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**1. Please identify your position and your organization.**

Mike Ramshaw, Team President, New Hampshire Fisher Cats

**2. Please identify what economic sector your enterprise operates within.**

The Fisher Cats operate within the hospitality and entertainment sector.

**3. Please describe how your enterprise and economic sector has been impacted by Covid19.**

COVID-19 has eliminated the vast majority of our 2020 revenue. The Fisher Cats rely exclusively on ticket sales and sponsorship sales from our 70 home games at Delta Dental Stadium, which entertain over 300,000 fans each year. COVID-19 has forced the indefinite postponement of our 2020 season.

While other businesses will be impacted for a portion of the year, the Fisher Cats cannot open without MLB, MiLB and other states across the United States being able to open for large gatherings making it highly unlikely the team will be able to open their main revenue sources until April 2021. Without an ability to generate revenue through ticket sales and spectator attendance, economic assistance is critical for the team to bridge the gap until next spring's season and return to be a major economic driver for the State of New Hampshire and the City of Manchester. Additionally, the impact the team has on non-profits through its corporate philanthropy and the many lifestyle/cultural benefits it brings to the state will be missed in 2020, but GOFERR's assistance will enable the Fisher Cats to be in a position to continue its philanthropic activity again in 2021.

**4. Please provide an assessment of how you project your organization and economic sector will be impacted over the next 12 months Covid-19.**

The Fisher Cats will unfortunately have to lay off a significant number of full-time employees and will not be able to hire the event day staff. The team will not bring in enough revenue to pay the City of Manchester the over 1 million dollars it pays annually to use and maintain the stadium. This will in turn hurt the city's revenue outlook and its ability to provide services to residents. The Franchise's ability to meet its obligation to the city and support the community would be virtually eliminated this year without any revenue in 2020.

When fans are eventually permitted to return to the ballpark, the Fisher Cats will need to invest in additional staffing, signage, supplies, and infrastructure to comply with New Hampshire's social distancing guidelines. These guidelines could also severely limit the number of guests permitted to attend



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a game or special event at Delta Dental Stadium, and potentially create greater losses in the time it takes to get back to full capacity.

Over the last 14 years, the organization has generated \$5.75 million in monetary and in-kind donations, including the team's scholarship program, which annually awards twelve \$2,500 scholarships to local student athletes. The Fisher Cats Reading Challenge has reached over 600,000 students, awarded \$50,000 to local schools, and led to the reading of over 3 million books. These are just a few examples of the community programs that would have to be put on hold for the foreseeable future

**5. Please explain whether your enterprise or economic sector has or is receiving, or may possibly receive in the future, any other governmental support (federal, state or local) or charitable funds specifically intended to help address Covid-19 impacts; and explain whether the identified need might be covered by other governmental or charitable sources of funding or support programs.**

The Fisher Cats received a \$310,000 Payroll Protection Program loan to ensure the short-term security of the front office staff, but do not anticipate any additional government assistance at this time. The funds will be spent in their entirety during the 8 weeks and with no 2020 revenue the team will still be forced to make very tough decisions regarding staff for the summer.

**6. Please provide comments on one or more ideas on how some portion of public relief funds could be provided to your enterprise and economic sector (including, if possible, an estimate of the amount of funds), and please comment on how these ideas would achieve the following important public goals:**

A Main Street Relief Grant of \$3.1 million would provide essential support not just to the Fisher Cats, but to the New Hampshire community as a whole: Even without professional baseball being played in Manchester, the team still has to pay over \$1 million to the City of Manchester for the facility, and keep the ballpark running with its utilities. These funds would help us pay the city, keep a greater number of employees employed and keep the building operational for other small community-oriented events. In no way, would our request for assistance make the Fisher Cats whole. However, such a grant would allow the organization to bridge the gap until baseball resumes and the park is permitted to open for spectators, thus preserving an important economic contributor and cultural asset for the City of Manchester and southern New Hampshire.

**(a) The funds will serve a public use and provide a public benefit.**

a.) The team's ability to pay the City of Manchester will benefit city residents and help the team get through a 2020 year that poses a loss of over \$5 million in annual revenue. On the surface, the public benefits of a fully operational Fisher Cats organization are evident: an economic driver for the



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state, a cultural/lifestyle centerpiece as the state's only professional sports team that provides a safe, affordable destination for family fun at a beautiful ballpark that's welcomed over 5 million fans in 14 years. But we pride ourselves on bringing so much more to New Hampshire than just baseball. As mentioned, Fisher Cats charitable efforts have generated \$5.75 million in monetary and in-kind donations over the last 14 years, including the team's scholarship program, which annually awards twelve \$2,500 scholarships to local student athletes.

The Fisher Cats host dozens of small special events at the ballpark each year, including charity walks, weddings, food truck festivals, and graduations. Each November, the team hosts MLB legends at the Granite State Baseball Dinner to raise money for the Children's Hospital at Dartmouth-Hitchcock.

With in-game initiatives like Home Runs for Mental Health, Base Hits for Kids, Turn 2 for Recovery, Opioid Awareness Night, and much more, the Fisher Cats consistently work with their community partners to support New Hampshire's most important causes. Beyond the three Eastern League Championships, 125 major leaguers, and state-of-the-art ballpark, we know New Hampshire is proud to have the Fisher Cats as its hometown team because of how much the organization gives back to the community.

**(b) The funds will preserve or increase the social welfare or economic prosperity of the state, and will promote the general welfare of the state's citizens.**

b.) As the state's only professional sports team, the Double-A Fisher Cats feature MLB's top prospects and draws hundreds of thousands of fans to Manchester each season, including in 2008, 2011, and 2017, when the Fisher Cats were selected to host the Eastern League All-Star Game. The Fisher Cats produce nearly \$15 million annually in direct and indirect economic spending, according to a feasibility study conducted by Southern New Hampshire University. Nearly \$6 million in annual income is created by the team and area businesses, which will only be able to continue with the help of these public relief funds. The organization is committed to New Hampshire, with the stadium lease extended through 2035, and over \$2 million invested in ballpark improvements over the last several years.

The team needs the support to be able to bridge the gap of 2020 and begin to get back to business as usual in 2021.

**(c) The funds will promote the orderly development of economic and social activities, create or preserve employment opportunities, or protect the physical environment.**

c.) These funds will allow the Fisher Cats to continue creating hundreds of jobs for New Hampshire every year. In addition to 25 full-time front office staff members, the team employs hundreds of seasonal gameday staff including ushers, ticket takers, camera operators, wait staff, concessions workers and more.



**(e) The funds will contribute significantly to the continued operation, competitiveness and future success of the organization and the economic sector, and will enhance the resiliency of the organization to survive future economic or health challenges.**

e.) The continued operation and future success of the Fisher Cats is perhaps the most essential purpose of these funds. While businesses across New Hampshire may soon reopen and begin to generate income, the Fisher Cats will still be left without revenue in 2020. As this reality becomes more and more likely, these funds will help bridge the gap to 2021 and allow the Fisher Cats to adequately prepare for the eventual return of baseball while continuing to support the community. The unfortunate reality of the coronavirus, and the nature of our business, will likely make our baseball park one of the last public venues to reopen and our team one of the last businesses to resume operations.

**(f) The use of funds is not in conflict with local or regional development plans and policies, or any other provision of state or federal law.**

f.) No. The Fisher Cats are unaware of any possible conflicts.

**(g) The funds are structured in a way that will help the community and the State at large, and not just the particular private business or organization.**

g.) Over \$1 million of these funds will go directly to meeting the Fisher Cats' obligation to the City of Manchester and subsequently help the city meet its obligation to the residents of New Hampshire's largest city. These funds will help sustain the Fisher Cats in a year with no revenues and allow them to return in 2021 as the economic driver and corporate philanthropy leader they are in New Hampshire. The team will be able to continue numerous community efforts, such as the Reading Challenge Program, Oral Health Challenge, and Summer Reading All-Stars. During the stay at home order, the Fisher Cats have stayed connected with fans through daily video lessons for at-home learning, a Virtual STEM in the Stadium Day, dozens of remote in-class readings from on-field emcee "Zick," and a number of personal parades for deserving members of the community. Without this funding, the Fisher Cats would not be able to fully commit to their charitable efforts that have generated nearly \$6 million in monetary and in-kind donations since 2006.

**(h) The use of funds is consistent with the one-time availability of the public relief funds and will not require future continuing operational support from the public sector in order to maintain success.**

h.) The Fisher Cats would use the one-time funding to help bridge the gap from a lost 2020 season to a return to the solid corporate citizen they are in 2021, and would not require future continuing operational



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support. We understand that we will lose money in 2020, we just want to be able to get through this time and not be so far behind that it takes several years to recover.

**(7) Please describe how the receipt and use of the public relief funds described in question 6 could be accounted for in your organization's financial statements.**

**(8) Please describe specific measures for public reporting on the receipt and use of the public relief funds, so that the State may satisfy any public reporting obligations that may be imposed with respect to such funds.**

7-8. The team's financials are annually audited as a requirement in the agreement with the City of Manchester. The team will work with Bigelow (company that performs our audit) to establish a new general ledger account on our books and update this account as the support funds are utilized. This separate ledger would be reflected in our monthly financial statements, covered during our annual third-party audit and provided as needed to the state.

**(9) Please identify other important organizations or functions in the State that have an important impact on your organization or economic sector, and, if possible, provide ideas of how those organizations and functions may be assisted by public relief funds in a manner that would help your organization or economic sector.**

9. Because of the Fisher Cats' role as a hub of entertainment and community gathering, nearly every organization in New Hampshire has an important impact on us and we impact them as well. The Fisher Cats host entire games dedicated to schools, camps, and non-profit organizations, and rely heavily on group sales revenue from companies big and small across the state. In addition, companies from various parts of the state will host meetings and off-site events at the stadium throughout the year (in-season and off-season).

**(10) What would your business, agency, organization, sector do with the funds that cannot be done currently?**

10. Unlike most businesses throughout the state, we are at the mercy of MiLB, MLB and the status of large gatherings being possible in every state in our league. There is no TV revenue in MiLB so we are almost entirely dependent on sponsorships and ticket sales. It is almost certain at this point that we will not have a 2020 season. Our business relies on fans attending games from April-September, buying tickets, merchandise and concessions while spending a few hours at the park. With these funds the Fisher Cats would still be able to keep most of their employees on payroll, working on the ballpark, supporting our community and preparing to get back to normal in 2021. In addition, these funds would allow us to fulfill our lease payment to the City of Manchester as well as pay utilities to keep the ballpark operational



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during these difficult times. We would also be able to work on additional small community events to bring the communities throughout the state together and provide them with an outlet to enjoy an outdoor activity with the proper social distancing.

**(11) We consistently hear different stories of what is occurring and what is needed; given the opportunity, please comment on what do you think should be said or considered that hasn't received much attention?**

11. We understand how important it is to reopen restaurants, beaches, and other places for community gathering. However, it's important to note that even if the Fisher Cats are allowed to open, the organization will still suffer devastating losses. Our team is in a unique and unfortunate situation, because regardless of state policy, we cannot have a season without the approval of Major League Baseball, Minor League Baseball, and the MLB Players Association. COVID-19 has affected every industry, and thousands of business will unfortunately suffer revenue losses. But, when determining which organizations are most in need of support, I hope you'll consider how difficult it will be for the Fisher Cats to recoup a portion of our lost revenue and keep our staff together. Even as other businesses will be impacted severely for the period the state is closed, the Fisher Cats are likely to stay closed until 2021 and need these funds to ensure we return to being the community focused corporate citizen and economic driver for the State as New Hampshire as its only professional sports team.