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## Dearborn Announces Small Business Relief Grant Program in Response to COVID-19

*Accepting applications April 27-May 1 for grants up to \$5,000 for small businesses and sole proprietors in Dearborn*

**April 23, 2020 | Dearborn, Mich.** – The Dearborn Small Business Relief Grant application opens on Monday, April 27, with a May 1 deadline, for grants up to \$5,000 providing small businesses with 17 employees or less and sole proprietors located in Dearborn working capital during the COVID-19 crisis.

Applications will be available at <https://bit.ly/neigrantapp> at 9 a.m. on April 27. The application process will close May 1 at 12noon. Awardees will receive notification via email the second week of May.

Applicants must meet specific eligibility criteria to qualify as listed on the website. Business owners who previously have been awarded a Michigan Small Business Relief Grant or the Wayne County/TCF Small Business Relief Loan Fund are not eligible to apply.

The Dearborn Small Business Relief Grant, funded by the New Economy Initiative (NEI), aims to support the businesses most often left out of major city, state and federal relief efforts due to lack of federal funding and eligibility restrictions on micro-businesses. It focuses on opening up access to capital for locally owned retailers, service business and restaurateurs, as well as makers, home-based businesses, freelancers and creative industries.

Through a partnership initiated by NEI, the Dearborn Small Business Grant is being led and administered by ACCESS, the City of Dearborn, East and West Dearborn Downtown Development Authorities, and Warren and Dix/Vernor Business District Improvement Authorities.

“In this moment of crisis, the civic leaders of Dearborn are facing many challenges. The combined energy of the City leadership and many civic partners have come together to address one of those challenges; how to help small businesses survive,” said Pamela Lewis, Director of NEI. “The New Economy Initiative is pleased that we can support this fund for small businesses in the city. We know that these payments will provide important interim relief that help the city stay strong, grow and thrive.”

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Small business outreach support and technical assistance is being provided by the partners, as well as the Dearborn Area Chamber of Commerce, American Arab Chamber of Commerce and Yemeni American Chamber of Commerce to assure long-term business success.

“The City has been advocating for our business owners to receive immediate financial relief. This NEI grant program is tangible and accessible, and we’re doing everything we can to get all available money into businesses’ hands as quickly as possible,” said Mayor John B. O’Reilly, Jr.

A grant review committee comprising members of the community will review and approve/deny the grant applications. ACCESS will distribute the funds. Grant money may be used for day-to-day operating expenses of the awarded business, which includes: payroll, rent/mortgage, inventory, and utilities; restocking inventory in preparation of re-opening to the public; and transitioning to e-commerce, curb-side pick-up and delivery integrations.

“We are pleased to be a part of this important initiative and are fully committed to doing all we can to uplift our community, support our business establishments and do our part in this crisis,” states ACCESS Chief Financial Officer Wisam Qasem-Fakhoury.

To support those with the greatest need, business owners will be asked to note and substantiate their monetary need on the application and submit their 2018 or 2019 tax return. Applicants must also be prepared to provide their Michigan business entity identification number and employer identification number (EIN).

“This crisis has been a gut punch for every business owner out there,” said Cristina Sheppard-Decius, executive director of the East and West Dearborn DDAs. “With hundreds of small businesses in Dearborn, we are doing everything we can to provide the resources they need to get through this and keep our downtown and business districts vibrant.”

NEI, established in 2007, is a Detroit-based funder collaborative housed at the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan to drive entrepreneurship and diversify and strengthen southeast Michigan’s regional economy.

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