



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

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1. \$5 million of Lehigh County COVID-19 County Relief Block Grant Program 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.
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 13.15(g).

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 available only for businesses with 100 or fewer full-time employees (FTEs).
3. 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.
4. Eligible businesses may be structured as C-corporations, S-corporations, limited liability corporations, sole proprietors, independent contractors or self-employed individuals.
5. Businesses must have must have been in operation as of March 1, 2019.
6. Businesses must currently be operating or have a clear plan to re-open once the Commonwealth permits re-opening of the business.

ELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDING

1. Payroll costs, costs related to the continuation of group health care benefits during periods of paid sick, medical, or family leave, and insurance premiums.
2. Working capital for the purpose of paying mortgage principal and interest payments (but not mortgage prepayments); and principal and interest payments on any other debt obligations that were incurred before February 15, 2020.
3. Rent payments, utility payments.
4. Working capital for the purpose of covering the costs of re-opening business operations after being fully or partially closed due to the state-mandated business closure period commencing March 2020, as long as the expense was incurred due to COVID-19.
5. Any COVID-19 related expenses that occurred due to the pandemic, including but not limited to specialized equipment, barriers, personal development education, and employee training expense to ensure compliance with state and federal CDC guidelines for reopening.
6. Any Covid-19 related expenses not already paid for with other relief measures such as state grants or loans, US SBA Paycheck Protection Loans, local or regional grant and/or loan programs

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 State 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, check cashing businesses 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

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION/PA CARES DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST

- Most recent tax return filed (2019 or 2018) – must be in an electronic form for online upload, such as PDF.
- If the applicant was a startup in 2019 and has not yet filed taxes, a management prepared statement of revenue and expenses as of December 31, 2019; must be in an electronic form for online upload, such as PDF.
- Copy of official filing with the Department of State or local municipality for your business such as: (one of the following); must be provided in electronic format for upload, such as PDF
- Articles of Incorporation
- Certificate of Organization
- Fictitious Name Registration
- Government-Issued Business License
- 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.

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 on February 15, 2020 and, if required, paid income taxes to the state and federal government, as reported on individual or business tax returns.

_____ 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 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.

_____ 4. During the period beginning on March 1, 2020 and ending on December 30, 2020, the business has not and will not receive another grant under the **Lehigh County COVID-19 Relief Small Business Grant Program.**

_____ 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 this COVID-19 Relief Statewide 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 further 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 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.

_____ 8. 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.