

Small Business Solano COVID Assistance Grants
Administered by the Workforce Development Board of Solano County

Program Summary

In order to support small businesses and employers facing financial impacts and layoffs from the novel-coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), the County of Solano, in partnership with the Workforce Development Board (WDB) of Solano County and the Solano Small Business Development Center, established the *Small Business Solano COVID Assistance Grants* initiative. The fund will provide micro-grants to small businesses experiencing economic stresses in order to prevent layoffs or closures during COVID-19 and allowing small employers to effectively pivot operations in response to COVID-19.

Grant Details

Eligible applicants include for-profit businesses who:

- Are based in Solano County
- Have 50 employees or less
- Are in good standing with the State of California and the County of Solano
- Can demonstrate a need for funding due to the impacts of COVID-19

Awards will be given based on whether the above eligibility is met, the demonstrated need of the business due to COVID-19, and the quality of the application. Priority will be given to businesses that have less than 20 employees. Staff will consider whether businesses have received small business grants from other locally funded COVID-19 business investment programs in award decisions.

Examples of permissible activities will include, but are not limited to:

- Purchasing computer equipment or software that allows remote work capabilities;
- Paying for services or tools to convert to online or outdoor sales or delivery;
- Purchasing cleaning or sanitation supplies/services that reduce exposure and transmission per reopening guidelines;
- New marketing strategies to engage clientele;
- Machinery or equipment needed to reduce exposure or pivot product sales;
- Activities that address supply chain challenges or to acquire new bids; and/or
- Other creative approaches and strategies to reduce or eliminate the need for business closure.

Funds will not be allowed to be used to pay for employee wages or benefits, nor for rent.

Due to federal funding, selected employers must attest to Certifications and Assurances and complete the contract process before funds may be dispersed. Businesses will be required to submit brief summaries and proof of expenses before reimbursements are issued. Entities receiving an award may be subject to local, state, or federal monitoring.

Grant Progress

The WDB and SBDC, in partnership with cities and chambers, provided technical assistance and targeted outreach to minority-owned businesses, industries that have been significantly impacted due to COVID, and communities that have received minimal small business investment to ensure equity in distribution of funds. The team conducted four webinars with over 100 attendees; two general webinars, one in Spanish with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and one with the Solano County Black Chamber of Commerce.

The grant team received 635 applications submitted by September 30, 2020 with some duplicate applications from businesses. Of those applications, 522 businesses met the basic eligibility requirements. Of the eligible applications, the total requested amount was \$12.44 million. A number of the applications requested funds for ineligible expenses: payroll and rent.

Awards are being approved in two rounds of funding. In the first round there are 185 businesses to be funded for a total of \$1,642,966 and an average award of \$8,880. 94% have an employee count under 20, 85% are minority owned. Round one includes funded grants in every city and unincorporated Solano. Round 2 Awards are under review and will be completed in the coming weeks.

Timeline

The WDB and SBDC are on track to meet their award decisions by October 15, 2020. The WDB will then engage in agreements with the businesses and begin receiving invoices for grant-approved expenditures.