



**LEHIGH COUNTY COVID-19
RELIEF SMALL BUSINESS
GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

FUNDING AVAILABLE

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1. \$10 million of Lehigh County Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund, established under the American Rescue Plan Act was designated by the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners for the Lehigh County COVID-19 Relief Small Business Grant Program that will be administered by the County Administration in Partnership with the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce.
2. Lehigh County Businesses with fewer than 100 employees may apply for up to a \$15,000 grant for COVID-19 related expenses.
3. The Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce will conduct outreach and marketing to ensure small, vulnerable and disadvantaged businesses have access to the grant application platform.
4. The Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce will provide technical assistance to business owners during application preparation and online submission.
5. Once applications are received, Lehigh County DCED in partnership with the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce will process applications and review for administrative completeness.
6. Grant applications will be reviewed by a committee Consisting of Lehigh County Administration, Lehigh County Board of Commissioners' members and the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce who will make recommendations to the Lehigh County Executive. Priority will be given to businesses that have not received other state or federal COVID-19 grant assistance and/or funding. Applicants **must list** other grants awarded during the pandemic as we will assess those funds when considering grant applications.
7. The County Executive will make final recommendations to Lehigh County Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners will consider each application for approval or denial.
8. Lehigh County will fund grants to approved businesses.
9. Businesses will be required to provide certifications regarding accuracy and truthfulness of information submitted in the application. Applicants must be aware of such certifications outlined in these guidelines.
10. Grant recipients must agree to comply with and be bound by the terms and conditions set forth in Lehigh County Administrative Code Section 610 and 801.2.

11. Grant recipient hereby agrees and acknowledges that the Lehigh County Small Business Grant Application shall constitute as official Grant Agreement contract between recipient and Lehigh County. Its terms and conditions shall be legally binding on recipient as a valid and legally binding contract.
12. The electronic submission of the Grant by the owner, as identified as "Business owner," shall constitute owner's certification and acknowledgement that owner has read and understands the terms and conditions of the grant, is an authorized signatory, and intends to be legally bound hereby to any and all terms and conditions set forth in the Lehigh County Small Business Grant.

GRANTS WILL BE AWARDED ON A FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVE BASIS

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

1. Grants of up to \$15,000 are available for small businesses that have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and related statewide business closure.
2. Grants are not to exceed 25% of the business's 2019 annual gross revenue. If a business opened after 2019, the award will be based upon 2020 or 2021 tax returns.
3. Grants are available only for businesses with 100 or fewer full-time employees (FTEs).
4. Eligible businesses must operate primarily in Lehigh County and must file a Pennsylvania tax return. Applicants will self-certify that 51% or more of revenues are generated in PA.
5. Eligible businesses may be structured as C-corporations, S-corporations, limited liability corporations, sole proprietors, independent contractors or self-employed individuals.
6. Businesses must have been in operation for one full year prior to application submission. However, businesses that opened after that time will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the committee.
7. Businesses must currently be operating at the location listed on the application submitted.

ELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDING

1. Expenses related to implementing safer operating procedures such as physical plant changes to enable social distancing, enhanced cleaning efforts, barriers or partitions, or Covid-19 vaccination, testing, or contact tracing programs.
2. Expenses to mitigate periods of closure including payroll and benefits costs, costs to retain employees, mortgage, rent, or utilities costs, and other operating costs.
3. Expenses to mitigate financial hardship including technical assistance, counseling, or other services to assist with business planning needs.
4. There can be no duplication of benefits. Expenses already covered by other relief measures including state grants or loans, US SBA Paycheck Protection loans, local or regional grant and/or loan programs are not eligible uses for funding under this grant program.

INELIGIBLE BUSINESSES

1. Businesses that are not physically based in Lehigh County.
2. Businesses that are inactive, default (not on a payment plan) with taxes or fees owed to the County, federal government or Commonwealth.
3. Businesses engaged in any activity that is illegal under Federal, state, or local law.
4. Businesses owned or controlled by any owner that has ever obtained a direct or guaranteed loan from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or any Federal agency that is currently delinquent or has defaulted within the last seven years and caused a loss to the government.
5. Non-profits, churches and other religious institutions.
6. Financial businesses primarily engaged in the business of lending, such as banks, finance companies and factors.
7. Passive real estate companies and investors who file a Schedule E on their personal tax returns are not eligible. Real estate businesses in which the majority (>51%) of their income is rental income are also not eligible.
8. Life insurance companies.
9. Private clubs and businesses which limit the number of memberships for reasons other than capacity.
10. Government-owned entities or elected official offices.
11. Businesses primarily engaged in political or lobbying activities.

12. Businesses engaged in any illegal activity, socially undesirable or those that may be considered predatory in nature, such as pawnshops, rent to own, and adult bookstores.
13. An owner of 20 percent or more of the equity of the applicant is incarcerated, on probation, on parole; presently subject to an indictment, criminal information, arraignment, or other means by which formal criminal charges are brought in any jurisdiction; or has been convicted of a felony involving fraud, bribery, embezzlement, or a false statement in a loan application or an application for federal financial assistance within the last five years or any other felony within the last year.
14. Participants in the Gig Economy (e.g., Grub Hub, Lyft, Uber, etc.) will be evaluated by the committee to determine eligibility as a business entity for purposes of this grant.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST

***Your application will not be considered until we receive the following:**

1. 2019 **AND** 2020 Federal Tax Returns AND 2021, if filed – must be in an electronic form for online upload, such as PDF.
2. If the applicant was a startup in 2021 and has not yet filed taxes, a management prepared statement of revenue and expenses as of December 31, 2021; must be in an electronic form for online upload, such as PDF.
3. Copies of **ALL** of the following applicable filings/documents from the Department of State or local municipality for your business (must be provided in electronic format from upload, such as PDF):
 - Articles of Incorporation
 - Certificate of Organization
 - Fictitious Name Registration
 - Government-Issued Business License
 - Licensure certificate from PA Department of State, for occupations or professions that requires licensure, i.e. cosmetology, barbers, massage therapy, physical therapy, vehicle salesperson, etc.
4. Your completed IRS W-9 form.
5. Any form of acceptable government-issued photo ID; must be in an electronic form for online upload, such as PDF.

APPLICANT CERTIFICATION

Applicants must be aware of these critical Applicant Certifications
Applicants will be required to self-certify adherence to the following:

Lehigh County Reliance on Business Applicant Certifications for the Lehigh County COVID-19 Relief Small Business Grant Program:

_____Lehigh County may rely on applicant certifications for use of funds, business eligibility, owner information and financial information for both the business and the owner. Applicants must make this certification in good faith, taking into account their current business activity and their ability to access other sources of liquidity sufficient to support their ongoing operations in a manner that is not significantly detrimental to the business.

_____Applicant understands that the grant funds available under the **Lehigh County COVID-19 Relief Small Business Grant Program** are limited, and thus, certain small business owners, including small business owners who may otherwise qualify for such grant funds, may not be selected to receive grant funds under the **Lehigh County COVID-19 Relief Small Business Grant Program**. The grant funds will be awarded by Lehigh County Board of Commissioners, which reserves the right to reject or approve applications at its sole discretion.

An authorized representative of the applicant must certify in good faith to all of the below:

Businesses receiving grant funds must certify such compliance under penalty of perjury and fines pursuant to 18 Pa. C.S. § 4904 (relating to unsworn falsification to authorities) to all of the below:

_____ 1. The business was in operation for one year and, if required, paid income taxes to the state and federal government, as reported on individual or business tax.

_____ 2. COVID-19 has had an adverse economic impact and makes this grant request necessary to support the ongoing operations of the applicant.

_____ 3. The amount of funds requested does not exceed 25% of the business's 2019 annual gross revenue.

_____ 4. The grant will be used only to cover COVID-19 related costs. I understand that if the funds are knowingly used for unauthorized purposes, the county, state and federal government may hold me legally liable such as for charges of fraud.

_____ 5. The business must have been, and remain, in compliance with all relevant laws, orders, and regulations during the period of the COVID-19 disaster emergency under the Pennsylvania Governor's proclamation dated March 6, 2020, and any and all subsequent renewals. The foregoing includes,

but is not limited to, orders by the Governor, Secretary of Health, or other commonwealth officials empowered to act during the emergency. Any noncompliant business will be ineligible for funding under this program and may be required to return all, or a portion, of the funds awarded.

_____6. I understand that I am ineligible to receive funding under the Lehigh County Covid-19 Small Business Assistance Program if I, or any owner of 20 percent or more of the equity of the applicant is incarcerated, on probation, on parole; presently subject to an indictment, criminal information, arraignment, or other means by which formal criminal charges are brought in any jurisdiction; or has been convicted of a felony involving fraud, bribery, embezzlement, or a false statement in a loan application or an application for federal financial assistance within the last five years or any other felony within the last year.

_____7. I certify that the information provided in this application and the information provided in all supporting documents and forms is true and accurate in all material respects. I understand that knowingly making a false statement to obtain a grant from the County of Lehigh will result in repayment of all funds granted under this program and ineligibility for future grants from the County of Lehigh.

_____8. I further certify that the information provided in this application and the information provided in all supporting documentation and forms is true and accurate in all material respects. I understand that knowingly making a false statement to obtain a grant from the County of Lehigh is punishable under state and federal law, including under 18 USC 1001 and 3571 by imprisonment of not more than five years and/or a fine of up to \$250,000; under 15 USC 645 by imprisonment of not more than two years and/or a fine of not more than \$5,000; and, if submitted to a federally insured institution, under 18 USC 1014 by imprisonment of not more than thirty years and/or a fine of not more than \$1,000,000.

_____9. I acknowledge that the County of Lehigh will confirm the eligible grant amount using tax documents I have submitted. I affirm that these tax documents are identical to those submitted to the Internal Revenue Service. I also understand, acknowledge, and agree that the County of Lehigh and its authorized representatives can share the tax information with state and federal authorized representatives for the purpose of compliance with federal and state grant requirements and reviews.

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