

Brooklyn Heights Association Announces New Covid-19 Community Relief Fund

‘Brooklyn Heights Together’ campaign will fundraise to provide cash to workers in need due to local business closures

BROOKLYN, NY / May 5, 2020 - The Brooklyn Heights Association (BHA) is launching a fundraising campaign to support hourly workers who have lost or been furloughed from their jobs in the Brooklyn Heights neighborhood by the Covid-19 crisis.

The *Brooklyn Heights Together* Community Relief Fund will provide funding for grants of \$250 to qualifying hourly workers, helping recipients to buy groceries, medicine, diapers/baby items, and pay utility or other bills. The grants will be administered through a local community-based organization with experience in disbursement of emergency funds.

“Our members began reaching out to us in the very first days of the crisis to see how they could help, especially right here in the neighborhood,” said Brooklyn Heights Association Executive Director Lara Birnback. “We knew we wanted to focus on some of the most vulnerable members of the larger community, the people who helped make our restaurants, shops, salons and other businesses such wonderful places.”

Other new funds around the city and the country are also distributing cash donations, but the BHA Covid-19 Community Relief Fund will focus specifically on people who worked in Brooklyn Heights. “This may be a modest fund, but we know that any amount can make a difference,” said Erika Belsey Worth, BHA President. “As we get the word out, we hope more people will be inspired to contribute, so we can help as many people as possible.”

To identify displaced workers and disburse the grants, the BHA will be working with the Arab-American Family Support Center (AAFSC). A non-profit, non-sectarian organization, the AACFS has been providing social services to a variety of immigrant and refugee communities throughout New York City since 1994. Its work was nationally recognized in 2019 by the USA Today Network and the Gannet Foundation.

“Hourly wage earners, so many of whom are immigrants and refugees, have been hard hit by this crisis and are turning to the Arab-American Family Support Center as a trusted, culturally and linguistically competent resource for help,” said AAFSC President and CEO, Rawaa Nancy Albilal. “We are deeply grateful to be working with the Brooklyn Heights Association and our generous neighbors in reaching people who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.”

The BHA is working with additional local organizations and business owners to identify qualifying individuals and encourage them to apply for the grant. In particular, the Montague Street Business Improvement District (BID) has been helpful in providing contact information for many businesses and is supportive of the *Brooklyn Heights Together* initiative.

“Brooklyn Heights is more than the people who live here, it’s also the people who work here -- and we have come together to support them now,” said Birnback.

People interested in contributing to the *Brooklyn Heights Together* Fund can visit the [BHA’s website](#) and make a tax-deductible, secure online donation or send a check to:

The Brooklyn Heights Association

Attn: Brooklyn Heights Together Fund
55 Pierrepont Street, #17D
Brooklyn, NY 11201

More information about the Brooklyn Heights Together can be found on our website, or you can call 718-858-9193 or email: lbirnback@thebha.org

If you are interested in applying for assistance from the Brooklyn Heights Together fund or want to refer an applicant, please contact:

Kerry Sesil | Director of Development and Communications

Arab-American Family Support Center
150 Court St, 3rd Fl, Brooklyn, NY 11201
kerry@aafscny.org
Tel: 718-643-8000

About the Brooklyn Heights Association

The mission of the Brooklyn Heights Association (BHA) is to engage the Brooklyn Heights community in maintaining and improving the quality of life in our neighborhood. We are widely recognized for over a century of effective advocacy on behalf of all who live, work, visit, and operate businesses in the Heights. BHA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. All contributions are tax-deductible.

About the Arab-American Family Support Center

The Arab-American Family Support Center (AAFSC) is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization established in 1994 to provide culturally and linguistically competent, trauma-informed, multigenerational social services to immigrants and refugees.