



MEDIA CONTACT:
Pete Tesch, President
Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County
ptesch@youredc.com | 772.336.6254

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. Lucie County launches Small Business Assistance Grants program to provide emergency relief to hardest hit small businesses

Grants of up to \$7,500 to be awarded to qualifying small business to aid in economic recovery efforts

St. Lucie, Fla – With the goal of providing some economic relief and a rapid infusion of capital to smaller businesses that were hardest hit in St. Lucie County during the COVID-19 pandemic, a new program is being launched that offers grants to local businesses. Business with up to 3 employees will be eligible for grants up to \$5,000 and businesses with 4 to 10 employees will be eligible for grants up to \$7,500.

The application process will launch on Monday, August 3. These grants, which do not have to be repaid, will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis to qualifying businesses with 10 or fewer employees and total revenue of less than \$1 million. Grants may be used to cover expenses during a forced closure and incurred to safely reopen. Grant funds will not be approved to replace lost revenue.

Funding is available to businesses economically injured due to the pandemic and businesses **mandated to close** or curtail operations due to COVID-19. They include small businesses in hardest hit industries such as hospitality, retail, entertainment, food and beverage, and personal services.

The application process will be conducted in phases, with priority given to businesses that did not receive any funding through other federal, state or local programs related to COVID-19. Other eligibility requirements also apply and should be reviewed carefully before spending time submitting an application.

Grant funds can be used to cover mortgage, rent, utilities, reopening costs and new operational expenses needed to ensure safety measures are in place.

“We anticipate high demand for these grants and encourage all eligible small businesses to apply. We’ve made the process as simple as possible, with a web portal www.recoverstlucie.org that contains guidelines and eligibility requirements, as well as a checklist of documents needed before completing the online application,” said Cathy Townsend, Chair of the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners. “I encourage everyone to make sure they continue to be safe and healthy.”

If all necessary documentation is pulled together in advance it can take as little as 30 minutes to complete the application. Incomplete or inaccurate information could lead to a delay in processing or denial.

Technical assistance is also available to help business owners complete the application. A webinar hosted by the EDC’s Virtual Business Recovery Center on Friday, July 31 at 9:00 a.m. will also help educate business owners on the application process. [Click here to register for the webinar.](#)

“We want this critical infusion of capital in the hands of small business owners who need it the most. Beyond this grant funding, we also have many other support programs for small business owners through our Virtual Business Recovery Center as well as counseling, workforce development and training services through the Florida Small Business Development Center at Indian River State College and CareerSource Research Coast,” said Pete Tesch, President of the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County (EDC).

Workforce training and development programs provided through CareerSource Research Coast help qualifying St. Lucie County for-profit businesses not only avert layoffs but also train new and/or existing employees to meet new market demands. These programs also provide area residents with short-term training

opportunities designed to prepare them to re-enter the workforce. Grant amounts range from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

St. Lucie County received \$13.8 million from the State of Florida's Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) as part of the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. These funds are being used to assist residents as well as businesses, with about \$4 million allocated specifically for small business assistance grants. The application process is being administered by St. Lucie County in partnership with the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County.

For more detailed small business assistance grant information, including eligibility requirements and the online application, go to www.recoverstlucie.org or call 772.336.6285.

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