



State of Rhode Island
Office of Lieutenant Governor Daniel J. McKee

November 2, 2020

The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo
Governor of Rhode Island
State House
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI

Dear Governor Raimondo:

As we approach the December 30, 2020 use it or lose it deadline for CARES Act funds, I write to offer additional suggestions to improve the Restore RI grant program and ensure small businesses receive funds before it is too late.

Despite changes made to the program since it launched in July, funds continue to drip slowly from the state to the small business community. Over \$30M in Restore RI funding is still available with less than 2 months left to distribute. Based on feedback from small business owners—those who qualified for a grant and those who did not—we suggest the following changes:

- Allocate an additional \$75M to the program by December 1, 2020.
- Increase the maximum grant amount to \$50,000 and the minimum to \$5,000.
- Intentionally notify all small businesses owners who received a grant that they may qualify for additional funds under the new program guidelines announced on October 20, 2020.
- Allow small businesses from all industries to apply. Do not limit eligibility to only certain NAICS codes. For example, dental, optometry and other medical offices continue to be excluded.
- Weigh overhead expenses just as much as employee count in the grant amount calculation.
- Allow small businesses that opened during the pandemic (January 2020 - present) to be eligible for Restore RI or a separate CARES Act funded grant program.

Additionally, we urge you to consider including small hotels in the newly announced \$20M Rhode Island Hotel, Arts & Tourism (HArT) Grant Program which is currently only available to hotels with over 200 rooms.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. McKee
Lieutenant Governor

CC: Rhode Island Commerce Secretary Stefan Pryor