

Small Business Relief and Reopening Grants Program Guidelines

Release date: July 27, 2020

Hennepin County announces the availability of \$10,000,000 in grants for small businesses that have experienced financial hardship because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Small businesses located in Hennepin County who have experienced financial hardship due to COVID-19 and meet other eligibility requirements below may apply for a Small Business Relief and Reopening (SBRR) grant up to a total of \$15,000. Grant funds may be used for specific operating expenses and costs incurred to reopen safely and adapt business practices to ensure worker and customer safety during the pandemic.

Priority will be given to those businesses that have received \$5,000 or less in COVID-19 related emergency relief funding from local, county, and state sources.

Eligible businesses that have received a prior Hennepin County Small Business Relief Fund grant can apply for additional funds up to a combined total of \$15,000 for eligible expenses as described below.

Business Eligibility

Applications will be reviewed for compliance with eligibility standards and the total amount of funding received from other local, county and state sources.

To qualify, a business must

- Be a locally-owned, for-profit business with a permanent physical establishment in Hennepin County impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic

- Employ at least 1 employee other than an owner and not more than 50 employees
- Be registered and in good standing with the Minnesota Secretary of State, if required
- Be able to demonstrate financial hardship due to COVID-19 in one or both of the following ways:
 - The business was restricted from operating above 50% capacity by executive orders in effect on May 18, 2020 or
 - The business experienced at least a 10% loss of revenue as a result of the COVID emergency
- Be current on property taxes, if applicable
- Have operated and generated revenue in Hennepin County on or before January 15, 2020

Ineligible Businesses

- Home-based businesses; those without a permanent physical establishment
- Non-profit organizations
- Corporate chains, multi-state chains
- Businesses in default conditions prior to February 29, 2020
- Businesses that primarily derive income from passive investments only, gambling, or any income from adult entertainment

Eligible Expenses

Expenses must be incurred March 15–August 30, 2020. Hennepin County Small Business Relief and Reopening Grants (SBRR) are federal CARES Act funds. SBRR grant funds may NOT be used for the same expenses for which a business received any other source of federal funds. Any expenses paid with SBA Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) or EIDL Advance, State of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Small Business Relief Grant, or other grant or forgivable loan from a city that used federal funds are ineligible for SBRR funds.

Businesses may apply for a grant up to \$15,000 (minimum grant amount is \$2,500) based on a business's grant-eligible expenses including:

- Business operating expenses incurred since March 15 and not reimbursed by other grant or forgivable loan funds. Eligible expenses include:
 - Commercial rent or mortgage payments
 - Insurance premiums
 - Utility payments
 - Inventory costs
 - Paying other direct business-related bills
- Costs incurred to purchase supplies, access technical assistance, certain types of equipment

and other needs to safely reopen in accordance with public health guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Examples of eligible expenses include:

- Construction costs, plus materials incurred for physical improvements or alterations, such as installation of spatial dividers, reconfiguration of spaces, construction to enable use of outdoor space. Reimbursement of a construction contractor who has employees is limited to \$2,000.
- Materials and purchases required due to COVID-19, such as plexiglass or other dividers, signage, hygiene stations, or outdoor furnishings to comply with social distancing and COVID-related regulations.
- HVAC improvements, air purification systems, or similar measures to help prevent spread of the virus.
- Supplies for cleaning, safety, or screening, including purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Reimbursement for supplies is limited to a three months' supply.
- Technological improvements to online platforms, points of sale, etc. including improvements to accommodate customers via appointment, or curbside pickup due to COVID-19.
- Professional/technical services to prepare and implement Preparedness Plans and pivot business practices.
- Other costs that support business reopening with pre-approval from the program administrator.

For additional questions, please see review our [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Application Process and Requirements

Applications for will be accepted online only. Funds will be distributed through a random selection process.

Assistance is available for business owners through the [following organizations](#):

African Career, Education & Resource Inc. (ACER)

- Contact: Denise Butler
- Email: dbutler@acerinc.org
- Phone: 612-217-0282
- Website: <https://acerinc.org/>

African Development Center

- Email: info@adcmnnesota.org
- Phone: 612-333-4772
- Toll-free: 1-877-232-4775
- Website: <https://www.adcmnnesota.org/>
- **Languages: English, Amharic, Somali, Swahili**

Black Women's Wealth Alliance

- Email: service@bwwa-us.com
- Phone: 612-876-1317
- Website: www.bwwa-us.com (can request an appt via website)

Lao Assistance Center of MN

- Provider for SE Asian communities
- Email: sunny@laocenter.org
- Phone: 612-987-2642

Latino Economic Development Center (EDC)

- Email: BIZSUPPORT@LEDCMN.ORG
- Phone: 651-621-2758
- **Languages: English, Spanish**

Liberian Business Association

- Email: jackson@libausa.org
- Phone: 612-607-4233
- Website: <https://www.libausa.org/>

New American Development Center

- Contact: Asad Aliweyd
- Email: aaliweyd@nadcmn.org
- Phone: 612-232-1372
- **Languages: Amharic, English, Oromo, Somali**

Northside Economic Opportunity Network

- Email: info@neon-mn.org
- Phone: 612-302-1505
- Website: <https://www.neon-mn.org/>

Applications selected to move forward for further review and funding will be required to submit documentation of eligibility acceptable to the program administrator. Requested documents may include:

- Most recent tax return or equivalent documentation
- Itemized budget for use of grant funds and itemized sources and uses of any COVID-19 related relief funding received
- IRS form 941, W3 or other documentation of payroll employees

Each approved business's maximum grant amount shall be limited to their identified eligible expenses. Businesses will be required to sign a grant agreement prior to receiving any funding.

Recipients will be required to submit follow-up information to Hennepin County, including a final budget and documentation of how funds were used, including paid invoices, statements or similar documentation.

Use of Data

Data is being requested from you to determine if your business is eligible for financial assistance from Hennepin County. Please take notice that any data received by Hennepin County as the result of submitting this form will be classified as government data pursuant to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13 (the "Act"). Under the Act, some or all of this data is classified as public data, including your business name, address, email address, phone number, and other information provided by you. Public data is available to anyone requesting it and consists of all data furnished via this Web form. You are not required to provide the requested information, but failure to do so may result in Hennepin County's inability to determine your business' eligibility for financial assistance. With the exception of sharing application data with municipal or state governmental entities for the purpose of considering the application for grant or forgivable loan funding, any data you provide during the application process that is classified as private or non-public will not be shared by Hennepin County or Next Stage without your permission unless required by state or federal law.