



## News Release

[Office of the Pierce County Council](#)



### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 6, 2020

## Pierce County Council expands support to help more local businesses

This week the Pierce County Council passed two ordinances aimed at making more funding available to local businesses struggling from impacts of COVID-19.

The first ordinance doubled the total amount of funding available through a previously established COVID-19 Adaptation Grant Program, bringing the total authorized for assistance to \$10 million.

The second ordinance established a Commercial Rent and Mortgage Payment Assistance Program that provides limited assistance to eligible businesses to help protect jobs threatened by COVID-19.

Under the expansion of the existing Adaptation Grant Program, the council authorized an increase in the total amount of funding available to eligible local businesses based on the number of full-time equivalent employees. Initially the maximum amount of grant money available was \$8,000 for eligible business and \$10,000 for facilities providing care to the elderly or other vulnerable adults.

The new maximum amount of funding available is up to \$8,000 and \$10,000 respectively for businesses with 20 or fewer full-time equivalent employees or facilities providing care to the elderly or other vulnerable adults; \$25,000 for those with 21 to 100 full-time equivalent employees; and \$50,000 for businesses or facilities providing care to the elderly or other vulnerable adults with more than 100 full-time equivalent employees.

The expanded program also provides support to farmers markets, which are eligible to receive a grant up to \$25,000 to address COVID-19 operational changes. Councilmember Marty Campbell proposed the additional support in an effort to assist local Pierce County farmers.

Corporate chains and corporate franchises are largely excluded from the program.

“Through our economic recovery efforts, we have helped nearly 600 eligible business, of which nearly 40 percent are woman owned, 36 percent are minority owned and 7 percent are veteran owned,” said Pierce County Council Vice Chair Dave Morell.

“Expanding the grant allocations based on full time employees allows us to assist not only micro-businesses, but also nearly 300 large businesses that call Pierce County home that are eligible for the \$50,000 allocation,” Morell said.

The Council previously established the COVID-19 Adaptation Grant Program to supply grants to businesses and non-profits organizations to help them as they implemented changes to daily operations to comply with COVID-19-related public health guidance. Grants cover up to 50 percent of these operational changes up to the allowed maximum funding amounts. The Council instructed the county’s

Economic Development Department to develop and implement the grant review and approval requirements.

The second Council action this week authorized the Economic Development Department to disburse \$2.5 million to businesses needing assistance with rent or mortgage payments.

Eligible businesses may receive up to three months of commercial rent or mortgage payment assistance in the form of a grant not to exceed \$5,000 per month, or the monthly rent or mortgage obligation for the business, whichever is lesser. Businesses cannot receive more than \$15,000 in assistance under the program.

Payments will be made directly to the landlord or tender identified in the lease/rental agreement or mortgage for the eligible business.

“The purpose of this new loan program is to protect jobs in Pierce County,” Morell said. “The County Council recognizes the significant hardship our business owners and their employees face as we continue to see restricted operations due to COVID-19 and the delayed reopening of our economy.

“Through this program we hope to provide much needed financial aid to businesses that are currently operating, but who are limited in their activities under the state’s ‘Safe Start’ reopening plan.”

Businesses whose activities and operations are significantly restricted in Phase 2, or who cannot open until Phase 3 or 4 of the “Safe Start” reopening plan are eligible for assistance.

Additional eligibility requirements include:

- Businesses must document how operations and activities are limited by the “Safe Start” reopening plan;
- Demonstrate at least a 25 percent revenue reduction attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Proof the business was in operation and occupying commercial space under a lease or rental agreement or commercial mortgage in Pierce County prior to March 23, 2020; and
- Proof the business continues to be in operation and occupying commercial space under a lease or rental agreement or commercial mortgage in Pierce County.

Eligible businesses may apply through a process established by the county’s Economic Development Department, to be announced soon. Disbursement is subject to available funds.

Funding for both programs comes from the nearly \$158 million Pierce County received from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act.

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