

For immediate release
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Image attached – courtesy photo

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Southern Maine Small Businesses and Nonprofits Hurt By Covid Urged To Apply For New State Emergency Relief Grants This Week

Southern Maine Planning & Development Commission to administer

Maine Economic Recovery Grant Program

Maximum grant awarded - \$100,000

Deadline for online filing - Wednesday, September 9, 2020

Saco, Maine -- The deadline is approaching! Economic relief for small businesses and nonprofits is on its way as the State of Maine launches a new relief fund from the CARES Act; eligible businesses and organizations could receive up to \$100,000. The deadline for applications is Wednesday, September 9, 2020. Recipients will be notified in late September and awards will be made in early October. In Southern Maine, the program is being administered by the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC) in partnership with the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development. Grants will be calculated based on business losses reported by qualified applicants, proportional to overall losses for all applicants (not first-come first-served.)

To apply, businesses and nonprofits should visit the Maine Economic Recovery Grant Program [Website \(https://www.maine.gov/decd/economic-recovery-grants\)](https://www.maine.gov/decd/economic-recovery-grants) and file an application by September 9. Note: the application **must include a DUNS number** - a unique nine-digit identifier required by the federal government. Businesses can acquire a DUNS number through instructions provided on the DECD website.

According to Paul Schumacher, Executive Director of SMPDC, “It’s urgent that businesses and nonprofits act now and jump on this opportunity immediately. The application process is long and if a business does not already have a DUNS number, it can take a number of days to get one. This program is a unique opportunity for the region and we want as many qualified organizations and businesses as possible to take

advantage of this government assistance to deal with the economic impacts of COVID-19.”

Background - Maine’s Path to Recovery

In addition to the threat to public health, the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed the business environment, causing severe supply-chain disruptions, reduced consumer spending, and unprecedented losses that are felt across all sectors. In Maine, hospitality, tourism, retail, restaurants and bars, entertainment, manufacturing and countless others face a host of challenges and barriers that disrupt operations and impede growth. In addition, the closure of the Canadian border, the stoppage of cruise ships, and reluctance of people to travel has impacted the economy, from agriculture to fisheries, to retail, recreation and hospitality sectors.

The funding for this state program originates from the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund and will be awarded in the form of grants to directly alleviate the disruption of operations suffered by Maine’s small businesses and non-profits as a result of the pandemic. The Maine Department of Economic & Community Development has been working closely with affected Maine organizations since the beginning of this crisis and has gathered feedback from all sectors on the current challenges. Grants will be distributed based on a business’s/organization’s demonstrated losses as a prorated percentage of the total losses reported by qualified applicants. The program is not intended to replace lost profits but only to help businesses remain viable. The grants are considered taxable income and subject to audit.

According to the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, “Many Maine businesses and nonprofits have not been able to access existing sources of relief funding and so have ‘fallen through the cracks’ and need help in order to remain viable. The money available for these grants cannot wholly replace or repair the economic damage this pandemic has caused. Our narrow mission is to ensure that each dollar has at least a small, direct impact on supporting Maine businesses, Maine non-profit organizations, and Maine’s economy.”

About Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission

Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC) is a non-partisan nonprofit that cultivates thriving, sustainable communities and strengthens local governments by leading planning and economic development for 39 member towns in Southern Maine. The organization was founded in 1964 to provide technical expertise to municipalities in York, southern Oxford and Cumberland Counties. SMPDC offers a coordinated effort for land use, smart growth, resource management, environmental sustainability, and transportation planning. For more information, please visit www.smpdc.org

Interviews available upon request.

