Julie Anderson
Commissioner

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Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

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AK CARES Grant Program for Alaska Businesses: Expanded and Improved

Friday, July 31, 2020 (Anchorage) — Starting Thursday, August 6, 2020 the AK CARES grant program will be expanded to include Alaska's commercial fishermen, 501(c)6 nonprofit organizations, and small businesses that received $5,000 or less in Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) or Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) funds.

In response to concerns regarding processing timelines, the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED) and the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) have made substantial changes to the AK CARES processing procedures, created an online portal for applications, and continue efforts to bring on additional program operators.

"Providing broad and rapid relief to small businesses is critical to ensuring that every Alaskan can pay their bills and collect a paycheck during this global crisis," said **Governor Mike Dunleavy.** "These program improvements make certain that Alaskan businesses, non-profits, and their hardworking employees are not left behind as we continue to manage the health and economic impacts of COVID-19."

The online application portal will go live next Thursday, at which point applications will no longer be submitted through Credit Union 1's website. Instead, they will be completed and submitted online at akcaresonline.org. This will allow all program operators to access the applications from one central location to facilitate faster processing, and safeguard multiple processors from issuing grants to the same business. Businesses that will become eligible on Thursday should wait for the portal application to become available, as it will differ from the application currently available on Credit Union 1's website. However, businesses are encouraged to begin preparing their supporting documentation now.

"Setting up a completely new grant program to assist businesses through this unprecedented pandemic and its economic impacts, with constantly evolving federal guidance, has been challenging to say the least," **said DCCED Commissioner, Julie Anderson.** "However, we continue to adapt the program to assist as many businesses as we can, as quickly as we can. I expect to see significant improvements in processing times and the number of businesses we can reach as a result of the program changes that will go into effect next week."

DCCED encourages businesses to review the checklist, examples of eligible expenses, instructional videos, frequently asked questions, and other information available on the AK CARES Grant website, prior to submitting an application. Once an AK CARES grant application has been submitted, the business may receive follow up phone calls and/or emails from the grant processor. Two of the main processing issues to date have been the lack of complete applications and lack of responsiveness from applicants; thus, DCCED encourages applicants to review and submit prompt responses to follow up questions and requests for information, which are necessary in order to finalize these grants. Applicants should also check their voicemails and email inboxes daily, including junk folders for potential follow up questions.

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