



Small and Non Profit Business Recovery Grant GRANT INFORMATION

Through a Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Community Development Block Grant program, Alleghany County, the City of Covington and the towns of Clifton Forge and Iron Gate have jointly established a regional \$1.6 million grant fund, known as the Alleghany Highlands Small Business Recovery Grant, to support the region's small and non-profit businesses recovery efforts following the COVID-19 outbreak. One-time grants of up to \$15,000 are being provided to businesses in the region to offset business impacts during the pandemic. The grant program is administered by the Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Tourism under the oversight of a regional management team. There is no fee to apply and businesses do **not** need to be a member of the Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Tourism in order to apply.

Overview

Applications will be accepted starting February 1, 2021 and will be awarded on a first come first serve basis until funds are depleted or December 15, 2021; whichever occurs first.

There is no guarantee that all businesses nor all expenses will be eligible under this grant program.

Requests for reimbursement of expenses must be directly related to COVID-19 restrictions/guidelines and it is the applicant's responsibility to explain how the reimbursement request is related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ultimately DHCD has final approval of all fund distributions and they will rely heavily upon the applicant's explanation in their decision making.

Each business may receive up to a maximum total of \$15,000 which includes rent/mortgage reimbursements plus all other COVID-19 related expenses.

For businesses that were operational prior to March 12, 2020 and are seeking to reopen during 2021, on a case-by-case basis, consideration will be given to awarding eligible grant funds in advance of actual expenditures (with the exception of rent costs). This will be to assist in the reopening effort. The applicant must specify the planned reopening date on the application. Should the business be awarded grant funds and fail to reopen by the stated date, the award recipient must repay all grant funds awarded, in full, within 30 calendar days of the stated re-opening date. Applicants may request one (1) extension of the opening date with an explanation of the cause of the delay.

GRANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Businesses/nonprofits in the region meeting **ALL** of the following eligibility criteria are encouraged to apply:

1. Must be locally or regionally owned or operated, *and*
2. Must have at least one (1) full time employee which includes sole proprietors, *and*
3. Must have twenty (20) or fewer full-time equivalent employees (FTE's), *and*
4. Must verify that they were operational pre-COVID-19 (March 12, 2020) and are realizing a direct negative impact from COVID-19 (e.g. revenue loss, reduced sales, closure or suspended operation, employment decline, business interruption), *and*
5. Must not have already received federal CARES Act assistance from any other source for the exact same expenses requested by this application (no duplication of reimbursement), *and*
6. Must provide local or regional services, *and*
7. Must be an operating business/nonprofit located in the region or have a specific re-opening date, *and*
8. Must be current on all fees, permits and taxes as of the date of the application, *and*
9. Must possess a valid Alleghany County, City of Covington, Town of Clifton Forge or Town of Iron Gate business license if required to have one by the locality where the business is physically located.

ELIGIBLE GRANT USES

The aim of the grant program is to help businesses re-open and or remain operational while meeting their long term goals by adjusting to COVID-19 demands. Requests for grant funds may include:

- Rent expenses (lease, mortgage, loan) falling between April 1, 2020 and the date of the application may be reimbursed for a maximum of 6 months or \$15,000; whichever occurs first. Home based businesses may receive up to 25% of the business owner's rent or mortgage, not to exceed six months. Awards are based on submission of a copy of a current signed lease, mortgage or loan statement and proof of rent payment(s) for the month(s) requested. Some applicants will receive less than 6 months of rent reimbursement while others will receive less than \$15,000.

Example 1 (receiving less than 6 months of rent reimbursement): applicant pays \$3,000/month in rent will receive the maximum of \$15,000.

Example 2: (receiving less than \$15,000 of rent reimbursement): applicant pays \$1,000/month in rent will receive the maximum of 6 months of rent reimbursement or \$6,000.

Under no circumstances will advance rent costs be awarded (rent occurring after the date of the grant award).

- Sanitation/PPE expenses. Examples include cleaning service, cleaning supplies, sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, sanitation equipment, masks and gloves.

- Space upgrades to reopen and conduct business safely. Examples include non-permanent barriers (sneeze/cough guards), benches, tables/chairs, outdoor seating furniture and appliances to facilitate social distancing. *Absolutely no construction expenses will be reimbursed; if an item is being permanently attached to the structure or the physical structure itself is being permanently changed (remodel, modification, renovation, install) it is considered construction for purposes of this particular grant.*

- Up to \$100 for special signage expenses to promote that your business is open, is open but operating under modified conditions, or to promote proper distancing/sanitation.

- Costs to pivot your business to online operations that were not in place prior to March 12, 2020 in order to continue business operations. This includes expenses for delivery, online payments, online reservations, etc.

- Touchless pay systems and related technology expenses such as laptops to accommodate social distancing.

- One cell phone or telephone, registered to and used by the business

- Job training class expenses such as protecting employees and or customers from COVID-19 exposure or pivoting/modifying business models to remain in business (i.e. ecommerce).

- Other COVID-19 related expenses which may be unique to a specific business.

INELIGIBLE GRANT USES

Businesses cannot be reimbursed for the below listed items under the terms and guidelines of this particular grant. The list is offered as clarity for applicants so that unnecessary time in completing the application process can be saved and disappointment avoided.

As noted throughout this document, requests for reimbursement of expenses must be *directly* related to COVID-19 restrictions/guidelines and it is the applicant's responsibility to explain how the reimbursement request is related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you are not sure whether your particular expense is covered, please contact the Grant Program Manager Susan Knick to discuss. While you may not qualify for this particular grant there may be other programs which you can be directed to for assistance.

- Expenses related to normal pre-COVID 19 daily business operations.
- Payroll costs incurred to maintain existing employees (i.e. job retention) or hire additional ones.
- Relief from employer payroll taxes.
- Lost revenue.
- Utilities.
- Insurance.
- Regular maintenance of the facility or equipment.
- Overdue/past due rent or mortgage payments prior to March 12, 2020.
- Payment of taxes, fees or any other payment due to the County, City and/or Towns.
- Franchise businesses except those that are locally owned and operated; corporately-owned national chains are not eligible.
- Requests from schools, whether public or private, churches and faith communities are not eligible.
- Construction and or landscaping expenses.
- Purchase of vehicles.
- Purchase of sheds or buildings.
- Cell phone Wi-Fi hot spots.
- Purchase of cell phone or telephone (exception: one cell phone or telephone if it is the business's main phone).
- Purchase of equipment to do things that are a fundamental responsibility of a local government (i.e. broadcasting government meetings for viewing by interested citizens).
- Marketing expenses (exception: website improvement/development and up to \$100 for special signage as outlined in eligible uses above)
- Website management plans
- Advertising (exception: \$100 for special signage as outlined in eligible uses above)
- Subscription or contract expenses with a software company used to manage/organize teams/staff
- Equipment that is not being used by the business (i.e. purchases for a client of the business)
- Expense(s) already covered by CARES funds received from other sources (no duplication of reimbursements).
- Any unlawful activity as defined by federal, state and or local laws.

GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

1. Each business/non-profit must complete and submit a grant application, signed by the business owner, outlining the use of funds and how the funds will help sustain business operations in the Alleghany Highlands.
2. A DUNS number is required; no application will be processed without this number.
3. Non-profit businesses must submit a copy of their 501 c 3 status.
4. The maximum amount of a grant award *for rent* will not exceed 6 months or \$15,000; whichever occurs first.
5. The maximum total amount of a grant award will not exceed \$15,000 per business which includes rent expenses awarded plus all other requested items.
6. The grant recipient agrees to undertake a minimum of two (2) hours of business development/sustainability planning to assist the business in recovery.
NOTE: Documentation of completing this requirement must be received before any grant funds are disbursed. It is recommended that the applicant complete this requirement as the application is moving through the review process so there will be no delay in receiving funds. See “Meeting the 2 Hour Requirement” sheet which follows this page.
7. Grants will not be awarded for the exact same expenses already covered by CARES funds received from any other source (no duplication of reimbursement).
8. Copies of lease, mortgage or loan statement and proof of *paid* rent must be presented to substantiate each request for rent reimbursement funding.
9. With the exception noted in #10 of this section, grant awards are based on reimbursing expenses incurred. Receipts, paid invoices, credit card statements and or canceled checks (front & back) must be provided before funds will be disbursed.
10. On a case-by-case basis for businesses in existence prior to March 12, 2020 and seeking to reopen during 2021 funds may be disbursed in advance of actual expenditures with the exception of rent expenses.
11. Funds are available on a first-come, first-serve basis until funds are depleted or December 15, 2021; whichever occurs first.

How to apply (Electronic submissions are not accepted): Application packets may be mailed or hand-delivered to Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, 110 Mall Rd, Covington VA 24426 beginning February 1, 2021.

The application form is available for download on the COVID-19 Resource page at www.ahchamber.com.

Hard copy applications may be picked up from the following locations:

Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, 110 Mall Road, Covington VA 24426

Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation, Suite C, 9212 Winterberry Avenue, Covington VA 24426

City Clerk’s Office, 333 West Locust Street, Covington VA 24426

Town Hall, 547 Main Street, Clifton Forge VA 24422

Town Hall, 401 Commerce Avenue, Iron Gate 24448

For information or questions please contact: Susan Knick, Grant Program Manager

Email: sknick@ahchamber.com

Phone: (540) 962-2178