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Contact: Anne Duncan Cooley
Chief Executive Officer
(603) 536-2011
adc@graftonrdc.org

**Grafton County Small Businesses Getting a Tech Boost
New Program Provides Financing for Website Development**

PLYMOUTH, N.H., April 8, 2020 -- [Grafton Regional Development Corporation](#), a non-profit organization that supports Grafton County small businesses, announced today a program that provides funding to help businesses develop new or update existing websites.

The Website Assistance Loan Program offers qualified businesses interest-free payments on deferred loans of up to \$2,000. Businesses can apply those funds to web design agencies that have been pre-approved by Grafton Regional Development Corporation. Additionally, some businesses may be eligible for zero-cost website support services.

“Grafton County small businesses have been deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Anne Duncan Cooley, the corporation’s chief executive officer. “We’re especially concerned about those in our area that don’t already have an online presence or that need assistance upgrading an existing site.”

In 2018, Clutch, a market research firm, found that [36 percent of small businesses](#) surveyed did not have a website, citing cost and lack of technical knowledge as key roadblocks to building a web presence. Furthermore, many small business owners relied solely on social media for their online presence, potentially placing them at a disadvantage, as algorithms change and platform usage trends continue to shift.

Websites lend credibility and legitimacy to business operations. But, to be fully effective, they must be secure, mobile optimized, load quickly, follow current search engine optimization practices, and have clear calls-to-action. Rita Toth is the NH Small Business Development Center advisor for Grafton County. “There’s a lot for small business owners to consider with their website: where to host it, which platform to use, whether they need e-commerce,” Toth, a successful entrepreneur, noted. “It can be overwhelming. Our goal is to remove the roadblocks and get these businesses online.”

Eligibility is limited to businesses that have been in business for at least two years. All applicants must be able to provide financial statements and business plans. Qualified applicants will meet with Toth to discuss needs and develop an action plan.

To apply for the Website Assistance Loan Program:

- [Visit the NH SBDC website](https://nhsbdc.org/grafon-county) (nhsbdc.org/grafon-county) and click on Online Request for Services.
- Select Online Request for Counseling with Rita Toth.
- Complete the requested information about your business.
- Businesses will be contacted by Toth to arrange an intake meeting.

For more information about the Website Assistance Loan Program, contact Anne Duncan Cooley at (603) 536-2011 or adc@grafonrdc.org.

About Grafton Regional Development Corporation

Grafton Regional Development Corporation (GRDC) is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to creating opportunity for entrepreneurs and businesses within Grafton County. GRDC's services and programs strengthen local businesses, grow the economy, and foster community support networks that create jobs and build wealth. GRDC also helps small businesses recruit and retain employees, and leases flexible office and co-working space for entrepreneurs and start-ups.

Visit grafonrdc.org for more information about small business advising, business loans, educational seminars, professional skills training, and leasing office space. Follow GRDC on Facebook [@GraftonRDC](https://www.facebook.com/GraftonRDC), LinkedIn [@company/grafonrdc](https://www.linkedin.com/company/grafonrdc), and Instagram [@enterprisecenterplymouth](https://www.instagram.com/enterprisecenterplymouth).