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November 10, 2020 - DCA Announces Award of $1.6 Million in Main Street New Jersey

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, November 10, 2020

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Grants Aimed at Helping Traditional Main Streets and Business Districts Recover from the COVID-19 Crisis

TRENTON, NJ – The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) today announced the award of $1.6 million in Main Street New Jersey COVID-19 Relief Grants to 11 business district management organizations to assist them in their continued recovery and revitalization from the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis. The grant funding will be used for a variety of activities and costs including sanitizers, outdoor dining equipment, training in marketing/branding and e-commerce, delivery services, website upgrades, and ambassador programs, among others. All of the initiatives are aimed at attracting and encouraging consumers to patronize the small businesses and restaurants in downtown business districts in their communities.

“Governor Murphy and I recognize that main streets, which are so critical to the economic and social health of our communities, have been hit incredibly hard by the pandemic. We want to help these businesses get through the year financially so that they can survive through the winter season and beyond until life returns closer to normal,” said Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, who also serves as DCA Commissioner. “The Main Street New Jersey COVID-19 Relief Grants will provide downtown business districts with the funding they need to successfully transition to a post-COVID reality more focused on people’s health and safety.”

The relief grants are funded by an allocation from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The $1.6 million in grant funds were awarded to District Management Organizations (DMO) that actively participate in the Main Street New Jersey program. Eleven eligible DMOs completed grant applications and all 11 received grant awards. All grant-funded activities must occur within the boundaries of the designated Main Street New Jersey district. Eligible uses include:

- Cleaning products, sanitizers, personal protection equipment, and other safety equipment.
- Expenses related to training and to implement necessary and required protocols to continue business operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Costs for space and technology upgrades to reopen and conduct business safely, including furniture, barriers, cement planters for pedlets/parklets, outdoor heaters, and technology such as laptops, software, and touch-free credit card payment systems to accommodate social distancing.
- Classes and/or technical assistance, including, but not limited to modifying business models and training for long-term sustainability planning. This includes software platforms to initiate digital marketplaces for businesses; education courses for retailers and restauranteurs to pivot in a COVID-19 environment; and classes to help set up e-commerce website upgrades.
- Amendments to code to permit dining, sales, and consumption in areas not otherwise permitted.
- Payment of rent or fees for the use of vacant or publicly owned space for dining, sales, or outdoor programming.

Many of the DMOs are using the relief grants for innovative initiatives. For example, Boonton Main Street Inc. is creating an outdoor amphitheater and community space for socially distanced activities; Downtown Westfield Corporation is partnering with a local delivery service to offer free same-day delivery for all merchants in the business district to customers within a five-mile radius; and the Montclair Center Business Improvement District is collaborating with local art curators to bring art installations to businesses to energize its downtown.

The grant recipients and projects are listed below:

Grantee Name	County	Project Description	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
Boonton Main Street Inc.	Morris	Create outdoor amphitheater and community space appropriate for socially distanced activities; provide financial support to businesses for COVID-related expenses	$585,712
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
Main Street Mount Holly	Burlington	Provide economic foundation to help businesses pay their bills and keep their operation going during pandemic	$118,100
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
Montclair Center Business Improvement District	Essex	Provide equipment and supplies for street closure program; Bring art installations to energize downtown; improve Montclair Center website; engage firm to plan for district's post-COVID future	$100,000
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	$85,000

		signage; purchase supplies for Date Night In program	
Main Street Woodbury Inc.	Gloucester	Purchase outdoor furniture, barriers, planters and heaters; upgrade websites including e-commerce for businesses; provide walking tour of downtown and business directory	$50,500
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
Summit Downtown Inc.	Union	Create small business grant initiative called Sustain Summit Program; install more market lights to provide extra lighting and ambiance during the winter months	$120,000
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
		11 Approved Applications Total:	**$1,601,000**

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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