



# Small Business Recovery Assistance Fund

The Mecklenburg County Small Business Recovery Assistance Fund will help businesses throughout the County meet their long-term business goals by adjusting to COVID-19 demands. Establishing safe and clean re-opening procedures, in accordance with the Governor's guidance, is necessary for the safety of customers and employees. It will allow businesses to regain and sustain operations, ideally helping them retain existing staff, fill vacant positions, create new jobs, and become more efficient and resilient.

*Please note these guidelines are still in draft form and are subject to change.*

## Eligible Businesses:

Assistance through the program will be targeted to businesses that meet each of the following five criteria.

1. Locally or regionally owned,
2. 20 or fewer employees,
3. Has been impacted by COVID-19,
4. Has not received federal CARES Act assistance, AND
5. Provides local or regional services, including those in the program's areas of emphasis:
  - a. tourism related businesses, nonprofit destination marketing organizations (DMOs),
  - b. accommodations (i.e. hotel, motel, bed and breakfast),
  - c. restaurants/food service, professional services (i.e. banking, legal, design, real estate), d. cultural & educational services, e. arts,
  - f. recreation, g. retail, h. nonprofit/social services,
  - i. health practitioners, and
  - j. personal care (i.e. beauty/barbershop, nail salon, dry cleaner and more).

This program will be operated on a reimbursement basis only; therefore, the County of Mecklenburg must submit proof of payment prior to seeking reimbursement from DHCD. Since the County of Mecklenburg is acting as the lead applicant/fiscal agent, funds will be disbursed to businesses as follows:

1. **Retooling and technology activities (up to \$5,000)** will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis once the business submits documentation of expenditures via invoices and proof of payment.
  - a. **Space and technology upgrades** to reopen and conduct business safely, including furniture, barriers, and technology such as laptops, software, and touch-free credit card payment systems to accommodate social distancing.
  - b. **Sanitization** (cleaning service and/or supplies- EPA-approved disinfectants, gloves, and masks).
  - c. **Job training, classes and/or technical assistance** such as:
    - protecting the employees from COVID-19,
    - protecting customers from COVID-19,

- pivoting or modifying the business model, and
  - training for long-term sustainability planning. (Businesses will be encouraged to register with the local/regional workforce council or equivalent body (Virginia Workforce Boards).
2. **Rent/ Mortgage/Utilities: (up to \$10,000) (The \$10,000 maximum benefit amount is contingent on no assistance sought for retooling and technology activities):**
- a. **Rent/Mortgage** – The duration of rent/mortgage assistance will be determined based on the severity of the COVID-19 impact on the business. Rent/Mortgage will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis once the business submits documentation of expenditures via mortgage statements, lease agreements and proof of payment dated no earlier than March 12, 2020 (Date of State of Emergency). All businesses will be eligible for rent/mortgage assistance from March 12, 2020 to the time of application.
  - b. **Utilities** – The duration of utility assistance will be determined based on the severity of the COVID-19 impact on the business and coincide with the duration of rental/mortgage assistance. Utility payments will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis only once the applicant submits adequate documentation of utility expenses dated no earlier than March 12, 2020 (Date of State of Emergency). All businesses will be eligible for utility assistance from March 12, 2020 to the time of application. Utility expenses shall include water, sewer, gas, electricity, phone, and internet.
3. Expense documentation from the approved business will be included in a reimbursement request to state.
4. Reimbursement requests to the state can take up to two (2) to three (3) weeks, and the businesses should allow an additional 5-10 days for the County to disburse grant funds received from the reimbursement request.

### **Ineligible Activities:**

Due to the limited amount of available funds at this time, the activities listed below are ineligible uses:

- Payroll costs incurred to maintain existing employees (i.e. job retention)
- Relief from employer payroll taxes
- Costs of daily business operations
- Regular maintenance of the facility or equipment
- Refinancing of existing debts.
- Activities not deemed to be in response to COVID-19 impacts.

### **Timeline:**

Applicants can submit requests on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are depleted.

### **Job Creation:**

If any jobs will be created or retained as a direct result of any re-opening plans, the applicant will provide documentation of job descriptions, pay, and skills required, including low-to-moderate income (LMI) positions. Note: New or retained jobs are only considered to be available to LMI persons when: the job does not require special skills that can only be acquired with substantial training or work experience or education beyond high school education, or when the business agrees to hire unqualified persons and provide such training. New or retained jobs are only considered to be held by LMI persons when the job is actually held by an LMI person.