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October 01, 2020 - New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Announces $7.5 Million for Three COVID-19 Relief Programs for Small Businesses

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Programs Promote the Continued Recovery and Revitalization of Communities in the Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP), Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (NRTC), and Main Street New Jersey Program

TRENTON, NJ – Recognizing the continued need for relief in communities as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is today announcing $7.5 million in federal funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act for three programs to help neighborhoods and vulnerable small businesses financially impacted by the pandemic. The programs, which open today, aim to promote the continued recovery and revitalization of communities that currently participate in the Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP), Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (NRTC), and Main Street New Jersey Program. DCA's COVID-19 Relief Programs are part of a larger coordinated State effort to quickly invest needed dollars into small businesses, small landlords, and impacted communities in the wake of the pandemic.

“It is without a question that small businesses within our communities are still suffering a financial blow due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are excited to announce these grant funds, which will serve as a lifeline to help them maintain day-to-day business operations,” **said Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver, who serves as DCA Commissioner**. “DCA will continue to work collaboratively with our State partners, the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority, and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, to create innovative programs and invest in small businesses and communities as we continue to rebuild the State’s economy.”

The **Main Street New Jersey (MSNJ) COVID-19 Relief Program** will provide $1.6 million in grant funds to District Management Organizations (DMO) that actively participate in MSNJ to fund eligible COVID-19 recovery activities and costs. Any DMO is eligible to participate. All activities must occur within the boundaries of the designated MSNJ 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 operating the business, and expenses related to the hiring and paying of employees necessary to implement protocols associated with screening, safety, security, cleaning, and sanitizing business premises to protect the employees and customers from COVID-19. This includes the creation/expansion of an ambassador program to help with the sanitization of surfaces in public spaces and safety/security of public spaces.

Costs for retooling and technology activities, and space and technology upgrades to reopen and conduct business safely, including furniture, barriers, cement planters for pedlets/parklets and technology such as laptops, software, and touch-free credit card payment systems to accommodate social distancing. This could include cameras, software for security, propane heaters for cafes,

and lighting upgrades throughout the district, provided they are specifically in response to circumstances created by the COVID-19 crisis.

Job training, classes and/or technical assistance, including, but not limited to, pivoting or modifying the business model, and training for long-term sustainability planning. This includes: software platforms to initiate digital marketplace for district businesses, education courses for retailers and restauranteurs to pivot, classes to help set up for e-commerce website upgrades (interactive directory/walking tours/mapping).

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 outdoor or indoor dining, sales, or outdoor programming (for example, some municipalities are requiring that restaurants pay a fee and/or the daily cost for the use of a parking space if used by the restaurant as a seating area).

Applications are due by October 16, 2020 with awards expected to be made by October 28, 2020. Applications must be submitted electronically through SAGE at dcasage.intelligrants.com/Portal.asp

View MSNJ Program Guidelines

The **Neighborhood Preservation (NPP) COVID-19 Relief Program** will provide $2.6 million in grant funding to municipalities with NPP plans for eligible COVID-19 response activities, including limited funding for local program administrative costs. Funds will only be allocated to municipalities with current approved NPP Implementation Plans through the local government or the NPP partner nonprofit that propose eligible COVID-19 response activities. Eligible uses include:

Business Uses:

Commercial mortgage, rent, and other bills (utilities, accounts payable).

Wages for employees whose services are substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 emergency (excluding bonuses other than hazard pay and overtime).

Resources to get the business established online (for example, a business needed to revamp a website to make delivery available to customers).

Perishable inventory that was lost due to an interruption of business.

Procurement of masks, gloves, and other personal protective equipment for business owners, staff and customers.

Shield guards for businesses.

Procurement of hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes.

Social distancing signage and decals.

Procurement of tables, chairs, and other furniture for outdoor dining.

COVID-19 educational materials, activities, and events aimed at businesses.

Other Uses:

All other COVID-19 educational materials, activities, and events.

Community access to internet services for food shopping.

Expenses for community social and health benefit activities by non-business nonprofits that are only necessary due to COVID-19 public health emergency.

Local gift card programs that promote patronage of NPP neighborhood businesses.

Program administration expenses, up to $10,000 or 10% of the total request, whichever is greater, provided they are for activities substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Applications are due by October 7, 2020, with awards expected to be made by October 13, 2020. Applications must be submitted electronically to jef.buehler@dca.nj.gov.

View NPP Program Guidelines

The **Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) COVID-19 Relief Program** will provide $3.1 million to organizations with NRTC neighborhood plans for eligible coronavirus response activities and costs. Nonprofit

organizations with approved NRTC plans as of the FY20 application cycle that submit complete applications and that propose eligible COVID-19 response activities are eligible to apply. At least 60 percent of funds must be allocated for business uses and must be distributed by grantees to small businesses with a physical location in their neighborhood boundaries. Neighborhood boundaries can be viewed on DCA's Community Asset Map. Funds can be distributed by grantees to businesses as grants.

Examples include the following:

Business Uses (businesses within the NRTC neighborhood boundary):

- Commercial mortgage, rent and other bills (utilities, accounts payable) for the period.
- Resources to get a business established online (for example, a business needed to revamp a website to make delivery available to customers).
- Perishable inventory that was lost due to an interruption of business.
- Procurement of masks, gloves, and other personal protective equipment for business owners, staff and customers.
- Shield guards for businesses.
- Procurement of hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes.
- Social distancing signage and decals.
- Procurement of tables, chairs, and other furniture for outdoor dining.
- COVID-19 educational materials, activities, and events aimed at businesses.
- Wages for activities substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency (excluding bonuses other than hazard pay and overtime).

Other Uses:

- All other COVID-19 educational materials, activities, and events.
- Community access to internet services for food shopping.

Applications are due by October 16, 2020, with awards expected to be made by October 28, 2020. Applications must be submitted electronically via NJDCA SAGE (https://dcasage.intelligrants.com/portal.asp).

View NRTC Program Guidelines

Additional uses beyond these examples provided for each program require prior approval from DCA.

Applicants and businesses receiving funds must first complete a written certification that funds will not be used to cover expenses reimbursed by any other emergency COVID-19 funding (whether county, municipal, state, federal or private).

Funds may not be used for indirect costs, administration, or to support the salaries of applicant staff unless it is for activities substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency and may only be used for expenses incurred between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020 that are necessary due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19. All funds received must be fully expended by grantees and their subrecipients by December 30. Any funds not expended by that date or expected to be expended by that date must be returned to DCA by December 15, 2020 for distribution back to the US Treasury.

To view NRTC boundaries on the DCA Community Asset Map, visit https://www.nj.gov/dca/communityassetmap

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.

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