Help us get everyone in our community pre-registered for a vaccination appointment. Go to vaccinate.dc.gov or call 1-855-363-0333 to pre-register and then help us spread the word. #DCHOPE
Read Mayor Bowser's Presentation on DC's COVID-19 Situational Update: April 19

Mayor Bowser Launches Application for New $25 Million Microgrant Program

Tuesday, March 24, 2020
Applications Now Open for DC Small Business Recovery Microgrant Program

(Washington, DC) – Today, Mayor Muriel Bowser launched the application for the new $25 million microgrant program to provide relief to local small businesses affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19). As part of the District's recovery efforts, relief will be provided to workers and small businesses through waivers for unemployment claims, federal assistance, local funding, and local programs.

"As we continue to support each other in the midst of this public health emergency, we are also thinking about how we can help the many workers and small businesses who are making tremendous sacrifices for the greater good of our community," said Mayor Bowser. "We are all in this together, and we will get through it together. And when we get to the other side of this, our city will recover together."

Small Business Relief

The Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia are investing $25 million in the DC Small Business Recovery Microgrant Program, which will be housed in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development. The microgrants will be available to businesses, non-profits, and independent contractors or self-employed individuals. Grants will provide financial support for expenses such as employee wages

and benefits, rent, and other operating costs. The program will provide support up to $25,000.

“As we continue to navigate this unprecedented situation together, Mayor Bowser has directed our agencies to work swiftly to implement programs that provide relief to our local businesses, nonprofits, independent contractors, and self-employed individuals,” said John Falcicchio, Acting Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development. “This program will provide the short-term financial assistance that our local businesses will need to get through these unforeseen circumstances. Recovery will be a community-wide effort, and the Bowser Administration will be here to help.”

This program was created through emergency legislation the DC Council passed last week in response to the impact of COVID-19 in the District.

“The public health emergency is causing real devastation to many small businesses and their workers,” said Kenyan McDuffie, Ward 5 Councilmember, Chairman, Committee on Business and Economic Development. “In the face of this unprecedented crisis, and while recognizing there is still a long road ahead, the DC Small Business Recovery Microgrant Program will begin to help some of our small businesses weather this storm.”

Applications and information on the microgrants program can be found at https://coronavirus.dc.gov/recovery-business.

Last week, Mayor Bowser also announced the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) accepted the District of Columbia’s declaration for assistance in the form of economic injury disaster loans following the advent of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), and DC businesses can apply. While the SBA directly administers this loan program, the Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD), led by Director Kristi Whitfield, is the liaison with the SBA on behalf of the District of Columbia. More information on SBA loans can be found at https://coronavirus.dc.gov/recovery-business.

Unemployment Benefit Waivers

The Department of Employment Services (DOES) is taking action to allow more workers to file for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits during the public health emergency. DOES is in the process of updating statutory eligibility requirements for workers impacted by COVID-19. Updates will include waivers for:

- the seven-day waiting period to receive benefits;
- the work search requirement for those affected by COVID-19 (included in Council emergency legislation); and
- additional flexibility with the requirement to be able and available to work.

These waivers will expand coverage and ensure a faster turnaround period for District workers who have become unemployed or partially unemployed, as a result of COVID-19. When implemented, the waivers will remain in effect until the end of the public health emergency.

"Providing effective relief for employees and employers remains our number one priority. That is why we are leveraging every flexibility and every waiver possible to quickly get the much needed funds in the hands of those most impacted," said Dr. Unique Morris-Hughes, Director of DOES.

Additionally, in a letter addressed to Congress, Mayor Bowser is calling on the federal government to: (1) provide additional emergency supplemental funding for UI benefits; (2) remove barriers to Disaster Unemployment Assistance; and (3) relax and allow flexibility regarding the merit based personnel requirements.

Based on the increase in call volume and wait times, DOES encourages residents and workers to visit https://does.dc.gov to review important information with regard to UI benefits and workplace rights. Similarly, claimants are encouraged to apply for unemployment insurance benefits online at dcnetworks.org, using a desktop or laptop.

For more resources and information about the District's response to COVID-19, visit coronavirus.dc.gov.

Attachment(s):

Use of the Contingency Cash Reserve Fund Letter March 20, 2020

Phone: (202) 727-2643
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Ask the Mayor

Muriel Bowser
Mayor

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