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Ask the Mayor

Muriel Bowser
Mayor

Mayor Bowser Announces $100 Million "Bridge Fund" to Support Hospitality, Entertainment, and Retail Industries

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Fund to Provide Targeted and Intentional Grants to Support Employees and Entrepreneurs in These Sectors During the Pandemic

(Washington, DC) – Today, Mayor Muriel Bowser and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) announced the Bridge Fund, a $100 million investment in businesses and workers grappling with the COVID-19 public health emergency in the hospitality, entertainment, and retail sectors.

"Since the beginning of the pandemic, DC businesses in the hospitality, entertainment, and retail sectors have made tremendous sacrifices to help us protect residents by combating and containing this virus," said Mayor Bowser. "We remain committed to providing the support and resources that will help them get through these challenging times and eventually cross the bridge to normalcy."

The Council of the District of Columbia passed the "Business Support Grants Emergency Amendment Act of 2020" to establish the Business Support Grant to provide businesses with financial support and aid in their recovery from the public health emergency. The legislation authorized up to $100 million from the federal CARES Act to provide COVID-19 related relief.

"When I introduced this $100 million relief bill in July I knew then that this investment would not meet the needs of all of our workers and business owners," said Ward 5 Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie. "Now that another four months have passed since introduction, the situation is even more dire and the need even greater. We know that black owned businesses have been the hardest hit and are more likely to close due to the pandemic. So, while there remains much work ahead, today marks a clear commitment to continue to do all that I can to support our workers in DC and the small businesses that employ them."

Through the Bridge Fund, the District will strategically invest to sustain the hospitality, entertainment, and retail industries to help mitigate the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on workers and businesses. Funds will be disbursed via four programs:

- **Restaurant Bridge Fund:** $35 million
- **Hotel Bridge Fund:** $30 million
- **Entertainment Bridge Fund**: $20 million
- **Retail Bridge Fund:** $15 million.

"In the midst of a global pandemic and a local hospitality recession, our residents need our support now more than ever," said Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development John Falcicchio. "The Bridge Fund is a catalytic investment in our recovery and will preserve jobs that our residents rely on. If we do not act now, they may disappear for years to come."

Disbursement will begin with the Hotel Bridge Fund. All full-service hotels, limited service hotels, extended stay hotels, bed and breakfast facilities, inns and motels located in DC, with at least 10 rooms, will be eligible for the Hotel Bridge Fund, including those that have temporarily suspended operations or are operating in a limited capacity. Grant funds will be allocated on a per-key basis. The Restaurant and Retail Bridge Funds will both operate as application-based grant programs in December. The Entertainment Bridge Fund will be launched later this year.

Since the COVID-19 public health emergency began in March, the District has made available more than $45 million to support small and local businesses and nonprofits through various funding opportunities , including the DC Small Business Microgrant Program, the Ward 7 and 8 Microgrant Program, the Small Business Resiliency Fund, DC Child Care Provider Relief Fund, the Legacy Business Supplemental Microgrant Program, and the Streateries Winter Ready (in partnership with Mayor's Office of Nightlife and Culture).

For more information on the Bridge Fund, visit coronavirus.dc.gov/page/recovery-businesses.