 9, 2020 at 3:29 PM
Subject: Fwd: seeking info/comment: CARES Act spending
To: Garrett, Pat <pat.garrett@iowa.gov>, <sara.craig@iowa.gov>

Hoping you will answer some of these questions. My understanding is that staff from the governor's office are no longer working out of the State Emergency Operations Center, but let me know if that is incorrect.

Laura

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From: **Laura Belin** <desmoinesdem@bleedingheartland.com>
Date: Wed, Oct 7, 2020 at 9:17 AM
Subject: Fwd: seeking info/comment: CARES Act spending
To: <sara.craig@iowa.gov>, Garrett, Pat <pat.garrett@iowa.gov>

I'm circling back on these questions. Was this payment routed through Homeland Security because of uncertainty over whether it would be legal to disburse CARES Act funds directly to the governor's office for staff salaries and benefits?

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From: **Laura Belin** <desmoinesdem@bleedingheartland.com>
Date: Tue, Oct 6, 2020 at 2:29 PM
Subject: Fwd: seeking info/comment: CARES Act spending

To: Garrett, Pat <pat.garrett@iowa.gov>, <sara.craig@iowa.gov>

Hello again,

I'm copying Sara on these follow-up questions because I have learned that Sara signed off on invoicing the Homeland Security and Emergency Management department for the transfer of \$448,448.86.

1. Why was this "internal transfer" routed through Homeland Security rather than made directly in a way that would show up on this database?

<https://data.iowa.gov/Pandemic-Recovery/Iowa-Pandemic-Recovery-Reporting-State-Expenditure/68ay-29f3>

That website purports to provide "information on all expenditures made by the State of Iowa associated with Federal awards considered covered funds under Section 15011 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act."

There's no way Iowans could find any record of CARES fund transfers to the governor's office on that database.

2. I'm attaching a separate document I downloaded today, which also does not show any CARES Act money going to the governor's office. Rather, it shows \$1,000,000 allocated to the Homeland Security department for "State Government COVID Staffing," of which \$448,449 has been disbursed. Again, the governor's office is not mentioned, even though 100 percent of the staffing covered under this expenditure came from the governor's office. Why was that expense recorded as going to the Homeland Security department?

3. Will the remaining \$551,551 allocated for that purpose be used to cover salaries and benefits for the governor's staff during the first half of FY2021? If so, on what grounds? My understanding from Governor Reynolds' news conferences is that her staff are no longer working in the State Emergency Operations Center.

4. The documents provided to Homeland Security break down various staff salaries into portions budgeted and portions "Not Budgeted Related to COVID-19." How were those amounts calculated? Was the formula based on the amount of time those staff spent at SEOC? Or the number of hours they spent working on pandemic-related matters in any location?

5. I'm still seeking specific information on how each of the 21 staffers was doing work substantially different from their regular responsibilities. My understanding of the Treasury guidance is that it isn't sufficient for staff to be working on COVID related matters. They must also be performing duties that are substantially different from those budgeted for.

6. David Pitt reported following the governor's September 16 news conference,

Craig said the money hasn't shown up in CARES Act expenditure documents yet because the governor hasn't signed the transfer of money but after she does, the spending will show up in public documents.

How is that consistent with the reality that a) Sara had already invoiced Homeland Security on September 14, b) Bonnie Rieder had executed the transfer on September 15, and c) to this day, public documents show no spending directed to the governor's office?

7. Pitt also reported,

The governor's office confirmed the expenditures with the U.S Department of Treasury Office of the Inspector General, said Reynolds' chief of staff Sara Craig.

When did that happen? Can you provide a copy of any written record of this communication?

8. If the Treasury OIG approved using CARES Act funds for the governor's staff, why did the expenditure run through Homeland Security and not go straight to the governor's office?

Thank you in advance for any comments or clarification you can provide.

Laura

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Laura Belin** <desmoinesdem@bleedingheartland.com>
Date: Mon, Oct 5, 2020 at 5:03 PM
Subject: seeking info/comment: CARES Act spending
To: Garrett, Pat <pat.garrett@iowa.gov>

Hello Pat,

The Pandemic Recovery database was updated today to reflect CARES Act disbursements since September 25.

<https://data.iowa.gov/Pandemic-Recovery/Iowa-Pandemic-Recovery-Reporting-State-Expenditure/68ay-29f3>

I still don't see any transfers to the governor's office. My understanding was that by September 30, \$448,449 was going to be transferred to help cover staff salaries and benefits for 21 staffers from March 14 through June 30.

Was CARES Act money transferred to help cover operating expenses in the governor's office for FY20? If so, why do those expenditures not appear on the public database?

If CARES Act funding was not used for that purpose, what other funding source was used to cover those salary and benefit expenses for the staffers? I'm attaching the document Linda Leto sent to me last month.

Thank you in advance for any clarification or information you may have.

Yours,

Laura

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3 attachments

