NEWS RELEASE
Amherst County Back in Business Grant
July 28, 2020

There's a new small business grant for Amherst County businesses called the Back in Business grant. The Economic Development Authority of Amherst County (EDA) has received a $500,000 Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for small business recovery assistance. This application is for locally owned Amherst County small businesses ranging from 1-20 employees who have suffered economic interruptions due to COVID-19 and State mandates.

Amherst County Businesses may be able to apply for both the CARES Act Business Grant and the Back in Business Grant if they meet both grant eligibility criteria and are not asking for funding from any other local, state, or federal assistance program for the same expenses for the same time period that they are requesting reimbursement or rent/mortgage relief under either of these Amherst County grant programs.

Between the two grants, there is a total of $800,000 in combined grant funds for small businesses in Amherst County. "Small locally owned businesses are critically important to our community and our local economy," according to Chad Eby, EDA Chairman. "This grant supports small businesses that in many cases have been left behind by other programs."

Applications are currently being accepted for locally-owned, for-profit businesses in the County. [Application]

Eligibility Criteria:
- Locally or regionally owned (Corporately-owned national chains are not eligible)
- 20 or fewer employees
- Has been impacted by COVID-19 (demonstrate 10% minimum loss)
- Must be up to date on local taxes and have a current Amherst Town/County business license (if required)
- Operational since March 1, 2019
- For-profit business with over $30,000 in gross receipts in 2019

Each business may receive up to $10,000 in utility and rent/mortgage relief for 3-6 months and up to $5,000 per business for retooling and technology activities. The maximum benefit to any individual business is $15,000.

Examples of Acceptable Uses of Grant Funds:
Approvable expenses are those that are directly related to the reopening of the business per the State of Virginia's reopening guidelines specific to your industry, as well as rent/mortgage and/or utility relief.
- Rent or mortgage relief for 3-6 months
• Business non-public utility costs
• Touchless payment systems
• Purchase of protective supplies (masks for employees/customers), tools, or equipment
• Cleaning and Sanitizing supplies: sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, etc.
• Modifications for limiting entering and exiting the business
• Sneeze and cough guards
• Signs and marking materials related to social distancing requirements
• Barriers, benches, or tables/chairs to facilitate social distancing
• Property improvements or renovations to accommodate social distancing and/or outdoor dining, recreation, etc.
• Software/Hardware expenses for delivery, online payments, online reservations, etc.
• Signage, advertising, marketing expenses, etc. to promote that your business is open/operating under modified conditions, to promote proper distancing/sanitization, etc.

Businesses cannot have received funding from any other local, state, or federal assistance program for the same expenses for the same time period that they are requesting reimbursement or rent/mortgage relief under this Amherst County program.

Ineligible Activities
Under the program, businesses cannot be reimbursed for the following costs:
• Loss of revenue
• Payroll costs
• Relief from employer payroll taxes
• Costs of daily business operations
• Regular maintenance of the facility or equipment

Other Requirements: COVID-19 has presented new challenges to every business and the EDA wants to provide free access to assessment tools and consultants so each business can be successful in this new environment. As part of this grant and at no cost to the business, business owners/managers are strongly encouraged to meet with a local consultant for individual business needs assessment and/or training.

Application Instructions: Applications will be accepted starting July 27, 2020, and will be awarded on a first come first serve basis until funds are depleted. Applications are available:
• Online at https://amherstvabusiness.com/ and emailed to shwilkes@countyofamherst.com
• Picked up and dropped off at the Finance Department at 153 Washington St., Amherst, VA 24521, between 8:30 am-5 pm Monday-Friday.
• A complete application includes the application form, all required attachments (listed below), and the notarized affidavit.

Questions? Contact the Finance Department at 946-9304 shwilkes@countyofamherst.com or the Economic Development Authority at 946-5200 lsauunders.aeda@gmail.com Follow us on Facebook to receive business updates and information.

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