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Gov. Wolf Announces \$96 Million for Small Businesses Impacted by COVID-19

Application Period for Final Round of Funding Now Open

Harrisburg, PA – Governor Tom Wolf today announced that \$96 million in state grants have been awarded to 4,933 Pennsylvania small businesses that were impacted by the COVID-19 public health crisis and subsequent business closure order.

[Businesses in every Pennsylvania county](#) received grants in this first of two rounds of funding, and 2,512 grants – or 51 percent – were awarded to historically disadvantaged businesses.

“As we continue to address this public health crisis, it’s critical that we also focus on our state’s economic recovery and supporting our small businesses across the state, which continue to be impacted by our necessary mitigation efforts,” Gov. Wolf said. “This funding will go a long way to help small businesses, including historically disadvantaged businesses, at a time when they need it most.”

The [COVID-19 Relief Statewide Small Business Assistance](#) funding was developed in partnership with state lawmakers and allocated through the state budget, which included \$2.6 billion in federal stimulus funds through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, of which [\\$225 million](#) was earmarked for relief for small businesses.

The Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) distributed the funds to the Pennsylvania Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), which are administering the grants through three programs: \$100 million for the Main Street Business Revitalization Program, \$100 million for the Historically Disadvantaged Business Revitalization Program, and \$25 million for the Loan Payment Deferment and Loss Reserve Program.

“The COVID-19 pandemic unexpectedly affected small businesses across the commonwealth, an unfortunate circumstance that could not have been predicted or

prepared for,” said DCED Secretary Dennis Davin. “However, through the collective action of the Wolf Administration, the General Assembly, and the CDFI Network, Pennsylvania’s hardest hit and most at-risk businesses will be able to access the funding they need to shore up their resources and regain sound financial footing as we move into recovery.”

The second and final round of funding is open starting today through 11:59 PM on Friday, August 28. Eligible applicants not awarded in the first round do not need to reapply and will be rolled into the next round for consideration. More information on the COVID-19 Relief Statewide Small Business Assistance Program, including how to apply, is available on [DCED's website](#).

“The PA CDFI Network targeted these funds to reach the smallest and most vulnerable businesses across the state and we received an immense response with close to 50,000 applications submitted in the first round and more than \$860 million in total requests,” said Daniel Betancourt, chairman of the PA CDFI Network and President & CEO of Community First Fund. “We are grateful to be part of this first step with Governor Wolf and the Pennsylvania Legislature to get much needed resources to the small businesses that have been so adversely impacted by the pandemic.”

The grants may be used to cover operating expenses during the shutdown and transition to re-opening, and for technical assistance including training and guidance for business owners as they stabilize and relaunch their businesses.

“These grants and the relief they will provide are testament to what we can do when we prioritize the right initiatives,” said state Sen. Vincent Hughes (D-Philadelphia, Montgomery), Democratic chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. “It is because of collaboration and a collective focus that today we were able to deliver help to the auto body shops, the barbershops, the beauticians, the pizza shop owners, the soul food establishments and other businesses across the commonwealth. It is critical to understand that there is still a great deal of need and must continue to direct resources and aid to our small business community to help it recover from the devastation of the pandemic.”

“I could not be more proud or more grateful for the great work of DCED and Pennsylvania’s CDFI Network in delivering substantive, fair, equitable, need-based assistance to our state’s main street and historically disadvantaged small businesses. Our program design and the accountability it provides to taxpayers and to our federal funders is a model for the nation,” said state Sen. John Blake (D-Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe), Democratic chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. “I appeal to the US Congress and to our colleagues on both sides of the aisle in Harrisburg to recognize the success of this program in assisting small businesses devastated by the pandemic and to invest further in the program so we can help even more of them.”

“Our business community has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and is in need of immediate assistance. The grant program is targeted to help small businesses manage costs, handle expenses, and stay in operation in this exceptionally difficult time,” said state Sen. Jim Brewster (D-Allegheny, Westmoreland). “Since COVID struck our state and debilitated our business community, I have been advocating for bridge grants and sought millions in aid for impacted businesses and workers. The small business assistance grants are one of the tools we can use to bolster business, maintain jobs and help workers at a time of immense distress.”

“For minority and women-owned businesses in Pennsylvania COVID-19 didn’t create a crisis, it laid bare the crisis our minority entrepreneurs have been facing for decades,” said state Rep. Jake Wheatley Jr (D-Allegheny), Democratic chairman of the House Finance Committee. “While I’m glad to see the positive impact of these grants and I urge all local community businesses to apply for the next round of grants, we need to expand investment in programs like this because it’s long past time for the legislature to address the systemic flaws that are leaving too many marginalized people behind.”

“The burden that COVID-19 has put on business owners, employees and families in southeast Pennsylvania gets heavier every day,” said state Rep. Chris Sappey (D-Chester). “At this point, when we talk about addressing the pandemic, we must not only fight it with masks and social distancing, but we also must equally and strongly support our business community, where this fight for our health and safety actually is taking place. Commerce and industry must survive this virus, as well. Pennsylvania needs this aid now, and my office is eager to work with any business that needs help applying.”