

Monday, July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Dear Dakota County Board Chair Slavik and Dakota County Commissioners:

Thank you for thinking of the health and well being of small businesses in Dakota County when considering the use of CARES ACT funds. As you know, small businesses have borne a disproportionate amount of the economic burden since the outbreak of COVID-19. While most businesses are now open, several are still limited on capacity and many are employing additional staff to serve less customers as they operate under new guidelines to maintain a safe environment.

One of the top concerns we hear from small business owners is the fear of another shut down. Providing these business owners with a small financial cushion would ease this stress, help pay for additional costs of operating during the COVID-19 pandemic and, in many cases, help them stay in business.

We are pleased to hear the Dakota County Board of Commissioners is considering \$10,000,000 for small business grants of \$10,000. This will ease the financial hardship of 1,000 businesses, roughly 11% of businesses with 20 or less full-time employees in Dakota County. We believe there is a greater need, and therefore would ask the board to consider an amount that would serve a larger percentage of the small business community. As COVID-19 continues to challenge our businesses, health and way of life, Minnesota's economic outlook remains uncertain. A business grant program from the county would greatly help our small businesses on their road recovery.

Thank you,

Ed Kearney, President  
Apple Valley Chamber Of Commerce



Jennifer Harmening, President  
Burnsville Chamber Of Commerce



Kristy Barse, President  
Hastings Area Chamber Of Commerce



Colleen Murphy Roth, Interim President  
River Heights Chamber Of Commerce



Cc: Matt Smith, Dakota County Manager  
Tony Schertler, Dakota County Community Development Agency