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Washington County will expand small-business financial relief

Washington County will expand its program to provide financial assistance for businesses in the county that have been negatively impacted through additional expenses or lost revenue due to closures during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Washington County Small Business Relief Fund, provided by the federal CARES Act, is providing grants of up to \$15,000 to small businesses in need of support. The first round of applications closed Aug. 31, resulting in 375 applications.

The County Board identified up to \$10 million in funds for the program. Based on the applications received in the first round, roughly 50% of the available funds remain.

The County Board determined that a second round of applications be allowed, and the eligibility requirements be adjusted to make additional county businesses eligible.

In the new round of applications, which will be accepted between Sept. 10 and Sept. 24, the program revises eligibility by increasing the number of employees and the annual revenue of the businesses applying, as well as shortening the time a business needed to exist prior to the pandemic.

Recipients:

- must be a locally owned and operated for-profit business in the county. Multiple individual businesses in the county that are owned by one owner are eligible to apply;
- to receive up to the maximum \$15,000 funding limit, businesses must have at least one full-time equivalent employee, in addition to the owner as of March 1, and not more than 75, and generate less than \$5 million in annual revenues;
- have been operating Jan. 1, 2020; and

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- demonstrate a significant loss in revenue since March 15.

Home-based businesses and self-employed entrepreneurs are eligible for grants of up to \$7,500; however, priority will be given to employer businesses with separate non-residential property addresses.

All businesses must complete, sign and certify the grant application. The business must provide all required information verifying their eligibility. All businesses must provide and document evidence of COVID-19 eligible expenses incurred.

Applications will be managed by Open to Business at the Washington County Community Development Agency, 7645 Currell Blvd., Woodbury; telephone 612-789-8838, and email wccoviderelief@mccdmn.org. More information is at www.washingtoncountycda.org