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February 11, 2021 - DCA Announces Supplemental Awards for Business Districts in the Main Street New Jersey COVID-19 Relief Grant Program

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, February 11, 2021

Grants Assist Traditional Main Streets and Business Districts in the Main Street New Jersey COVID-19 Relief Grant Program

TRENTON, NJ – The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) today announced that supplemental awards of Main Street New Jersey COVID-19 Relief Grants totaling $1.4 million were given to eight business district management organizations participating in the Main Street New Jersey (MSNJ) program. The supplemental grant funding was in addition to initial grants totaling $1.6 million that were announced in November. The grants assisted with the continued recovery and revitalization of traditional Main Streets and business districts in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, with a special emphasis on supporting vulnerable small businesses.

"We developed this program to help support downtown business districts, which have been battered both financially and psychologically by the COVID-19 crisis," said Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver, who serves as DCA Commissioner. "These grants provided a needed lift and gave small businesses resources to stay open and stay vibrant through the pandemic. We believe our wonderfully unique main streets will continue to attract people and commerce, and we trust that these grants have put them in a position to come back stronger."

Both the initial and supplemental awards of the relief grants were funded by an allocation from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The $3 million in grant funds were awarded to District Management Organizations (DMO) that actively participate in the Main Street New Jersey program. All grant-funded activities had to occur within the boundaries of the designated Main Street New Jersey district and had to be fully expended by January 31.

The grant funding was used for a variety of activities and costs including sanitizers, personal protective equipment, outdoor dining equipment, training in marketing/branding and e-commerce, delivery services, website upgrades, and ambassador programs, among others. All of the initiatives focused on attracting and encouraging consumers to patronize the small businesses and restaurants in downtown business districts in their communities.

Some examples of innovative grant funding uses include:

Accelerate Your Success!, a free eight-week program hosted by the Bloomfield Center Alliance for small businesses in Bloomfield. The program provides training and technical assistance in the areas of website design, e-commerce, marketing, and social media in a pandemic and post-pandemic environment.

The "New Streetery" on New Street in downtown Metuchen that features four long, tent-like structures that are resistant to fire and snow-load with infrared heaters inside to enable outdoor dining through cold winter months.

Related Links

MSNJ COVID-19 Recovery

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Photography services supported by Metuchen Downtown Alliance to help support online sales for small businesses in downtown Metuchen.

“Date Night In,” an initiative supported by Red Bank RiverCenter that curates weekly selections of food, beverages and retail items such as flowers, candy, and candles to keep small businesses in downtown Red Bank in the hearts and minds of people looking for a night out.

South Orange Open Air Holiday Market, which transformed a downtown parking lot into a festive, outdoor, socially distanced shopping experience during the 2020 holiday shopping season.

The Small Biz Social Webinar, a social media intensive hosted by the South Orange Village Center Alliance to educate small businesses on successfully managing and leveraging their online presence.

The grant recipients and projects are listed below:

Grantee Name	County	Project Description	Initial Award Amount	Supplemental Award Amount
Bloomfield Center Alliance Inc.	Essex	Majority of funds will be used to provide training to businesses about the new paradigms around marketing/branding, digital platforms, and e-commerce	$48,000	$43,555
Downtown Denville Business Improvement District	Morris	Host four Denville After Dark events that feature live music to drive commerce downtown; cover salaries/wages for employees responsible for COVID-19 response	$50,200	$14,355
Downtown Westfield Corporation	Union	Eight-part project to help businesses during holiday shopping season. Includes free delivery service, ambassador program, holiday guide and map, canvas bags, beautifying parklets, etc.	$72,530	$75,000
Main Street Mount Holly	Burlington	Provide economic foundation to help businesses pay their bills and keep their operation going during pandemic	$118,100	$70,000
Metuchen Downtown Alliance	Middlesex	Fund barriers, planters, parklets, streeteries, and alternative dining and retail areas that allow for social distancing; help businesses with setup for e-commerce and website directories	$295,958	$359,670
Montclair Center Business Improvement District	Essex	Provide equipment and supplies for street closure program; Bring art installations to energize downtown; improve	$100,000	$762,392

		Montclair Center website; engage firm to plan for district's post-COVID future		
Red Bank RiverCenter	Monmouth County	Provide financial support to businesses for COVID-related equipment and signage; build or expand streeteries; purchase hand sanitizing stations, trash receptacles, and district signage; purchase supplies for Date Night In program	$85,000	$25,000
South Orange Village Center Alliance	Essex	Activate Village Center with open air holiday market and expanded lighting and holiday displays; redesign website and create back-to-business campaign	$75,000	$58,625
		8 Supplemental Grant Awards **Total:**		**$1,408,597**

The Main Street New Jersey COVID-19 Relief Program is part of a larger coordinated State effort to invest needed dollars into small businesses, small landlords, and impacted communities in the wake of the pandemic.

The DCA offers a wide range of programs and services, including affordable housing production, fire safety, building safety, community planning and development, local government management and finance, and disaster recovery.

For more information about DCA, visit **https://nj.gov/dca/** or follow the Department on social media.

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