

Urgent – Workshop Funding Alert

We need you to call and write to your Missouri State Representative, State Senator, and the Governor's office, today through July 2, on behalf of workshop funding! State funding to Lafayette is in jeopardy.

WHAT IS HAPPENING

It has come to our attention that the Governor's administration is reviewing and finalizing cuts to Missouri's FY2021 State Budget. *Sheltered Workshop (EESWP) core budget is being discussed as a potential area for reduction which would lead to reduction or loss in services.*

Due to the Governor's withhold of all of June's funding dollars for the workshops, more than 347,000 work and training hours went **unpaid**. Had those dollars not been withheld, all the funds appropriated in the FY 2020 budget would have been used up.

Unique point: The funds given to workshops are to help significantly pay wages for our employees from the previous month! The funds can almost be characterized as "back wages pay." It's important to remind the administration that products produced in workshops were deemed "essential."

For every \$1 million cut out of workshop funds, there will be an estimated \$4 million economic impact on Missouri: lost wages, lost tax revenue, lost vendor and supplier purchases, lost consumer spending in the marketplace, lost workplace efficiency by parents, products not going into the supply chain, and higher costs and more waiting lists for other services for people with disabilities.

In fact, sheltered workshops in Missouri have been the only social/community activity open to several thousand Missouri citizens. Some workshops that have been closed due to the pandemic are hesitant to re-open for fear that state aid will be cut and further negatively impact their ability to operate, leaving many individuals without either employment or job training services.

WHO TO CALL AND WRITE

It is imperative to take the time — immediately — to contact your local elected officials and ask for their help in keeping Sheltered Workshops funding intact for FY2021.

- Your Missouri State Representative <https://house.mo.gov/MemberRoster.aspx>
- Your Missouri State Senator <https://www.senate.mo.gov/2020-senator-listing-2/>
- Any local elected official that you know who will contact state legislators and/or the Governor

WHAT TO SAY

"Due to the pandemic-triggered economic concerns, I am sympathetic to the state's need to find funds to make up fiscal year 2021's projected shortfalls. However, I am asking you to please contact Governor Parson and ask him **not** to cut the Sheltered Workshops' budget. The Governor's withhold of June reimbursement dollars — which significantly helps pay for the wages for required work already performed in May for essential products — negatively impacting workshops across the state, some of whom will not be able to recover let alone absorb additional budget cuts. Moreover, if certified workshop employees can no longer work, they will be forced to utilize more entitlement programs, which in turn will come at a high cost to the state."

Key points for your call/letter:

- **Be polite but firm**
- **The point: "funds for workshops are for work already performed — back wages pay" is our point of differential from other departments that are being cut**
- **Use some of the points from above, and if you feel comfortable, tell your personal story**

Ask the Governor to keep Sheltered Workshop funding intact!

There are 6,000 people with disabilities counting on him to do what is right!