



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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Microenterprise Assistance Grant Programs Launched

Community Development Block Grant COVID-19 programs will help low-to-moderate income business owners throughout Berkshire County

Berkshire County, MA -- Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) announced today the launch of two Community Development Block Grant CDBG-CV Grant Programs to assist low-to-moderate income microenterprise business owners in Berkshire County. Funds derive from the *CARES Act of 2020* awarded to the Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) by HUD. The purpose of the two business assistance programs is to assist *low-to-moderate income* (LMI) microenterprise business owners prepare for, prevent, and/or respond to the impacts of the Coronavirus.

The two regional CDBG grant programs are focused on communities within northern and southern Berkshire County. The Town of Adams is serving as lead community for the 13-town northern Berkshire regional grant, which received \$850,000 under the program. The Town of Lenox serves as the lead community for the 17-town southern program, which received \$765,000. Eligible applicants will receive assistance in the form of grants up to \$10,000 to cover business costs such as rent, staffing and utilities, as well as COVID-19 supplies or technical assistance services.

The two regional grant programs will begin accepting applications from business owners immediately. Business owners who are interested in applying will find additional information, as well as all application materials, on the BRPC website, located here:

<https://berkshireplanning.org/microenterprise-assistance-programs-launched-in-northern-and-southern-berkshires/>

Separate programs have been established for the cities of Pittsfield and North Adams.

Patricia Mullins, BRPC Community & Economic Development Program Manager, stated, "BRPC looks forward to assisting many locally-based small businesses through these grants. These programs would not have been possible without enthusiastic support and assistance from our regional partners, the towns of Adams and Lenox, or without funding from HUD and MA DHCD."

"Here in Adams, we are eager to secure any help we can for our small businesses that are integral to the day-to-day fabric of our communities", said Christine Hoyt, Select Board Chair. "Even though these grants are modest, we hope they provide a level of support to sustain operations until businesses can recover more fully."

Gwen Miller, Land Use Director and Town Planner for the Town of Lenox, agreed. "We are very hopeful that Southern Berkshire businesses impacted by Covid-19 in Lenox and beyond will benefit from this funding opportunity and grow their resilience now and into the future."

Applications for both programs are being accepted on a rolling, first come, first served basis. Interested business owners are encouraged to submit their applications as soon as possible, and to contact BRPC directly for guidance throughout the application process.

"This is a very exciting opportunity for business owners in Berkshire County to recover some of the losses they have experienced due to the pandemic, and provides the ability for them to adapt and respond to future challenges. We look forward to receiving all applications," added Ms. Mullins.

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