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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 22, 2020

Helene Caseltine, Economic Development Director

Indian River County Expands Small Business Grant Program

One-time grants available for small businesses impacted by COVID-19

Vero Beach, FL – With its additional federal CARES Act funding, Indian River County is expanding its COVID-19 Small Business Recovery Grant Program to assist a broader range of local businesses that are negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The County Commission approved an allocation of \$500,000 to the program, providing grants of up to \$5,000 per business. For-profit locally-owned small businesses are eligible to apply, especially those that were required to close or severely limit their business operations as a result of the pandemic. This includes hospitality businesses, hair salons, nail salons, fitness centers, specialty retail and those serving special events. A complete list of eligible businesses is available on page 2 of the application.

The business must have 25 or fewer employees, including the owner, and be based in, and operating in, Indian River County. It can be home-based businesses or sole proprietor. Funds may be used for business expenses incurred between 3/1/2020 through 12/30/2020. Funds may not be used for the exact same expense that was paid by other federal programs.

As it did with its initial round of funding, the county will partner with the FL Small Business Development Center at Indian River State College and the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce to process the grant applications.

“This collaborative effort between Indian River County and the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce will provide CARES Act funds to continue to assist local businesses that have been hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic. This will be a great benefit to our community as we continue to work together against the impacts of COVID-19,” explains County spokesperson Brian Sullivan.

All applications are to be submitted electronically, through the FL Small Business

Development Center (SBDC) at IRSC. [Access your IRC Small Business Recovery Grant Application here](#). “The SBDC is a great partner, especially as we continue to navigate our way through this difficult economic environment”, states Helene Caseltine, Economic Development Director for the Chamber. “Tom Kindred, SBDC Regional Director, and his staff are quite savvy with this application process. Over the years, the SBDC has processed hundreds of FL Bridge Loan applications in our region on behalf of the state, so it just made sense to continue this partnership.”

Applicants must provide proof of financial distress due to COVID-19 when submitting their application, with copies of previous years’ Profit & Loss statements or QuickBook reports. (Confidential information will be shredded once the application is processed.) They must also state how they intend to use the funds.

[IRC Grant Application](#)

Grant criteria for eligible applicants include:

- Locally or independently owned business that are located and operating in Indian River County, FL, including home-based businesses and sole proprietors
- No more than 25 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, including the business owner
- In operation since October 1, 2019
- Expects to return to full operations after all local and state emergency guidelines for COVID-19 are rescinded
- Up-to-date on tangible personal property taxes and real estate taxes
- The business and business owners are in good standing (i.e. no active judgements, liens, bankruptcies, etc.)

Ineligible businesses include:

- More than 25 FTE employees
- Publicly traded companies
- Non-profit organizations
- Business that has applied for, or received, CARES Act grant funding from a municipality in Indian River County

Applications will be reviewed and processed by the SBDC at IRSC as they are submitted, then forwarded to the Indian River Chamber for confirmation. The Chamber will send applications recommended for approval to the County’s Budget Office for payment. The Indian River Chamber will notify the business owner if their application is recommended for approval or not. Grants will be disbursed to eligible businesses on a first-come/first-served basis, until the new funds are exhausted. Any questions, call Helene Caseltine, Economic Development Director with the Indian River County

Chamber of Commerce, or John Corapi, the Chamber's Business Retention Manager, at 772-567-3491.

The [Indian River County Chamber of Commerce](#) is a county-wide non-profit organization representing the business community. The Chamber provides a wide variety of business services and benefits for its members and advocates on behalf of the local business community to create an environment where all businesses will thrive and succeed. The Chamber serves as the primary economic development organization and tourism promotion office, working on behalf of the [Indian River County Board of County Commissioners](#).

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