



City of Westfield
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



59 Court Street Rm. 300
Westfield, MA 01085
413-572-6246 FAX 568-6850
Peter J. Miller, Director

Donald F. Humason, Jr., Mayor

For Immediate Release
April 13, 2020

Contact: Leanne Cloutier
(413) 572-6244

WESTFIELD OFFERS EMERGENCY BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Businesses impacted by COVID-19 urged to apply for operational assistance

WESTFIELD, MA- The City of Westfield's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program today announced it has launched an Emergency Business Assistance Program for independent small businesses in an effort to assist in sustaining businesses through the current COVID-19 health and economic crisis.

Grant funds may be used for the following purposes: Business lease or mortgage payments, business utility payments, business monthly debt payments, business payroll, business inventory expenses, and other expenses as might be approved by the Community Development team.

"I am committed to helping Westfield's business community navigate this unprecedented health and economic crisis," Mayor Humason stated. "These CDBG funds, while limited, are aimed at providing a little cushion to businesses to help them meet their obligations in the near-term to give them a fighting chance for the future," he continued.

Businesses citywide are eligible for this program, but will be required to comply with regulations set forth by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development. HUD requires that all funds expended to benefit individuals from low-and-moderate income households. Local businesses can qualify in one of two ways- first, if the business has five or less employees and the business owner resides in a low-or-moderate income household; or second, if the business commits to retaining an employment position for an individual who lives in a low-or-moderate income household for a one-year period.

Today, the City has \$20,000 available for these activities. These funds have been reprogrammed from similar activities from the 2019 CDBG Action Plan.

Additional funding for business assistance is anticipated shortly as the City was informed by Congress and HUD that \$216,737 will be made available to the City through the federal

CARES Act, signed into law on March 27th. CDBG CARES funding can also be used to provide assistance to local agencies providing public services, including food security programs, domestic violence prevention, and senior services, among other things. Input from the provider community and the general public will be solicited over a five-day public comment period slated for next week.

Mayor Humason and the Community Development Department anticipate grants to range from \$2,500 to \$10,000, depending upon the number of jobs to be retained and obligations to be met. Following public input, the City anticipates adding an additional \$150,000 to the program by late April and an additional \$30,000 in July upon the outset of the new program year.

For more information or an application, please contact Peter Miller at p.miller@cityofwestfield.org, (413) 572-6246.