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Media Contact: Gary Davidson
Volusia County Community Information
386-801-0188

Volusia County to offer \$3,000 grants to local small businesses to offset COVID-19 impacts

Volusia County will open the application window later this week on a \$10 million grant program to help small businesses recover financially from the COVID-19 pandemic. Local businesses that meet the criteria, including having no more than 25 full-time employees or the equivalent number of part-time employees, can qualify for a one-time, \$3,000 grant under the program.

The county is moving rapidly to get the grant program up and running in order to help businesses recoup operating losses or reopening costs and get the relief funds flowing through the local economy. The Volusia County Council gave formal approval to the grant program on Tuesday (today, May 12) and the online application process is scheduled to open at 9 a.m. on Thursday, May 14.

“The purpose is to get this money out as soon as we can,” Rick Karl, the county’s head of aviation and economic resources, told the council. “It’s very important that we get this out as quickly as possible.”

The council agreed to seed the program with \$10 million in coronavirus relief funds that the county has received from the federal government as part of the CARES Act. To qualify for the county grant program, businesses must certify that they suffered a financial impact of at least \$3,000 due to COVID-19 and that the loss wasn’t reimbursed by insurance or some other governmental assistance program. Qualifying impacts can be anything from a loss of revenue due to an interruption in business to the cost of installing things like plexiglass dividers, UV sanitizing cabinets and hand sanitizing stations needed to resume normal business operations. With 12,000 small businesses in Volusia County, there’s enough money for approximately 3,300 of them to receive a county grant. Applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis, with the application posted on the county’s new Volusia Business Resources web site:

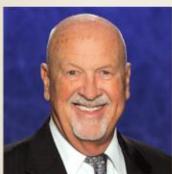
<https://www.volusiabusinessresources.com/>

For small businesses to qualify, they must be a physical business located in a commercial or industrial space, licensed to operate in Volusia County or the local city where they’re located if a license is required and were operational and actively conducting business in Volusia County on or before Dec. 1, 2019. Tax exempt businesses and businesses that are either a publicly traded company or a subsidiary of a publicly traded company don’t qualify for the program. A complete list of qualification criteria will be listed on the county web site.

With the program ready to go, the county is already thinking about additional ways to use its COVID-19 relief funds to help local businesses recover. For instance, one idea under consideration is for the county to purchase protective equipment such as masks, gloves and cleaning materials in bulk to distribute to qualified businesses that need them. County Council members agreed the more help, the better.

“This is definitely a time for us all to move forward in setting up these programs to help these small businesses,” said council member Billie Wheeler. “It has to be our top priority.”

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ED KELLEY
COUNTY CHAIR
ekelley@volusia.org



BEN JOHNSON
AT-LARGE
bjohnson@volusia.org



DR. FRED LOWRY
VICE CHAIR, DISTRICT 5
flowry@volusia.org



BARBARA GIRTMAN
DISTRICT 1
bgirtman@volusia.org



BILLIE WHEELER
DISTRICT 2
bwheeler@volusia.org



DEBORAH DENYS
DISTRICT 3
ddenys@volusia.org



HEATHER POST
DISTRICT 4
hpost@volusia.org