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January 29, 2021 - DCA Announces Second Round of Awards for Communities in the Neighborhood Preservation COVID-19 Relief Grant Program

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$6.2 Million in Grant Awards Have Positively Impacted 19 Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) Communities across New Jersey

TRENTON, NJ – The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) today announced the award of a second round of Neighborhood Preservation COVID-19 Relief Grants totaling $3.6 million to 19 municipalities participating in the Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP). This grant funding is in addition to a first round of grants totaling $2.6 million that was announced last month. The grants are assisting in the recovery and revitalization of NPP communities by providing funding for eligible COVID-19 response activities with a special emphasis on supporting impacted small businesses.

"The Neighborhood Preservation Program is all about helping municipalities transform declining neighborhoods into thriving neighborhoods. Before the pandemic, these 19 communities were making considerable progress towards their goals of attracting residents, entrepreneurs, and visitors," **said Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver, who serves as DCA Commissioner**. "We didn't want to see the results of this tremendous work vanish as a result of COVID-19 and quickly developed a program to assist these unique neighborhoods. We're proud to say that this grant funding has been a lifeline to our NPP communities in what has been an extremely challenging year."

Both rounds of the relief grants are funded by an allocation from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The $6.2 million in grant funds were awarded to municipalities that have a current, approved Neighborhood Preservation Program Implementation Plan through the local government or an NPP partner nonprofit organization. A majority of the funding is for business uses and must be distributed to small businesses located in their NPP neighborhood district boundaries. The remainder of the funding is dedicated to NPP district improvements that benefit both the local business and residential communities. Eligible uses of the grant funding include:

- Commercial mortgage, rent, and other bills (utilities, accounts payable);
- Resources to get a business established online (for example, an upgraded website to make delivery available to customers);
- Procurement of hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, masks, gloves, shield guards, and other personal protective equipment (PPE) for business owners, staff, and customers;
- Social distancing signage and decals;
- Procurement of tables, chairs, and other furniture for outdoor dining;
- COVID-19 educational materials, activities, and events;
- Wages for activities substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency;
- Community access to internet services for food shopping;
- Expenses for community social and health benefit activities by nonprofit groups that are necessary due to the COVID-19 pandemic;

Local gift card programs that promote patronage of NPP neighborhood businesses; and

Program administration expenses for activities dedicated to COVID-19 response.

Approximately 98 percent of the $6.2 million in funding has been used by the NPP communities for 561 direct grants to more than 430 small businesses. The grant funding has also been used for 68 NPP district improvement projects, including thousands of pieces of PPE and sanitizer, outdoor dining and seating equipment, social distance signage and stickers, local community-based gift-card programs, and small business training and district marketing efforts.

For example, NPP Keyport in Monmouth County has provided grants to 77 small businesses, or about 50 percent of businesses in the district, and funded 12 district improvement projects such as PPE distribution and Downtown Keyport marketing initiatives.

“I've had business owners say this funding was a miracle. Some have mentioned that it's the first time their needs had been heard during the pandemic,” **said Nicole Henn, the Keyport NPP Coordinator**. “To be a part of the solution is humbling. It's personal on some level because these are my neighbors. They wave to my children when we walk by, they donate to school events. I just can't imagine the fabric of our town being the same without them.”

In NPP Perth Amboy in Middlesex County, small businesses used the grants to pay back rent and cover expenses they incurred during the most difficult days of the pandemic. One beauty salon owner accumulated over $30,000 in rental debt and the $20,000 grant she received allowed her to remain open and continue to employ six people.

“A majority of our businesses in the downtown NPP district are smaller mom-and-pop shops and, unlike major corporations, do not have the resources to adapt. The NPP COVID-19 Relief Grant program made it possible for us to offer direct financial assistance to our small businesses,” **said Tashi Vazquez, assistant director of Perth Amboy’s Office of Economic & Community Development**. “Our city administration is moving to help our economy get back on track to pre-pandemic levels by launching our Back to Business initiative, which would not be possible without the nearly $400,000 in grant funds from NPP at DCA.”

NPP Hammonton in Atlantic County awarded 90 small business grants and also put funding toward a public address system to promote social distancing, outdoor dining enhancements, and downtown parklets.

“About 84 percent of the businesses that received grants were very likely to close permanently without receiving funding. Many jobs were saved by this vital funding as well,” **said Cassie Iacovelli, executive director of MainStreet Hammonton**.

So far, approximately 15 percent of businesses in NPP Passaic’s large downtown district have received direct grants.

“NPP has enabled many of our smaller businesses to meet critical operational needs and continue their services to residents. Without NPP, and programs like it, it is unlikely many of these businesses would be able to survive,” **said Passaic NPP Coordinator Joe Buga**. “NPP is directly saving jobs and assuring that much needed services remain available to the community.”

The grant recipients and projects are listed below:

Grantee Name	**Municipality**	**Project Description**	**Award Amount in FirstRound**	**Award Amount in Second Round**
Berlin Township	Berlin Township(Camden County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent/Mortgage Support; Districtwide PPE	$55,000	$5,000

Main Street Burlington, Inc.	Burlington City (Burlington County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent/Mortgage/Utilities Support; Districtwide PPE and Sanitization	$120,300	$150,000
Cape May City	Cape May City (Cape May County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent/Mortgage and COVID-19 Impacted Operational Support; Districtwide PPE	$105,000	$1,000
East Orange City	East Orange City (Essex County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent/Mortgage/COVID-Impacted Expenses Support; Districtwide PPE	$76,300	$50,000
Egg Harbor City	Egg Harbor City (Atlantic County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent/Mortgage/COVID Mitigation Employee Wage Support/Prior COVID Loss Support; Social Distancing Signs and Equipment; Outdoor Dining Equipment and Seating; Districtwide PPE and Sanitizing Equipment; Marketing	$85,000	$105,000
Elizabeth City	Elizabeth City (Union County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent/Mortgage/COVID Loss Support; Districtwide PPE and COVID-Prevention Equipment	$140,200	$256,660
Greater Bergen, Inc.	Garfield City (Bergen County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent/Mortgage/Prior COVID Loss Support; Districtwide PPE and Social Distancing Signs and Equipment	$122,700	$100,000
Glassboro Borough	Glassboro Borough (Gloucester County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent/Mortgage/Prior COVID Loss Support	$100,700	$5,000
Hammonton Revitalization Committee	Hammonton Town (Atlantic County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent/Mortgage; Districtwide Parklets, Outdoor Dining and Other Open-Air Enhancements; and Public Information Sound System for Public Health Announcements and Marketing	$184,300	$500,000
Keyport Borough	Keyport Borough (Monmouth County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent/Mortgage/Utilities Support; Districtwide PPE; Public Health and Business Support Marketing; and Outdoor Seating	$192,000	$231,000
Holly City Development	Millville City (Cumberland	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent/Mortgage and	$231,200	$106,198

Corp.	County)	COVID-19 Impacted Operational Support; Districtwide PPE, eGiftCard Program Subsidy; Business Survival Training and Marketing Assessments and Support		
Mount Holly Township	Mount Holly Township (Burlington County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent/Mortgage/Utilities/Prior COVID Loss Support; Districtwide PPE, Social Distancing Signs and Equipment; Outdoor Dining Equipment; and eGiftCard Subsidy	$139,300	$10,000
New Brunswick City	New Brunswick City (Middlesex County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent Support	$237,600	$570,000
Passaic City	Passaic City (Passaic County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent/Mortgage/Utilities Support; Districtwide PPE and Sanitization	$190,200	$700,000
Perth Amboy City	Perth Amboy City (Middlesex County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent Support; Districtwide PPE; Sanitation Stations; and Restaurant Online Menu and QR Code Program	$180,200	$380,000
NORWESCAP	Phillipsburg Town (Warren County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent/Mortgage Support; Business PPE; Internet and eCommerce Presence; Districtwide Marketing; Creation of Outdoor Seating Area; and Subsidizing eGiftCard Program	$140,300	$290,000
Pleasantville City	Pleasantville City (Atlantic County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent/Mortgage and COVID-19 Impacted Operational Support	$82,500	$1,000
Roselle Borough	Roselle Borough (Union County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent/Mortgage/Utilities/Prior COVID Loss Support; Districtwide PPE; Social Distancing Signs and Equipment; Outdoor Dining Equipment	$98,800	$30,000
Woodbury City	Woodbury City (Gloucester County)	Grants to Small Businesses for Rent/Mortgage Support; Districtwide PPE; Creation of Outdoor Seating Area; and Subsidizing eGiftCard Program	$119,400	$100,000

		19 Approved Projects Total:	**$2,601,000**	**$3,590,858**

The grants must be fully expended by January 31, 2021.

The Neighborhood Preservation 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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