



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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To: City of La Crosse Economic Development Commission

From: Planning and Development Staff

Date: February 25, 2021

RE: #20-0259 Update for Plans with Relaunch of Small Business Relief Grant

Staff determined the need for outside assistance with the second round of business relief funds, due to the fact that staff continues to work with meeting compliance and closing out grant files from the first round of relief funds. There was consensus that given WWBIC's ongoing experience managing Small Business Relief Funding, that they would be best placed to provide these services.

Being that the need is far greater than the funds that are available through the CDBG-CV3 funds allocation, a first come, first served grant allocation will be used. The funds availability will be announced 1 week in advance of application opening and close 1 week later. WWBIC will use their online application software and they will monitor applications as they come in. Applications will be time stamped and evaluated in the order received. Grants will be awarded for the amount requested, up to 3 months' worth of rent for the business. Once the funds have been exhausted, review of applications will cease.

The following changes have been made, in an effort to narrow the grant awards to go to business classifications facing the largest deficiencies as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Eligible businesses changes:
 - Reduced from 75 employees to 20
 - only businesses that can prove they are in a lease agreement, which also demonstrates brick and mortar establishment
 - Business must demonstrate they were in business for at least 1 year previous to 2/1/20
- Use of funds only for rent and/or non-city owned utilities
- Profit and Loss statement for 2019 and 2020 required to demonstrate drop in sales
- Funds will be dispersed within 2 weeks of award, as application packet will demonstrate financial need as well as proof of expense for reimbursement
- There is no longer a jobs deposit being held – WWBIC will manage all follow-up compliance
- Grant amount is based on 3 months of rent for the recipient vs. number of FTE

These changes have been made as a result of lessons learned from the first round, lessons learned from peers in other municipalities that have shared their experiences as well as recommendations made by HUD personnel. Staff also took into consideration all suggestions made by the Community Development Committee and Economic Development Committee.

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KEVIN CONROY, HOUSING REHABILITATION SPECIALIST

Proof of lease or rent payment amounts as well as proof of financial need will be uploaded with the application, so ideally funds will be 100% dispersed within 2 weeks of application closing period. Design of the 2nd round is intended to make procedures for compliance much more manageable.

Staff is working with WWBIC to get an agreement in place for the management of the funds. Once executed, we will relaunch marketing and media releases announcing the application opening and ending dates. Target schedule:

Week Ending 2/26/21: Relaunch marketing and media releases

3/4/21: Application Period Opening

3/11/21: Application Closing

3/19/21: Agreements Executed and Funds Released

Schedule is dependent on approval for program management agreement as well as WWBIC commitment.