

Pennsylvania CDFI Network

Media Release

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\$96 Million in Relief Grants Awarded to PA Small Businesses

Nearly 5,000 small businesses economically impacted by COVID-19 approved for awards

August 10, 2020 --Governor Tom Wolf along with the [Pennsylvania CDFI Network](#), PA State Senators and PA Department of Community and Economic Development today announced \$96 million in grant awards under the COVID-19 Relief Pennsylvania Statewide Small Business Assistance program. The small businesses that have been approved for awards span all 67 Pennsylvania counties.

“As we continue to address this public health crisis, it’s critical that we also focus on our state’s economic recovery and supporting our small businesses across the state, which continue to be impacted by our necessary mitigation efforts,” Gov. Wolf said. “This funding will go a long way to help small businesses, including historically disadvantaged businesses, at a time when they need it most.”

“We’ve seen the impact of this pandemic-fueled economic crisis on the small businesses in our communities and in the immense response to the program in the first round of applications,” said Daniel Betancourt, Chair of the PA CDFI Network and President & CEO of Community First Fund. “The PA CDFI Network is grateful for the partnership of Governor Wolf and the Pennsylvania Legislature as we move quickly to get these resources into the hands of those most impacted by the crisis.”

Of the close to 5,000 small businesses approved in the first round of funding, more than 2,500 (51 percent) are historically disadvantaged businesses that have traditionally experienced discrimination when seeking financial services and financial products. Over 2,400 of the businesses are located in rural communities and disadvantaged areas and more than 1,200 in communities targeted for business investment by state government programs like Main Street and Elm Street.

“Our business community has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and is in need of immediate assistance. The grant program is targeted to help small businesses manage costs, handle expenses, and stay in operation in this exceptionally difficult time,” said Senator Brewster. “Since COVID struck our state and debilitated our business community, I have been

advocating for bridge grants and sought millions in aid for impacted businesses and workers. The small business assistance grants are one of the tools we can use to bolster business, maintain jobs and help workers at a time of immense distress.”

“I could not be more proud or more grateful for the great work of DCED and Pennsylvania's CDFI Network in delivering substantive, fair, equitable, need-based assistance to our state's main street and historically disadvantaged small businesses. Our program design and the accountability it provides to taxpayers and to our federal funders is a model for the nation,” Senator Blake said. “I appeal to the US Congress and to our colleagues on both sides of the aisle in Harrisburg to recognize the success of this program in assisting small businesses devastated by the pandemic and to invest further in the program so we can help even more of them.”

“These grants and the relief they will provide are testament to what we can do when we prioritize the right initiatives,” said Senator Vincent Hughes. “It is because of collaboration and a collective focus that today we were able to deliver help to the auto body shops, the barbershops, the beauticians, the pizza shop owners, the soul food establishments and other businesses across the commonwealth. And though we are gathering today virtually to recognize the positive impact these grants will have, it is critical to understand that there is still a great deal of need and must continue to direct resources and aid to our small business community to help it recover from the devastation of the pandemic.”

The program has targeted getting grants to small businesses with the greatest need and to be eligible to apply, businesses had to have less than \$1M in revenue and less than 25 employees. Grants ranged in size from \$5,000 to \$50,000 based on the revenue size of the business with the average amount granted in round one just over \$19,500. Approximately 80% of the grantee business owners are low-moderate income individuals.

“The COVID-19 pandemic unexpectedly affected small businesses across the commonwealth, an unfortunate circumstance that could not have been predicted or prepared for,” said DCED Secretary Dennis Davin. “However, through the collective action of the Wolf Administration, the general assembly, and the CDFI Networks, Pennsylvania’s hardest hit and most at-risk businesses will be able to access the funding they need to shore up their resources and regain sound financial footing as we move into recovery.”

More than two thirds of the approved awardees are women-owned businesses and 16% located in rural communities. The businesses represent industries that have been especially hard hit by the pandemic including retail, food and hospitality, health and wellness, and personal care.

The program is part of \$225 million in statewide relief [funds announced by Governor Tom Wolf](#) in June to support small businesses economically impacted by the pandemic.

“We targeted these funds to reach the smallest and most vulnerable businesses across the state and as CDFIs, we were able to mobilize our networks to reach those who have been hardest hit by the pandemic,” James Burnett, Vice Chair of the PA CDFI Network and Executive

Director of the West Philadelphia Financial Services Institution. “The response was immense with almost 50,000 applications submitted in the first round and more than \$865.5 million in total requests.”

The second grant application window for the relief funds opened today, August 10, and will remain open for 15 business days closing at 11:59PM on August 28. In order to get funds to businesses in need as quickly as possible, the second application window will be the final opportunity to apply for the program. Qualified applicants not awarded in the first round do not need to reapply and will be rolled into the next round for consideration.

Eligible small businesses can apply online at pabusinessgrants.com or through any one of the [17 Community Development Financial Institutions \(CDFIs\)](#) that are part of the Pennsylvania CDFI Network. CDFIs are organizations that share a common goal of expanding opportunity in underinvested communities by providing access to financial products and services for local residents and businesses.

Grant disbursements for those approved for awards under the first round will depend on verification requirements.

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About the PA CDFI Network

The PA CDFI Network is a coalition of 17 PA-based community development financial institutions that primarily provide financing options for small businesses. The members of the coalition are listed below. Media can reach out to each of the CDFIs in the network using the contact information linked below.

[The Progress Fund](#) (Counties Served: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Bedford, Blair, Butler, Cambria, Cameron, Centre, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Fayette, Forest, Fulton, Greene, Huntingdon, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, Lycoming, McKean, Mercer, Potter, Somerset, Tioga, Venango, Warren, Washington, Westmoreland)

[Bridgeway Capital](#) (Counties Served: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, Washington, Westmoreland)

[Northside Community Development Fund](#) (Counties Served: Allegheny, Beaver, Greene, Lawrence, Washington)

[Metro Action](#) (Counties Served: Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming)

[Rising Tide Community Loan Fund](#) (Counties Served: Bradford, Bucks, Carbon, Columbia, Lehigh, Monroe, Northampton)

[ASSETS](#) (Counties Served: Berks, Juniata, Lancaster, Mifflin, Snyder, York)

[Community First Fund](#) (Counties Served: Adams, Berks, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Perry, Philadelphia, York)

[Reinvestment Fund](#) (Counties Served: All Counties)

[PIDC Community Capital](#) (Counties Served: Philadelphia)

[Impact Loan Fund](#) (Counties Served: Montgomery, Montour, Northumberland, Philadelphia)

[Beech Capital](#) (Counties Served: Bucks, Chester, Dauphin, Delaware, Erie, Montgomery, Philadelphia, York)

[West Philadelphia Financial Services Institution](#) (Counties Served: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia)

[Enterprise Center Capital](#) (Counties Served: Berks, Bucks, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Montgomery, Northampton, Philadelphia)

[Neighborhood Progress Fund](#) (Counties Served: Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia)

[Entrepreneur Works](#) (Counties Served: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia)

[Women's Opportunities Resource Center](#) (Counties Served: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wyoming)

[United Bank](#) (Counties Served: Blair, Bucks, Cambria, Chester, Delaware, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Montgomery, Philadelphia, Union)

The members of the Executive Committee of the network are:

- Daniel Betancourt, Community First Fund -- Chair
- James Burnett, West Philadelphia Financial Services Institution -- Vice Chair
- Lynne Cutler, Women's Opportunities Resource Center (WORC) -- Vice Chair
- Leslie Benoliel, Entrepreneur Works -- Treasurer
- Mark Masterson, Northside Community Development Fund -- Secretary
- Chris Hudock, Rising Tide Loan Fund -- Assistant Secretary