



## **Portage County COVID-19**

### **Small Business Emergency Relief Grant Program**

The 1<sup>st</sup> application period will **open on Friday, October 16, 2020 at 9am and will close on Friday, November 6, at 4:00 p.m.** Applications that are not fully completed and submitted by Friday, November 6, 2020 at 4pm will not be considered for the first round of funding. If there is grant funding remaining unallocated, a second round of funding may be offered.

#### **PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

The Portage County COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Relief Grant Program (the “Program”) is a grant fund that the County received through section 5001 of the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (that “CARES Act”). The Program has been created by Portage County in order to assist small businesses throughout Portage County with the financial hardships imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The below guidelines establish the businesses eligible for funding, examples of the type of business expenses that can be paid with grant funds, the application and award process, the process for entities to make contributions to the Program and other general operating guidelines that govern the use of funds and program administration.

#### **I. General Description of the Program**

Qualifying businesses will be able to receive grant funds through the PC COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Relief Grant Program to assist those businesses with operating expenses incurred after March 1, 2020 and no later than December 30, 2020. Overall eligibility for the grant will be tied to businesses that can demonstrate a financial hardship due to COVID-19 in the time period as described above.

Applicants must submit an application and a request for funding on the form attached to these guidelines to Neighborhood Development Services, Inc, 120 E. Main Street, Ravenna, Ohio 44266 which will review the same for completeness and compliance with these guidelines. The 1<sup>st</sup> funding round for which applications will be taken will commence at 9am on Friday October 16, 2020 and run until 4pm Friday, November 6, 2020. All complete applications submitted during that time, that are in compliance with the eligibility criteria set forth below, will be considered for funding by the Portage County Board of Commissioners.

The Portage County Board of Commissioners maintains sole discretion regarding which portions of any application will be funded, with the intention of awarding grants based on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Portage County businesses.

The goal of this program is to keep businesses in Portage County operating, to retain as many jobs in Portage County as possible, and to minimize the long-term economic

hardship to Portage County businesses, employees, and residents resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **II. Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible for grant funds under the Program, Portage County businesses must meet the following requirements, as of March 1, 2020:

The business may operate for profit or not for profit. The business may be a sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation (both S and C), professional association, limited liability company, limited partnership, or limited liability partnership. If a non-profit, the company must have a 501(c)3 designation from the IRS. If a sole proprietorship, the business shall provide documentation of its existence as a business. Acceptable documentation could include, but is not limited to: evidence of existence of registration with the Ohio Secretary of State; income tax returns for the business; trade name registrations; business banking or credit accounts; or similar documents. If a partnership, the business shall either be registered with the Ohio Secretary of State to do business in the State of Ohio, or, if not registered, shall provide documentation similar to that required for a sole proprietorship. In the event that documentation is not available as listed above, NDS, Inc. as administrator of the program, may make a determination of legitimacy for the business based on its review and examination of other evidence as it determines is appropriate.

The principal place of the business suffering financial impact from the pandemic must be located within Portage County. For businesses operating in multiple counties, only those costs/losses associated with operations occurring within Portage County, will be considered for this funding.

The business must not be permanently closed and must indicate based on answers in its application that it intends to continue its business operations following the COVID-19 pandemic.

All businesses will be required to provide the businesses' federal employer identification number, or, if the business does not have a federal employer identification number, the social security number under which the business operates.

The PC COVID-19 small business emergency relief grant program shall only reimburse expenditures that are not otherwise being reimbursed by another Federal or State program.

## **III. Eligible funding examples:**

The business must be able to show that it was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and that the expenses/losses it is applying for were directly related to the pandemic, and not part of the business' normal operations.

Examples of eligible expenses incurred due to the pandemic could include (but are not limited to):

- Protective equipment or barriers to provide for physical separation
- Premiums paid to workers filling shifts requiring an in person presence
- Equipment purchased to allow workers to work from home, or to enable less person to person contact
- Cleaning and disinfecting materials, including time spent on such activities, that went beyond the business' normal routine

Examples of losses suffered due to the pandemic could include (but are not limited to):

- Loss of revenue do to forced shutdown and/or reduced operating capacity as a result of the State's mandates, while still having to pay certain expenses such as rent, mortgage, utilities, etc. (a comparison from a similar, non pandemic, time period's expenses/revenues could be used to estimate the loss)
- If workers were laid off due to the pandemic or had their hours reduced, repayment of lost wages is eligible.
- Reduced operating capacity due to shipping interruptions or inability to acquire certain supplies do to shipping issues related to the pandemic

Each applicant for funds will include in its application to NDS an itemization of the expenses incurred and paid through September 30, 2020 (*with backup documentation as described above*), which will be reviewed for compliance with the eligible expenses set forth above. Documentation will be in the form of cancelled checks, paid invoices, bank statements, or similar documents evidencing payment. Revenue and expense comparisons from a prior time period can be used to quantify losses.

The business may also provide a listing to NDS of estimated business expenses to be paid through December 30, 2020 using the grant funds along with supporting documentation. Estimated future expenses should be identified separately from those already incurred, and must be actually incurred by December 30, 2020. For such estimated expenses and following the expenditure of all grant funds, the listing of business expenses paid and accompanying documentation shall be submitted to NDS no later than Feb 1, 2020.

All expenses reported to NDS as paid or reimbursed using Program funds must either be incurred by the business or paid by the business on or after March 1, 2020, and before December 30, 2020. The eligible expenses set forth above constitute, to the best of Portage County and NDS understanding, eligible expenses for which funds can be used under 601(d) of the Social Security Act and Section 5001 of the CARES Act and the business cannot use grant funds it receives for purposes other than those set forth above.

#### **IV. Application and Award Process**

Businesses that wish to apply for a grant from the Program shall submit to NDS the following documents in a complete application on the form prescribed by NDS. That application will include basic information regarding the business, as well as the following information:

- Summary level information on 2019 revenues and expenses, an estimate of 2020 YTD revenues and expenses through September 30, 2020 and an estimate of COVID-19 impact on revenue and expenses through December 30, 2020.
- For all businesses applying, the first page of its IRS Form 1040, 1040-SR, 1065, 1120 or 1120-S for tax year 2019, or, if the business has not filed IRS Form 1040, 1040-SR, 1065, 1120 or 1120-S for tax year 2019, but has filed one of said forms for tax year 2018, then the first page of the same. Additionally, any business providing a Form 1040 or 1040-SR must also include the full Schedule C that was filed with the Form 1040 or 1040-SR.
- A completed form W-9 for the business or recipient of grant funds to enable IRS reporting and verification.

Round 1 Applications will be taken beginning at 9 am on Friday, October 16, 2020 and remain open until 4 pm Friday, November 6, 2020. All applications must be fully submitted and completed during this time to be considered for the first round of funding. All Submissions via fax will date and time stamped for receipt. Applications may also be received by U.S. Mail and will date and time stamped upon receipt for 4 p.m. on the date of the postmark of the application. To facilitate review, no applications will be included in the first-round funding decision if received by U.S. Mail after 4 pm on November 6<sup>th</sup>, such applications may be considered if further funding rounds are made available. Applications may be dropped off at NDS drop-box, 120 E. Main Street, Ravenna, Ohio 44266.

Complete submission of accurate information is the responsibility of the applicant. Information submitted will be deemed as certified to be accurate and truthful by the applicant and will be relied on for determining eligibility. False information provided by applicants could result in the requirement to repay grant funds as a result of submitting a false or misleading application.

Grants will be funded only to the extent that grant funds are available. Following award of each grant, NDS will email to each business a grant agreement. The business must complete and sign the grant agreement and return the same to NDS to receive grant funds. Grant funds will be distributed as soon as possible following the receipt of a signed grant agreement and any required verification of documentation and other requirements. If, after review of all applications and award of grant funds for all applications received, there are still funds remaining to be granted, subsequent rounds of funding, that will function in a similar manner, may be announced and

conducted. Any application that is complete and meets all eligibility but was not funded in a certain round will be reconsidered for funding in the next subsequent funding round.

Prior to receiving any grant funds, the business shall sign a grant agreement between itself and the Portage County Board of Commissioners. At a minimum, the grant agreement will (i) require the business to use all grant funds for the purposes set forth in these Guidelines and its application, (ii) require the business to follow and comply with all other provisions of these Guidelines, (iii) be conditioned on the business providing all information on the application, accompanying documents and verification of expenses in a true and accurate manner, (iv) require the business to be subject to audit and reimbursement of funds in the event it fails to comply with any of the provisions listed in the grand agreement, or is found to have misrepresented information in its application, and require the business to indemnify and hold harmless the Portage County Board of Commissioners and NDS.

NDS Inc. will manage the Program and administer the distribution of grants in accordance with these Guidelines.

Nothing contained herein is intended to obligate or bind, nor shall it be construed to obligate or bind, NDS to make, award, or fund any grant to any entity whatsoever, and no entity shall have any claim, action, or cause of action against the NDS for failure to make, award, or fund any grant. All determinations will be made with the best efforts of NDS and in the spirit of meeting the objectives of this program. The decisions of the Portage County Commissioners are final, not subject to appeal and fully within the discretion of the Portage County Board of Commissioners subject to whatever process modifications they find necessary in the dispatch of their work to meet the guidelines of the program.